

STRONG INCREASE IN NI HOGGET TRADE

BASE quotes for R3 grading hoggets from the major NI processing plants increased strongly this week with quotes towards the end of the week ranging from 480-500p/kg with all plants continuing to pay up to 22kg. Similar quotes are expected across all of the major plants early next week.

The plants have reported tighter supplies of hoggets coming forward for slaughter combined with steady demand for lamb as key drivers behind the strong increase in the deadweight trade this week. Throughput in local plants last week totalled 5,896 head which was a slight decline from 6,141 head killed during the previous week. Much of this decline will be due to the poor weather and road conditions in NI last week.

With the euro continuing to trade strongly against sterling there has been strong competition for NI origin hoggets from plants in ROI. Last week 6,041 hoggets were exported from NI to ROI for direct slaughter but as with local slaughterings the level of export was hampered by the difficult weather and

travelling conditions.

During 2018 to date 72,121 hoggets have been exported from NI to ROI for direct slaughter, a 15 per cent increase from the same period in 2017 when 62,564 hoggets were exported. Exports to ROI have accounted for 55 per cent of total hogget output from the NI flock during 2018 to date, up from 49 per cent in the same period last year.

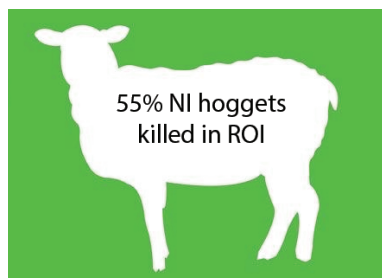


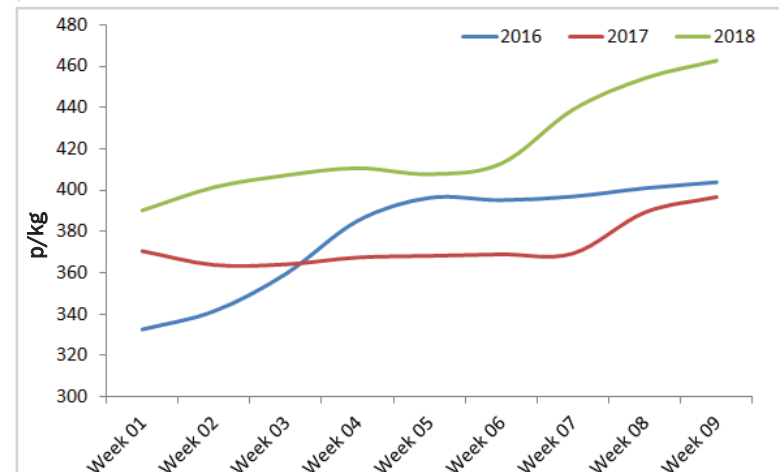
Figure 1 displays average deadweight hogget prices in NI during 2018 to date compared with the same period in previous years. The average deadweight hogget price in NI last week was 462.7p/kg, up 8.5p/kg from the previous week and 66p/kg higher than the same week last year.

Deadweight hogget prices in ROI have been consistently higher than NI prices during 2018 to date, however this differential has narrowed significantly in recent weeks. The average deadweight hogget price in ROI last week was 461.7p/kg, up 4.4p/kg from the previous week. In the corresponding week last year the deadweight hogget price in ROI was the equivalent of 405.4p/kg.

Deadweight hogget prices in GB have also increased steadily in recent weeks with an average reported price last week of 493.9p/kg. This was up 7.6p/kg from the previous week when the average price in GB was 486.3p/kg. In the same week last year the average hogget price in GB was 384.1p/kg.

While it is possible to observe the upward trend in deadweight hogget prices in GB it is impossible to compare GB prices with NI prices on a like for like basis due to differences in the way sheep are price reported in GB. There are also several different carcass dressing specifications being used in plants in GB which influence reported prices.

Figure 1: Deadweight hogget prices in NI during 2018 to date and corresponding periods in 2016 and 2017



In recent week steady numbers of hoggets have passed through the sale rings of local marts, although the poor weather conditions last week did interrupt the level of throughput in some marts. There has been a continued improvement in the liveweight hogget trade in NI with reports from the marts indicating a strong demand for good quality hoggets.

The average liveweight price for hoggets in NI last week was 421.6p/kg, up from 402.4p/kg during the previous week. In the corresponding week last year the average liveweight hogget price in NI was 368.7p/kg which accounts for an increase of 52.9p/kg year on year.

REPORTS INDICATE STRONG AVAILABILITY OF PRIME CATTLE FOR SLAUGHTER

THE major processing plants have reported strong supplies of prime cattle for slaughter with prime cattle slaughterings in NI during 2018 to date totalling 61,652 head. This is a 2.2 per cent increase on the same period in 2017 when the local prime cattle kill totalled 60,301 head and 7.1 per cent higher than the corresponding period in 2016.

At the end of February 2018 there were 89,279 cattle for beef production (beef sired cattle and dairy males) in the 24-30 month age category on NI farms as outlined in Table 1. This was an increase of 9,653 head from the corresponding month in 2017 and accounts for a 12.1 per cent increase year on year. At the end of February 2016 there were 74,416 beef cattle in this age range which accounts for a 20 per cent increase between the two periods. This is expected to keep firm numbers of cattle coming forward for slaughter in the weeks ahead.

However in the lower age categories the number of cattle on farm at the end of February 2018 was broadly similar to the previous year. There were 171,785 cattle for beef production in the 18-24 month age category on NI farms at the end of February 2017. This was a 1.9 per cent reduction from year earlier levels

however it was up marginally from February 2016 levels.

There were 161,210 cattle for beef production on NI farms in the 12-18 month age category at the end of February 2018. While this was a 3.3 per cent reduction from February 2017 levels when there were 166,692 cattle in this age category on NI farms it was an 8.6 per cent increase from the end of February 2016 when there were 148,420 cattle in this age group.

There were 229,183 cattle for beef production aged between 6-12 months on NI farms at the end of February 2018. This was a 1.9 per cent increase from February 2017 levels and a marginal decrease from February 2016 levels.

Exports of cattle out of NI for both direct slaughter and further production have been operating at fairly low levels in recent years and if this continues the largest majority of beef cattle currently on NI farms will be processed locally. Imports of prime cattle from ROI for further production on NI farms and those for direct slaughter have also been operating at low levels. If this trend continues prime cattle throughput during 2018 is expected to follow a broadly similar trend to 2017 levels.

Figure 2: Cattle for beef production on NI farms at the end of February 2016-2018 by age category (beef sired and dairy males)

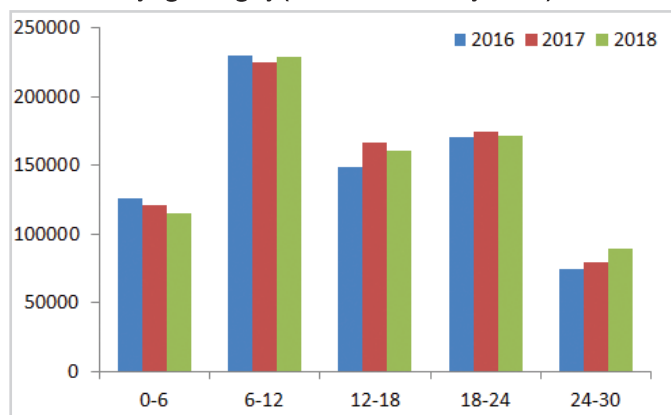


Table 1: Cattle for beef production on NI farms at the end of February 2016-2018 by age category (beef sired and dairy males)

	2016	2017	2018	2017/2018	2016/2018
0-6	126,264	121,467	115,455	-4.9%	-8.6%
6-12	230,214	224,970	229,183	+1.9%	-0.4%
12-18	148,420	166,692	161,210	-3.3%	+8.6%
18-24	170,570	175,036	171,785	-1.9%	+0.7%
24-30	74,416	79,626	89,279	+12.1%	+20.0%

FREE HEALTH & SAFETY WORKSHOPS

UNDER the 2014 - 2020 Rural Development Programme, Farm Family Key Skills (FFKS) initiative, CAFRE continues to run free Health & Safety workshops.

Health and safety on the farm continues to be an issue, stats show that each month there are over 100 accidents on the farm that require medical attention. This figure is too high and shocking - STOP & THINK.

FFKS H&S workshops in your area:

Weds 14th March 2018, Hilltown, Newry, 7pm
 Weds 21st March 2018, Donemana, 7pm
 Weds 28th March 2018, Dungannon Mart, 1.30 pm

To register contact:

Rural Development Council: 028 8676 6980
 Or call CAFRE Knowledge Transfer Unit: 028 94426790
 Or visit: www.cafre.ac.uk

Please note that each month there will be a draw for those who attend. You could receive a FREE bundle of goods - a hi vis, bodywarmer, head torch and pair of wellingtons.



FQAS Helpline

If you have had a recent inspection and need help and advice to rectify any non-conformances, contact the

FQAS helpline:
028 9263 3024

Answerphone Service

Factory Quotes & Mart Results
Updated 5pm Daily

Tel: 028 9263 3011

Text Service

Free Price Quotes sent to your mobile phone weekly

Email - bulletin@lmcni.com
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CATTLE TRADE

NI FACTORY BASE QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 05/03/18	Next Week 12/03/18
Prime		
U-3	348 - 356p	348 - 356p
R-3	342 - 350p	342 - 350p
O+3	336 - 344p	336 - 344p
P+3	290 - 306p	290 - 306p
Including bonus where applicable		
Cows		
O+3 & better	260 - 280p	260 - 280p
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 03/03/18	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	358.9	360.2	348.0
R3	353.9	355.9	344.4
O+3	346.3	346.9	337.3

*Prices exclude AA, HER and Organic cattle

REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

W/E 03/03/18	Wgt <220kg	Wgt 220- 250kg	Wgt 250- 280kg	Wgt >280kg
P1	180.8	184.5	202.2	231.3
P2	195.9	228.3	241.0	256.1
P3	230.0	245.3	259.3	265.7
O3	-	284.5	277.2	286.7
O4	-	261.7	279.7	287.8
R3	-	-	-	304.0

Deadweight Cattle Trade

THE deadweight cattle trade remained steady this week with base quotes from the major NI plants for in spec U-3 grade prime cattle ranging from 348-356p/kg. Quotes for good quality O+3 grade cows this week ranged from 260-280p/kg across the plants. Similar quotes are expected for all types of cattle early next week.

Difficult weather conditions in NI last week impacted cattle throughput. Prime cattle throughput in NI last week totalled 6,113 head, notably lower than the 7,149 head of prime cattle slaughtered in local plants during the previous week. Meanwhile a total of 1,770 cows were killed in NI last week, well back from the 2,220 cows killed during the previous week.

Imports of prime cattle from ROI for direct slaughter in NI plants totalled 53 head last week, up 44 head from the previous week and lower than the 225 prime cattle imported during the corresponding week in 2017. A total of 14 cows were imported from ROI for direct slaughter last week compared to 73 cows during the same week last year. Meanwhile exports of cattle out of NI for direct slaughter to ROI last week consisted of 69 prime cattle and 57 cows compared to the 74 prime cattle and 96 cows exported during the previous week. Last week there were no exports of cattle reported from NI to GB for direct slaughter, most likely due to the difficult weather conditions.

The average steer price in NI last week was back by a penny to 348.7p/kg while the R3 steer price decreased by 2.1p/kg to 356.1p/kg. The average heifer price in NI last week was up by 1.8p/kg to 350.3p/kg while the R3 heifer price increased by 0.4p/kg to 357.3p/kg. The average young bull price in NI last week was 330.0p/kg unchanged from the previous week while the R3 young bull price increased 0.5p/kg to 344.4p/kg. The average cow price in NI last week recorded an increase of 2.6p/kg to 267.2p/kg while the O3 cow price increased by 0.7p/kg to 285.6p/kg.

In GB last week the average steer price was up by 2p/kg to 355.9p/kg while the average R3 steer price was back slightly to 363.9p/kg. This puts the differential in R3 steer prices last week between NI and GB at 6p/kg or £21 on a 350kg carcass. The average heifer price in GB last week was up by almost a penny to 358.7p/kg while the average R3 heifer price increased to 366.8p/kg. The differential in R3 heifer prices last week between NI and the GB average was 8p/kg or £26 on a 320kg carcass.

In ROI last week deadweight cattle prices held steady in euro terms and a strengthening in euro against sterling has increased deadweight prices in ROI in sterling terms. The R3 steer price in ROI last week was the equivalent of 345.1p/kg up by 2.9p/kg from the previous week while the R3 heifer price was up by 2.8p/kg to the equivalent of 355.3p/kg. The O3 cow price in ROI last week recorded an increase of 2.7p/kg to the equivalent of 290.9p/kg which put it 5.3p/kg above the O3 cow price in NI.

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

	W/E 03/03/2018	Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	359.2	355.5	370.5	367.8	368.8	374.1	369.8
	R3	356.1	345.1	370.0	361.2	362.6	361.6	363.9
	R4	355.0	346.7	371.4	370.9	360.7	361.5	367.5
	O3	347.2	329.0	340.4	334.7	330.5	340.5	336.1
	AVG	348.7	-	366.3	356.2	349.2	350.6	355.9
Heifers	U3	360.7	368.6	377.1	374.4	378.1	373.3	376.3
	R3	357.3	355.3	369.9	362.0	368.2	364.7	366.8
	R4	354.9	355.8	370.3	366.9	363.8	361.8	366.2
	O3	349.6	339.2	350.2	343.3	338.3	342.8	343.6
Young Bulls	AVG	350.3	-	367.2	359.5	354.0	352.5	358.7
	U3	348.0	347.3	348.3	357.1	351.5	363.2	355.2
	R3	344.4	336.1	353.3	346.0	353.4	352.2	350.3
	O3	328.3	321.3	319.9	313.7	320.8	316.3	319.2
Cows	AVG	330.0	-	325.4	329.9	313.0	327.0	321.6
	Prime Cattle Price Reported	5457	-	5506	6346	5802	3770	21424
	O3	285.6	290.9	284.2	274.3	283.3	275.6	279.4
	O4	287.1	291.1	281.5	277.9	283.2	277.7	281.0
Cows	P2	242.0	261.5	226.0	231.0	237.0	245.6	237.5
	P3	263.4	281.2	243.6	253.0	252.0	257.0	252.4
	AVG	267.2	-	273.6	254.0	254.2	251.0	255.8

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=88.50p 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

W/E 03/03/18	1st QUALITY			2nd QUALITY		
	From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
Finished Cattle (p/kg)						
Steers	206	228	214	177	204	187
Friesians	-	-	-	-	-	-
Heifers	208	214	210	180	204	193
Beef Cows	140	180	157	112	139	125
Dairy Cows	110	130	121	65	109	90
Store Cattle (p/kg)						
Bullocks up to 400kg	220	242	230	190	219	210
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg	200	227	215	170	199	185
Bullocks over 500kg	195	218	208	165	194	180
Heifers up to 450kg	210	241	221	175	208	190
Heifers over 450kg	190	209	200	160	189	175
Dropped Calves (£/head)						
Continental Bulls	220	330	265	130	195	160
Continental Heifers	150	205	180	100	150	125
Friesian Bulls	100	170	135	40	70	55
Holstein Bulls	80	145	110	28	60	45

SHEEP TRADE

SHEEP BASE QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 05/03/18	Next Week 12/03/18
Hoggets >22kg	450-470p	480-500p

REPORTED SHEEP PRICES

(P/KG)	W/E 17/02/18	W/E 24/02/18	W/E 03/03/18
NI L/W Hoggets	399.5	402.4	421.6
NI D/W Hoggets	439.0	454.2	462.7
GB D/W Hoggets	461.4	486.3	493.9
ROI D/W	448.3	457.3	461.7

Deadweight Sheep Trade

THE deadweight hogget trade in NI this week continued to firm with quotes for R3 grade hoggets increasing to 480-500p/kg up to 22kg by the end of the week. Similar quotes are expected for early next week. A decline in supplies of hoggets coming forward for slaughter has been reported with 5,896 hoggets killed in NI last week. This was a decrease of 245 head from the 6,141 hoggets killed in NI during the previous week and was also lower than the 6,024 hoggets killed during the corresponding week in 2017. A total of 7,105 sheep were exported from NI to ROI for direct slaughter last week, compared to 10,036 sheep during the previous week. The average deadweight hogget price in NI last week increased by of 8.5p/kg to 462.7p/kg while the average deadweight hogget price in ROI increased by 4.4p/kg to 461.7p/kg.

This week's marts

MANY of the marts have reported smaller numbers passing through the sale rings this week, with most marts reporting a strong increase in hogget prices. In Omagh last Saturday 340 hoggets sold from 429-483p/kg compared to 1,164 hoggets the previous week selling from 410-449p/kg. In Massereene on Monday 669 hoggets sold from 460-532p/kg compared to 726 hoggets last week selling from 400-445p/kg. In Rathfriland on Tuesday 595 hoggets sold to an average of 463p/kg an increase of 39p/kg on last week. In Ballymena on Wednesday 1,885 hoggets sold to an average of 466p/kg compared to 1,507 hoggets last week selling to an average of 412p/kg. In Markethill 1,300 hoggets sold from 450-510p/kg compared to 400 hoggets last week selling from 410-472p/kg. The trade for first quality fat ewes held steady with top prices ranging from £101-136.

LATEST SHEEP MARTS

From: 02/03/18		Hoggets (P/KG LW)			
To: 08/03/18		No	From	To	Avg
Saturday	Omagh	340	429	483	-
	Swatragh	550	423	514	-
Monday	Massereene	669	460	532	-
	Kilrea	200	420	457	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	564	450	480	-
	Rathfriland	595	400	515	463
Wednesday	Ballymena	1855	450	527	466
	Enniskillen	585	452	496	-
	Armoyle	486	444	530	471
	Markethill	1300	450	510	-

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