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MORE BEEF CALF REGISTRATIONS IN NI

THE latest available statistics from APHIS have indicated that 392,609 calves have been registered on NI farms during the first eight months of 2017 compared to 400,528 head registered during the same period in 2016. This reduction in total calf registrations by 7,919 head accounts for a two per cent decline year on year.

A total of 24,390 beef sired calves were registered in NI during August 2017 taking the total for the year to date to 293,904 head. In the corresponding period in 2016 a total of 291,160 beef sired calves were registered on NI farms. This accounts for a one per cent increase year on year. Beef sired calves have accounted for 75 per cent of all calf registrations in NI during 2017 to date, up from 73 per cent in the same period in 2016.

Meanwhile 98,705 dairy sired calves were registered on NI farms during the first eight months of 2017, a reduction of 10,663 head from year earlier levels when 109,368 dairy sired calves were registered. This accounts for a 10 per cent decline year on year and can be attributed to an increase in the proportion of dairy cows being mated to a beef sire.

During the first eight months of 2016 a total of 188,974 calves were registered to dairy cows with 81,664 head or 43 per cent of these being beef sired calves. In the same period in 2017 a total of 185,785 calves were registered to dairy cows with 88,782 of these registrations for beef sired calves. This accounts for 48 per cent of all calf registrations to dairy cows.

Aberdeen Angus continues to be the most popular beef sire used on dairy cows in NI and they accounted for 37 per cent of all beef cross calves registered during the first eight months of 2017 as indicated in Table 1. This is a two percentage point increase from the same period in 2016 when Aberdeen Angus accounted for 35 per cent of all beef cross calf registrations.

Limousin is the second most popular beef sire used on dairy cows and they accounted for 19 per cent of beef cross calf registrations during the first eight months of 2017, a slight reduction from 20 per cent during the same period in 2016. Hereford calves accounted for a further 16 per cent of beef calf registrations to dairy cows during the 2017 period, back from 17 per cent in the 2016 period.

Charolais continues to be the most popular beef sire used on the NI suckler herd, accounting for 33 per cent of registrations to suckler cows during the first eight months of 2017. It is closely followed in terms of popularity by Limousin which accounted for 32 per cent of registrations to suckler cows during 2017 to date. Aberdeen Angus calves accounted for a further 11 per cent of registrations to suckler cows during the first eight months of 2017while Simmental calves made up a further eight per cent of registrations. The proportion of registrations by breed to suckler cows during the first eight months of 2017 was unchanged from the corresponding period in 2016.

Figure 1: Beef sired calf registrations by month January 2015 to August 2017

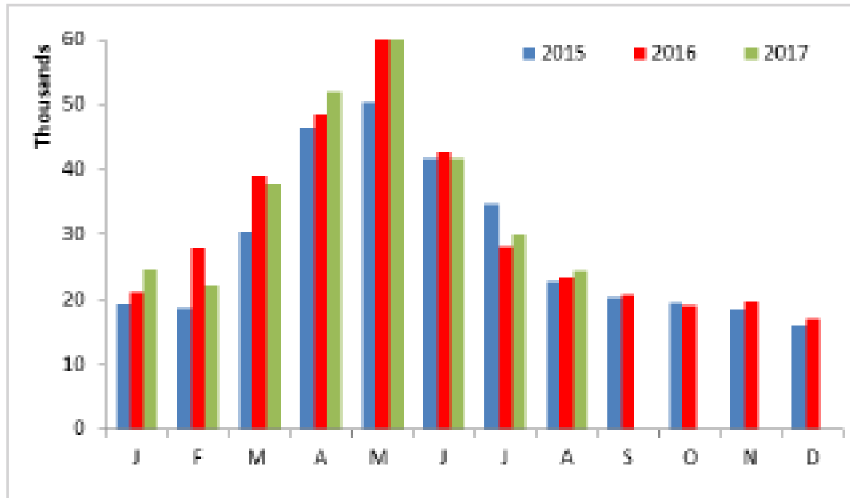


Table 1: Proportion of beef cross calves by breed Jan - Aug 2016 and 2017

	2016	2017
AA	35%	37%
LIM	20%	19%
HER	17%	16%
BB	12%	13%
SIM	7%	6%
CH	4%	4%
Other	6%	6%

DAERA RELEASE PRELIMINARY CENSUS FIGURES

THERE has been a slight reduction in NI suckler cow numbers according to the preliminary results of the June 2017 Agricultural Census which have just been released by DAERA. The census has indicated that there were 267,100 suckler cows on NI farms in June 2017 compared to 269,700 during June 2016. This decline by 2,600 head accounts for a one per cent decline year on year.

The number of beef heifers in calf has also recorded a one per cent decline with 30,800 on NI farms in June 2017 compared to 31,100 in June 2016. This has been partly offset by an increase in the number of beef heifers on NI farms intended for breeding but not yet in calf. There were 77,200 of these heifers on NI farms in June 2017, a two per cent increase on June 2016 levels.

Cattle over two years of age on NI farms intended for beef production totalled 105,100 in June 2017, a three per cent increase from year earlier levels. Meanwhile the number of male cattle for beef production on NI farms aged between 1 and 2 years increased by seven per cent to total 177,500 head in June 2017. The number of beef heifers increased by the same proportion to total 123,700 head in June 2017.

The number of dairy cows on NI farms has also declined slightly, back from a record high of 317,100 head in June 2016 to 315,800 head in June 2017. However there has been an increase in the number of in calf dairy heifers on NI farms. In June 2017 there were 61,000 dairy heifers on NI farms according to the latest census figures. This is an increase of 1,200 head or four per cent from year earlier levels.

The preliminary census results have indicated a total sheep flock in NI of 2.1 million in June 2017. This is a two per cent increase on year earlier levels and brings the NI sheep flock to the highest recorded levels since June 2006.

A total of 972,000 breeding ewes were recorded on NI farms in June 2017, a two per cent increase from year earlier levels. The number of lambs recorded on NI farms increased by the same proportion to total just over 1 million head in June 2017.

MORE NI LAMBS EXPORTED TO ROI FOR DIRECT SLAUGHTER IN 2017

A total of 10,867 lambs were slaughtered in local plants last week bringing throughput for the last twelve weeks to 122,555 head. This is a 5 per cent decrease from the corresponding twelve week period in 2016 when 128,958 lambs were killed locally.

The average carcase weight of lambs killed in local plants during the 12 week period ending 03 September 2017 was 21.1kg. This was a slight increase from year earlier levels when the average carcase weight of lambs in NI was 20.8kg. This increase in average carcase weights has been offset by the decline in total lamb throughput which has meant the volume of lamb handled by local processors decreased by 3.4 per cent year on year to total 2,588 tonnes in the 12 weeks ending 03 September 2017.

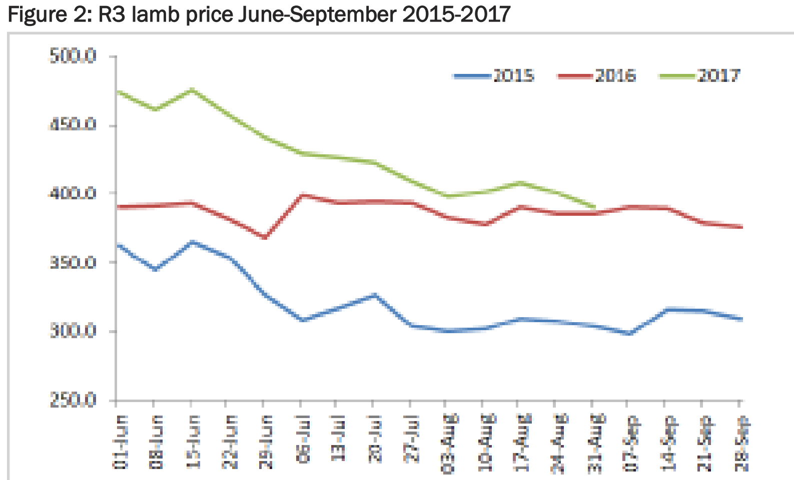
Lamb exports to ROI for direct slaughter last week totalled 8,215 head, the highest level of export for the year to date. Total exports for direct slaughter to ROI during the last 12 weeks totalled 73,884 head compared to 68,137 head during the corresponding period in 2016. This accounts for an 8 per cent increase year on year.

Exports to ROI accounted for 38 per cent of total output from the NI sheep flock during the 12 weeks ending 03 September 2017. This is a slight increase from the same period in 2016 when exports accounted for 35 per cent of total output from the NI sheep flock.

Lamb throughput in ROI last week totalled 51,721 head which brings throughput for the last 12 weeks to 613,235 head. This is a 9 per cent increase from the same period in 2016 when 560,250 lambs were slaughtered in ROI plants. Lambs imported from NII for direct slaughter accounted for 12 per cent of lamb throughput in ROI plants during the 2017 period, unchanged from the 2016 period.

Deadweight lamb prices in NI have come under some pressure in recent weeks however the R3 lamb price in NI last week was just above the corresponding week last year and well above the same week in 2015 as outlined in Figure 2. The average R3 lamb price in NI last week was 390.3p/kg, 4.8p/kg higher than the corresponding week in 2016 and 86.9p/kg higher than the corresponding week in 2015.

Figure 2: R3 lamb price June-September 2015-2017



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WEEKLY BEEF & LAMB MARKETS

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CATTLE TRADE

NI FACTORY BASE QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 04/09/17	Next Week 11/09/17
Prime		
U-3	340 - 356p	340 - 354p
R-3	334 - 350p	334 - 348p
O+3	328 - 344p	328 - 342p
P+3	276 - 308p	276 - 306p
	Including bonus where applicable	
Cows		
O+3 & better	255 - 270p	250 - 270p
Steakers	140 - 170p	140 - 170p
Blues	120 - 130p	120 - 130p

Cow quotes vary depending on weight and grade.
Pricing policies vary from plant to plant. Producers are advised to check pricing policies before presenting cattle for slaughter.

REPORTED NI CATTLE PRICES - P/KG

W/E 02/09/17	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	362.1	365.3	359.6
R3	356.8	360.2	352.3
O+3	349.1	351.1	333.7

*Prices exclude AA, HER and Organic cattle

REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

W/E 02/09/17	Wgt <220kg	Wgt 220-250kg	Wgt 250-280kg	Wgt >280kg
P1	187.8	197.5	206.7	227.1
P2	200.5	219.7	237.2	255.4
P3	222.4	251.1	259.0	260.8
O3	236.0	248.5	272.9	280.2
O4	-	260.0	274.9	283.4
R3	-	-	-	297.9

Deadweight Cattle Trade

BASE quotes from the major processing plants this week ranged from 340-354p/kg for U-3 grade prime cattle. The majority of plants are quoting 350p/kg for steers and 352p/kg for heifers with one plant continuing to quote 340-342p/kg. Quotes for good quality O+3 grade cows ranged from 255-270p/kg across the plants this week. Similar quotes are expected for all types of cattle early next week.

The plants have indicated steady supplies of prime cattle coming forward for slaughter to meet demand for beef. Prime cattle throughput in local plants last week was similar to the previous week at 5,950 head. In the corresponding week last year prime cattle throughput in local plants was 5,467 head which accounts for a nine per cent increase year on year. Cow throughput in NI plants last week has also remained similar to previous weeks with 1,762 cows killed. In the same week last year cow throughput totalled 1,702 head.

Imports for direct slaughter from ROI last week consisted of 321 prime cattle and 118 cows compared to 111 prime cattle and 77 cows in the same week last year. A further 9 prime cattle and 86 cows were imported from GB for slaughter in local plants last week compared to 28 prime cattle and 11 cows in the same week last year. Prime cattle imports for direct slaughter accounted for 6 per cent of total prime cattle slaughterings in NI last week compared to 3 per cent in the corresponding week in 2016. Exports of prime cattle to GB for direct slaughter have started again in recent weeks in response to a widening price differential between the two regions. A total of 80 prime cattle and 19 cows were exported last week. In the same week last year 118 prime cattle and 37 cows were exported to GB for direct slaughter. A further 10 prime cattle and 123 cows were exported to from NI to ROI for direct slaughter last week.

The average steer price in NI last week was back almost 2p/kg to 352.1p/kg while the R3 steer price was back by 1.3p/kg to 361.9p/kg. The R3 heifer price in NI was back by a similar margin to 363.5p/kg while the average heifer price increased by half a penny to 356.5p/kg. The young bull trade also came under some pressure last week with the average price back 3.8p/kg to 342.7p/kg and the R3 price back by 4p/kg to 352.4p/kg.

In GB last week the deadweight cattle trade was variable across the regions however the trade generally firmed with the average steer price up by 2.3p/kg to 375p/kg. Meanwhile the R3 steer price increased by 0.8p/kg to 383.6p/kg. This puts the differential between NI and the GB average at 21.7p/kg or £76 on a 350kg carcase. The average heifer price in GB last week was back marginally to 377p/kg while the R3 heifer price increased by 2.6p/kg to 384.5p/kg. This puts the differential between NI and GB at 23.p/kg or £82 on a 350kg carcase.

The deadweight trade in ROI has continued to come under pressure however a weaker sterling has meant prices are only back marginally in sterling terms. The R3 steer price in ROI was the equivalent of 347.2p/kg last week while the R3 heifer price was the equivalent of 357p/kg.

LAST WEEK'S DEADWEIGHT CATTLE PRICES (UK / ROI)

W/E 02/09/2017		Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	364.2	357.3	400.5	384.4	383.4	389.9	389.1
	R3	361.9	347.2	396.2	377.4	379.0	381.0	383.6
	R4	359.7	346.7	397.9	393.0	379.4	377.4	389.8
	O3	354.7	330.7	372.1	346.0	358.1	351.2	356.8
	AVG	352.1	-	392.3	372.6	368.6	363.1	375.0
Heifers	U3	367.3	369.1	403.7	387.6	393.5	386.9	393.8
	R3	363.5	357.0	395.9	378.9	382.4	378.2	384.5
	R4	361.0	356.3	397.7	378.7	381.5	377.7	384.4
	O3	357.5	341.6	381.7	359.3	356.5	363.1	365.5
	AVG	356.5	-	394.3	372.5	371.9	366.6	377.0
Young Bulls	U3	359.5	354.9	388.1	372.7	370.2	380.5	376.0
	R3	352.4	345.6	381.7	360.3	362.2	371.7	365.9
	O3	332.9	330.3	345.9	328.1	321.1	312.1	326.5
	AVG	342.7	-	374.2	353.0	350.4	353.2	355.6
Prime Cattle Price Reported		4993	-	6163	6294	5771	3798	22026
Cows	O3	278.6	290.6	292.4	282.3	284.0	286.4	285.0
	O4	282.9	291.8	291.3	284.3	284.6	280.8	284.5
	P2	241.8	270.6	243.8	231.0	236.9	242.1	237.9
	P3	259.1	283.9	253.4	253.9	248.7	260.9	252.8
	AVG	260.1	-	281.4	255.5	245.5	245.6	251.3

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=92.32p Stg
(ii) Shading indicates a lower price than the previous week.
(iii) AVG is the average of all grades in the category, not just those listed

LATEST LIVEWEIGHT CATTLE MART PRICES NI

	1st QUALITY			2nd QUALITY		
W/E 02/09/17	From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
Finished Cattle (p/kg)						
Steers	210	241	219	180	208	195
Friesians	146	168	156	135	145	141
Heifers	200	216	207	168	196	188
Beef Cows	147	217	160	120	146	133
Dairy Cows	112	137	120	70	111	90
Store Cattle (p/kg)						
Bullocks up to 400kg	220	249	235	185	219	200
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg	210	246	225	180	209	195
Bullocks over 500kg	200	233	212	170	199	185
Heifers up to 450kg	205	237	220	170	199	185
Heifers over 450kg	210	228	218	165	209	188
Dropped Calves (£/head)						
Continental Bulls	300	425	335	200	298	250
Continental Heifers	260	370	300	150	258	200
Friesian Bulls	115	170	145	70	90	80
Holstein Bulls	64	80	68	30	60	48

SHEEP TRADE

SHEEP BASE QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 04/09/17	-Next Week 11/09/17
Lambs >21kg	390-400p	380-390p

REPORTED SHEEP PRICES

(P/KG)	W/E 19/08/17	W/E 26/08/17	W/E 02/09/17
NI Lambs L/W	369.2	352.1	345.2
NI Lambs D/W	408.7	400.7	389.9
GB Lambs D/W	436.7	431.1	423.9
ROI D/W	437.2	437.1	430.0

Deadweight Sheep Trade

QUOTES from the plants for R3 grading lambs came under some pressure this week and ranged from 380-390p/kg up to 21kg across the plants as the week progressed. Lamb slaughterings in local plants totalled 10,867 head last week, a ten per cent reduction from the previous week when 12,050 lambs were killed locally. Exports of lambs to ROI for direct slaughter last week totalled 8,215 head. This was an increase of 884 head from the previous week which accounted for a 12 per cent increase. The deadweight lamb price in NI last week came back in line with a drop in quotes from the plants with an average price of 389.9p/kg. This was back 10.8p/kg from the previous week. The average lamb price in ROI last week was the equivalent of 430p/kg, back 7.1p/kg from the previous week.

This week's marts

GOOD numbers of lambs continue to pass through the marts with a steady trade reported for good quality lambs. In Omagh last Saturday 1,605 lambs sold from 364-443p/kg compared to 1,087 lambs the previous week selling from 357-385p/kg. In Kilrea on Monday 450 lambs sold from 346-360p/kg compared to 650 lambs last week selling from 356-367p/kg. In Saintfield this week 533 lambs sold from 330-370p/kg compared to 774 lambs last week selling from 335-370p/kg. In Ballymena this week 1,266 lambs sold from 290-390p/kg (avg 338p/kg) compared to 2,184 lambs last week selling from 330-437p/kg (avg 343p/kg). Good numbers of cull ewes continue to pass through the sale rings with top prices of over £100 reported in several of the marts.

LATEST SHEEP MARTS

From: 01/09/17		Lambs (P/KG LW)			
To: 07/09/17		No	From	To	Avg
Friday	Newtownstewart	355	328	351	-
Saturday	Omagh	1605	364	443	-
	Swatragh	1200	355	404	-
Monday	Kilrea	450	346	360	-
	Massereene	1123	340	372	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	533	330	370	-
	Rathfriland	955	331	365	352
Wednesday	Ballymena	1266	290	390	338
	Enniskillen	592	338	382	-
	Markethill	1120	340	368	-
	Armoy	415	345	410	-

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