LMC
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BEEF DOMINATES NI RED MEAT SALES IN QUARTER 4

BEEF continues to dominate the red meat market in NI with volume sales accounting for 86 per cent of total red meat sales during the 12 weeks ending 30 December 2018 according to the latest available data from Kantar Worldpanel. This is up from 83 per cent of volume sales in the corresponding period in 2017.

Total volume sales of beef in NI were back marginally (0.9 per cent) to 3,773 tonnes during the 2018 period although there was notable variability in the performance of individual cuts in terms of volume sales.

During the 12 week period ending 30 December 2018 1,554 tonnes of mince were sold through NI retailers which accounted for 41 per cent of total red meat sales in terms of volume as outlined in Figure 1. In the same period in 2017 1,715 tonnes of mince were sold through NI retailers which accounted for 45 per cent of total beef sales. Overall there was a nine per cent decline in the volume of mince sales.

There was also a marginal decrease recorded in the volume sales of frying and grilling steaks in NI during the 2018 period however they accounted for 15 per cent of beef sales in terms of volume in both years. Meanwhile sales of roasting joints and stewing beef followed a more positive trend during the 12 weeks ending 30 December 2018. Volume sales of roasting joints totalled 975 tonnes in the 12 weeks ending 30 December 2018 and accounted for 26 per cent of total beef sales in terms of volume. This was up from 818 tonnes in the same period in 2017 which accounted for 22 per cent of volume sales.

Volume sales of stewing beef increased from 397 tonnes to 418 tonnes over the same period. This is an increase of five per cent year on year and increased market share of stewing beef sales to 11 per cent.

Image 1: Declines in volume sales of beef have been offset by higher retail prices and a changing product mix

The number of households buying beef has also recorded a slight increase during the 2018 period with market penetration at 83.7per cent. This is up from 83.1 per cent in the same period in 2017. Alongside this increase in household penetration there has been an increase in the average retail price to £7.84/kg. This was up 19p/kg from the same period in 2017 however despite the increase in the average beef price average spend per buyer in NI has held steady at £48 during the 2018 period.

Figure 2 displays the average retail price of the major beef cuts/products in NI during the 12 week period ending 30 December 2018 compared to the same period in 2017. As indicated in the chart there has been some variability in the retail pricing of individual products with the average retail prices of mince and frying/grilling steaks increasing during the 2018 period. Meanwhile the average price of roasting joints and stewing beef have both declined which may be a contributing factor to the increased volume sales of these products.

The value of beef sales in NI during the 12 weeks ending 30 December 2018 totalled £29.6 million, a 1.6 per cent increase from £29.1 million in the same period in 2017. Beef was the only meat sector to record value growth over the Christmas period.

LMC ran significant bursts of its beef and lamb advertising campaign during quarter four and the increased value of sales in the local market represents a notable return on investment of levy payers funds.

Figure 1: Proportion of NI beef sales by major cut/product during the 12 weeks ending 30 December 2018 (Source: Kantar Worldpanel)

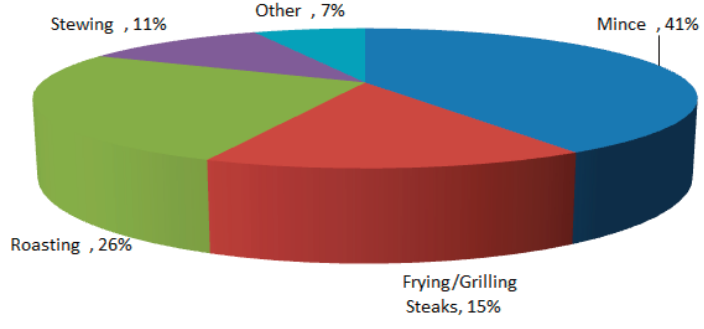

Figure 2: Average retail price of beef broken down by major cut/product during the 12 week period ending 30 December 2018 (Source: Kantar Worldpanel)

IMPROVEMENTS IN CONFORMATION SCORES OF NI PRIME CATTLE IN FINAL QUARTER OF 2018

Table 1: Conformation scores of NI price reported steer kill October to December 2017 and 2018

	E	U	R	O	P
2017	0.3%	17.5%	34.8%	35.7%	11.7%
2018	0.3%	19.1%	36.0%	35.0%	9.6%

Table 2: Conformation scores of NI price reported heifer kill October to December 2017 and 2018

	E	U	R	O	P
2017	0.2%	17.0%	43.2%	32.7%	7.0%
2018	0.2%	17.3%	44.1%	32.6%	5.8%

Table 3: Conformation scores of NI price reported young bull kill October to December 2017 and 2018

	E	U	R	O	P
2017	1.5%	18.4%	25.8%	32.2%	22.0%
2018	1.7%	19.0%	28.3%	33.3%	17.8%

THERE are many factors that influence the conformation scores achieved by prime cattle including the animals age, breed, carcase weight and finishing system. There was a general improvement in the conformation scores achieved by price reported prime cattle in NI during the period October-December 2018 when compared to the same period in 2017.

Table 1 displays a breakdown of conformation scores for the NI price reported steer kill. U grading steers accounted for 19.1 per cent of price reported steers during the 2018 period, up 1.6 percentage points from the same period in 2017. Meanwhile R grading carcases accounted for 36 per cent of the NI steer kill, up 1.2 percentage points from year earlier levels.

While there was an increase in the proportion of these better grading carcases in the kill the proportion of O and P grading carcases recorded a decline. O grading carcases accounted for 35 per cent of the price reported steer kill during the final quarter of 2018 while P grading carcases accounted for 9.6 per cent. These were back from 35.7 per cent and 11.7 per cent respectively during the corresponding period in 2017.

A similar trend can be observed in the price reported heifer kill as outlined in Table 2. During the final quarter of 2018 U grading heifers accounted for 17.3 per cent of the kill while R grading heifers accounted for 44.1 per cent of the kill. This compares to 17 per cent and 43.2 per cent respectively in the same period in 2017. The proportion of O grading heifers in the slaughter mix decreased fractionally to 32.6 per cent while the proportion of P grading heifers was back by 1.2 per centage points to 5.8 per cent in the 2018 period.

There has been an increase in the proportion of young bulls in the NI slaughter mix during the final quarter of 2018 with a larger proportion of these young bulls being sourced from the suckler herd than in previous years. This will have been one factor behind the improvement in the conformation scores achieved.

During the 2018 period U grading carcases accounted for 19 per cent of the price reported young bull kill, up from 18.4 per cent of the kill in the same period in 2017. There was a notable increase in the proportion of young bulls awarded an R grade, up from 25.8 per cent in the 2017 period to 28.3 per cent in the 2018 period. Meanwhile the proportion of O grading carcases increased to 33.3 per cent while the proportion of P grading carcases declined to 17.8 per cent.

WEEKLY BEEF & LAMB MARKETS

LMC

CATTLE TRADE

NI FACTORY BASE QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 21/01/19	Next Week 28/01/19
Prime		
U-3	336 - 346p	338 - 346p
R-3	330 - 340p	332 - 340p
O+3	324 - 334p	326 - 334p
P+3	278 - 294p	280 - 294p
	Including bonus where applicable	
Cows		
O+3 & better	222 - 236p	222 - 240p
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 19/01/19	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	348.1	353.8	340.0
R3	345.0	346.6	333.7
O+3	337.7	337.4	331.2

*Prices exclude AA, HER and Organic cattle

REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

W/E 19/01/19	Wgt <220kg	Wgt 220-250kg	Wgt 250-280kg	Wgt >280kg
P1	131.9	145.4	160.0	166.6
P2	147.8	172.7	195.0	207.2
P3	161.5	195.9	208.4	215.1
O3	-	222.7	228.0	238.4
O4	-	-	243.4	239.2
R3	-	-	-	258.6

Deadweight Cattle Trade

THE deadweight cattle trade in NI has continued to hold steady with base quotes from the plants ending this week ranging from 336-346p/kg for in spec U-3 grade prime cattle. The majority of plants are quoting 342-344p/kg for steers and heifers with similar quotes expected for early next week. With the range of quotes available producers are encouraged to shop around to get the best possible deal. Quotes for good quality O+3 grading cows ended this week ranging from 222-240p/kg with similar quotes expected for early next week.

Prime cattle throughput in NI last week totalled 6,936 head, a slight increase from the previous week when prime cattle throughput totalled 6,798 head. In the same week in 2018 the prime cattle throughput in NI totalled 7,169 head. Cow throughput in NI last week totalled 2,125 an increase of 318 cows from the previous week. In the corresponding week in 2018 cow throughput in local plants totalled 2,272 head.

Imports of cattle from ROI for direct slaughter last week included 282 prime cattle and 106 cows with a further 37 prime cattle and 173 cows imported from GB. Meanwhile exports from NI to ROI for direct slaughter last week consisted of 15 prime cattle and 137 cows. A further 22 prime cattle and 16 cows were exported from NI to GB for direct slaughter last week.

The deadweight prime cattle trade in NI came under some pressure in NI last week. The average steer price increased marginally to 341.2p/kg however the R3 steer price was back 1.2p/kg to 349.1p/kg,. In the corresponding week in 2018 the R3 steer price was 361.8p/kg. The average heifer price in NI last week was back by almost a penny to 342.1p/kg while the R3 heifer price was back by a similar margin to 349p/kg. In the same week in 2018 the reported R3 heifer price was 359.2p/kg. The deadweight cow trade improved in NI last week with the average cow price increasing by a notable 10p/kg to 221.2p/kg while the O3 cow price increased by 6.1p/kg to 237.2p/kg.

The deadweight prime cattle trade in GB reported a mixed trade last week with the average steer price back by 1.1p/kg to 350.5p/kg while the R3 steer price was up half a penny to 359p/kg. The average heifer price in GB last week reported a decrease of 1.6p/kg to 351.1p/kg while the R3 heifer price in GB increased by the same margin to 359.9p/kg. In the corresponding week in 2018 both the reported GB R3 steer and heifer price was 369.5p/kg. The O3 cow price last week in GB increased by 2.2p/kg to 235.1p/kg when compared to the previous week.

In ROI last week the R3 steer price was the equivalent of 327.8p/kg. This was back 3.9p/kg from the previous week. The R3 heifer price in ROI last week was 338.2p/kg, back 5.1p/kg from the previous week and 10.8p/kg below the R3 heifer price in NI. In the corresponding week in 2018 the reported ROI R3 steer price was the equivalent of 347.6p/kg with the R3 heifer price 360p/kg. The O3 cow price in ROI last week was the equivalent of 239.9p/kg, 2.7p/kg higher than the O3 cow price in NI.

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

W/E 19/01/19		Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	349.0	335.1	364.4	361.1	360.6	361.6	361.8
	R3	349.1	327.8	362.5	361.2	355.1	359.2	359.0
	R4	349.0	329.4	365.7	369.1	355.3	354.8	362.9
	O3	340.3	313.8	344.5	336.4	330.1	332.4	335.7
	AVG	341.2	-	361.7	354.7	341.3	343.7	350.5
Heifers	U3	354.0	351.1	369.9	365.8	368.5	364.7	367.5
	R3	349.0	338.2	362.6	362.9	357.1	358.9	359.9
	R4	348.6	340.0	365.6	361.2	358.3	354.7	360.5
	O3	342.0	324.1	352.3	340.4	328.7	333.7	338.5
	AVG	342.1	-	363.7	354.3	343.8	339.9	351.1
Young Bulls	U3	340.0	322.2	354.4	356.0	333.7	356.0	346.9
	R3	334.0	313.7	352.1	347.1	338.7	343.1	345.0
	O3	322.9	298.3	319.9	310.9	310.6	301.9	311.4
	AVG	322.5	-	341.3	326.9	314.7	306.7	321.2
Prime Cattle Price Reported		5,894	-	6,993	7,195	7,562	4,682	26,432
Cows	O3	237.2	239.9	228.0	233.0	240.9	228.6	235.1
	O4	239.4	241.0	232.2	235.3	238.7	228.1	234.8
	P2	197.6	211.8	182.5	185.3	192.3	184.3	187.8
	P3	213.2	228.7	201.0	199.2	215.2	208.9	209.3
	AVG	221.2	-	221.9	218.6	211.6	198.0	211.8

Notes:
(i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=88.65p 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 19/01/19	From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
Finished Cattle (p/kg)						
Steers	200	212	205	170	197	185
Friesians	158	160	159	153	155	154
Heifers	200	213	206	175	199	185
Beef Cows	141	195	155	118	139	128
Dairy Cows	98	118	104	70	97	85
Store Cattle (p/kg)						
Bullocks up to 400kg	230	271	240	210	229	215
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg	220	254	230	200	219	208
Bullocks over 500kg	200	212	205	176	199	190
Heifers up to 450kg	220	276	235	195	219	205
Heifers over 450kg	200	226	210	175	199	185
Dropped Calves (£/head)						
Continental Bulls	360	460	400	250	355	300
Continental Heifers	285	345	310	150	280	210
Friesian Bulls	130	180	168	35	125	80
Holstein Bulls	80	180	125	5	75	40

SHEEP TRADE

SHEEP BASE QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 21/01/19	Next Week 28/01/19
Hoggets> 22kg	425-435p	430-445p

REPORTED SHEEP PRICES

(P/KG)	W/E 05/01/19	W/E 12/01/19	W/E 19/01/19
NI L/W Hoggets	394.3	399.0	403.2
NI D/W Hoggets	413.6	429.8	425.4
GB D/W Hoggets	431.8	433.2	431.7
ROI D/W	431.5	432.0	434.5

Deadweight Sheep Trade

BASE quotes from the major processing plants in NI ranged from 425-435p/kg up to 22kg this week. Quotes for early next week are expected to range from 430-445p/kg up to 22kg. Throughput decreased last week with 6,273 hoggets killed across local plants, back 1,375 head from the previous week. In the corresponding week in 2018 hogget throughput totalled 7,119 head in local plants. Hogget exports to ROI last week for direct slaughter totalled 8,618 head, up 106 head from the previous week. The deadweight NI hogget price was back by 4.4p/kg last week to 425.4p/kg while the liveweight NI hogget price increased 4.2p/kg to 403.2p/kg. In the corresponding week in 2018 the NI deadweight hogget price was 407.2p/kg, with the liveweight hogget price reported at 365.8p/kg.

This week's marts

THE liveweight trade has continued to firm with smaller numbers of sheep passing through the sale rings during the week primarily due to the poor weather conditions across the province. In Massereene on Monday 729 hoggets sold from 390-440p/kg compared to 712 hoggets last week selling from 390-420p/kg. In Saintfield this week 630 hoggets sold from 400-453p/kg compared to 701 hoggets last week selling from 390-461p/kg. In Ballymena this week 1,193 hoggets sold from 370-422p/kg (avg 396p/kg) compared to 1,966 hoggets last week selling from 370-435p/kg (avg 388p/kg). A firm trade for well fleshed ewes has been reported across the marts with top recorded prices generally ranging from £90-110.

LATEST SHEEP MARTS

From: 18/01/19		Hoggets (P/KG LW)			
To: 24/01/19		No	From	To	Avg
Friday	Newtownstewart	180	356	436	-
Saturday	Swatragh	750	370	478	-
	Omagh	984	408	457	-
Monday	Massereene	729	390	440	-
	Kilrea	400	399	421	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	630	400	453	-
	Rathfriland	443	389	471	405
Wednesday	Ballymena	1193	370	422	396
	Enniskillen	398	388	458	-
	Armoy	444	390	428	-
	Markethill	1085	410	464	-

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