

CALF BIRTH REGISTRATIONS INCREASE

Between January and October 2020 there were 454,031 calves registered in NI, a slight increase from the 451,786 calves registered during the corresponding ten month period in 2019.

During 2020 to date 70 per cent of the calves registered in Northern Ireland were beef sired while the remaining 30 per cent were dairy sired. This has changed slightly from 69 per cent and 31 per cent respectively during the same period last year.

Beef sired calf registrations

During 2020 to date there have been 319,122 beef sired calves registered in NI, up 5,858 head or two per cent from the same period last year.

Beef sired calf registrations to suckler cows increased by 3,024 head from the same period in 2019 and accounted for 68 per cent of all beef sired calf

registrations. The remaining 32 per cent of beef sired calf registrations were to dairy cows and these increased by 1,862 head during 2020 to date.

Limousin continues to be the most popular beef sire used in NI and has accounted for 25.3 per cent of registrations during 2020 to date. This is back slightly from 25.9 per cent in the same period in 2019.

Aberdeen Angus is the second most popular beef sire used in NI and has accounted for 24.4 per cent of registrations during 2020 to date with a total of 77,789 calves registered. This is up from 23 per cent of registrations in the 2019 period when there was 71,242 Aberdeen Angus calves registered in the region.

Charolais was the third most commonly registered calf in NI during the first ten months of 2020 with 71,686 calves

registered. These accounted for 22.5 per cent of overall beef sired calf registrations, back slightly from 23 per cent in the same period in 2019.

Dairy sired calf registrations

During 2020 to date there were 134,919 dairy sired calves registered in NI and 63 per cent of these were female calves. In the same period in 2019 there were 138,522 dairy sired calves registered and 58 per cent of these were female. This data indicates a growing proportion of dairy sired heifer calves being registered, potentially as a result of better results from sexed semen. This progress has allowed a greater proportion of dairy cows to be served using a beef bull.

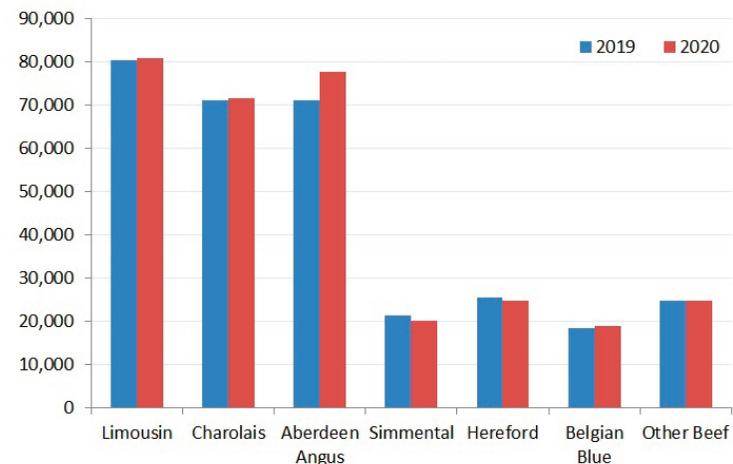
During 2020 to date there have been 50,847 dairy sired male calves registered in NI, back by 12 per cent from the 58,066 calves registered in the same period in 2019.

Calf exports

There has been a significant reduction in the number of calves being exported out of NI for further production. The latest figures from APHIS indicate that 5,014 calves have been exported out of

the region during 2020 to date, a notable decline from the 11,109 calves exported during the same period in 2019.

Figure 1: Beef sired calf registrations by breed January to October 2019 and 2020. Source: APHIS



NI RETAIL BEEF SALES REPORT

The latest available retail sales data for beef in NI have indicated a 7.3 per cent increase in the value of retail beef sales to £25.7 million during the 12 w/e 06 September 2020 when compared to the same period in 2019. This is according to the latest available data from Kantar World panel, a world leading data, insights and consulting company.

The increase in the value of beef sales may be attributed to the strong increase in volume sales, which were up 8.1 per cent from 2019 levels to total 3,320 tonnes. This growth in volume sales has been driven by the increase in the number of consumers eating at home and will also have been encouraged by the slight decline in the average retail price of beef by 6p/kg to £7.75/kg

Overall there has been an increase in individual consumer spend on beef to £47/head during the 2020 period 2020, up £4 or nine per cent from the 12 weeks ending 08 September 2019. Most of the beef cut categories showed an improved sales performance in terms of both volume sales and value sales in NI during the 12 weeks ending 06 September 2020 when compared to the corresponding time period last year.

The greatest percentage increase in terms of volume sales for individual beef cuts were recorded in the stewing, frying/grilling steaks and roasting beef categories while some lower level growth was recorded in the volume sales of mince.

Image 1: Retail beef sales have performed strongly in the 12 w/e 06 Sept 2020



Stewing beef sales were up over 25 per cent in volume terms during the 12 weeks ending 06 September 2020 from the same time period in 2019. The value of stewing steak sales recorded a strong increase of almost 30 per cent in this period from year earlier levels. This was driven by the increase in volume sales and an increase in the average retail price of over three per cent.

Volume sales of frying/grilling steaks were up over 23 per cent in the 12 weeks ending 06 September 2020 from the same 12 week period last year. Strong promotional activity by some of major retailers contributed to the six per cent reduction in the average retail price. This reduced retail price combined with more people eating at home due to Covid-19 restrictions contributed to a 15 per cent increase in the value of steak sales in the 12 week period ending 06 September 2020 when compared to the same period in 2019.

Roasting beef has also performed strongly in volume terms with volume sales increasing by 12.5 per cent during the 12 weeks ending 06 September 2020. However this increase in volume sales has been largely offset by a 14.2 per cent decrease in the average retail price which resulted in a 3.4 per cent decrease in the overall value of sales to £3.1 million.

During the 12 w/e 06 September 2020 beef mince sales in Northern Ireland totalled 1,464 tonnes which accounted for 44 per cent of total retail beef sales in the region. Volume sales of mince increased by four per cent or 60 tonnes from the corresponding period in 2019. This increase in the volume of mince sales combined with a 13p/kg increase in the average retail price to £5.67/kg contributed to a 6.7 per cent increase in the overall value of mince sales. The total value of mince sales in Northern Ireland was £8.3 million during the 12 w/e 06 September 2020.

NI COW TRADE UNDER PRESSURE

The deadweight cow trade in NI has come under some pressure this week in response to weaker demand for cow beef from the EU market in particular due to the impacts of Covid 19 restrictions on the foodservice sector.

Local plants are quoting 245-260p/kg this week for O+3 grading cows compared to 260-280p/kg early last week. Cow supplies for slaughter have remained firm with 2,664 cows processed locally last week, the highest weekly throughput since October 2019.

The deadweight trade for cows in NI remains ahead of the trade in GB and ROI as outlined in **Figure 2**. The O3 cow price in NI was up 1.7p/kg to 277.5p/kg last week however reported prices for

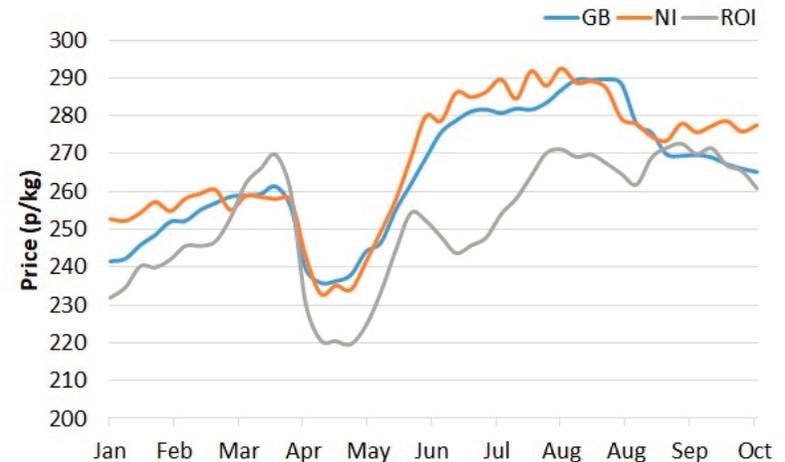
this week are expected to record a notable decline when they become available next week.

The cow trade has also come under pressure in GB this week in response to the weaker demand for cow beef. The O3 cow price in GB last week was back by a penny to 265.1p/kg which places it 12.4p/kg behind the trade in NI. The O3 cow price was back in almost all of the GB regions last week with the strongest decline in the Midlands where it came back 2.5p/kg to 265.7p/kg.

In ROI the O3 cow price has continued to come under pressure with reported prices last week back the equivalent of 5p/kg to 260.8p/kg which places it 16.7p/kg behind the O3 price in NI.

Figure 2: O3 cow prices in GB, NI and ROI during 2020 to date (p/kg).

Source: LMC/DAFM/AHDB



FQAS Helpline

If you have had a recent inspection and need help and advice to rectify any non-conformances, contact the FQAS helpline:
Tel: 028 9263 3024

Answerphone Service

Factory Quotes & Mart Results
Updated 5pm Daily
Tel: 028 9263 3011

Text Service

Free weekly price quotes sent to your mobile phone
Email - bulletin@lmcni.com
Tel: 028 9263 3000

WEEKLY BEEF & LAMB MARKETS

CATTLE TRADE

NI FACTORY BASE QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 02/11/20	Next Week 09/11/20
Prime		
U-3	356 - 362p	358 - 366p
R-3	350 - 356p	352 - 360p
O+3	344 - 350p	346 - 354p
P+3	294 - 304p	296 - 308p
	Including bonus where applicable	
Cows		
O+3 & better	245 - 270p	245 - 260p
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.

Deadweight Cattle Trade

Base quotes from the major NI processing plants have slightly firmed this week with quotes ranging from 356-362p/kg for in spec U-3 grade prime cattle. Quotes for next week are expected to range from 358-366p/kg. Quotes for good quality O+3 grade cows came under some pressure and ended this week ranging from 245-260p/kg with similar quotes expected early next week.

Prime cattle throughput in local plants totalled 7,553 head last week, up 135 head from the previous week. Throughput of prime cattle has totalled 286,898 head for 2020 to date, a two per cent decrease on the corresponding period in 2019 when 293,057 prime cattle were processed locally. Cow throughput in local plants last week totalled 2,664 head, up slightly from the previous week. This brings the total cow throughput in 2020 to 84,959 cows, a three per cent increase when compared to the same period in 2019.

Imports from ROI for direct slaughter last week included 235 prime cattle and 83 cows. This brings the total prime cattle imports from ROI for direct slaughter in 2020 to 12,671 head, an increase of 3,720 head when compared to the same period in 2019. Meanwhile exports from NI for direct slaughter in ROI last week consisted of 85 cows. This brings the total prime cattle exports from NI to ROI for direct slaughter to 232 head during 2020 to date, a decrease of 459 head when compared to the corresponding period in 2019.

The average steer price in NI last week was up 1.3p/kg to 360.4p/kg while the R3 steer price was up by 2.3p/kg to 369.6p/kg. The average NI heifer price last week increased by 2.3p/kg to 362.9p/kg while the R3 heifer price held steady from the previous week at 369.6p/kg. The average young bull price in NI decreased by 2.8p/kg to 344.9p/kg with R3 young bull prices back half a penny from last week to 357p/kg. Meanwhile last week the O3 cow price in NI reported an increase of 1.7p/kg to 277.5p/kg with the average cow price increasing by 2.8p/kg to 249.9p/kg.

The average steer price in GB last week held steady from the previous week at 368.3p/kg while the R3 steer price increased by 1.4p/kg to 376.3p/kg. There was some variation across the regions with R3 steer prices increasing in Scotland (+2.8p/kg), Northern England (+2.3p/kg) and the Midlands and Wales (+3.6p/kg) while a decline was reported in Southern England (-2.2p/kg). The average heifer price in GB last week generally held steady from the previous week at 367.7p/kg while the R3 heifer price increased by almost 2p/kg to 376.2p/kg. Across the regions the R3 heifer price reported the strongest increase of 6.4p/kg in Scotland, with Northern England and the Midlands both reporting increases of just over 1p/kg from the previous week.

In ROI last week the R3 steer price was back by just under a penny to the equivalent of 328.2p/kg from the previous week. This is 41.4p/kg below the R3 steer price in NI last week. The R3 heifer price in ROI held steady from the previous week with an equivalent price of 332.4p/kg, 37.2p/kg below the R3 heifer price in NI last week.

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

	W/E 31/10/20	Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	368.5	337.4	385.7	376.4	379.7	378.9	380.8
	R3	369.6	328.2	389.1	377.1	373.7	367.4	376.3
	R4	364.5	327.1	387.7	385.3	371.9	369.3	382.5
	O3	357.8	310.4	370.9	356.0	349.7	347.6	353.2
	AVG	360.4	-	382.9	370.0	362.3	356.9	368.3
Heifers	U3	374.0	343.0	391.7	377.2	385.5	375.8	384.1
	R3	369.6	332.4	389.5	375.3	375.2	366.9	376.2
	R4	366.7	331.7	388.6	378.2	374.5	366.3	379.9
	O3	358.1	320.7	367.0	358.1	349.9	347.9	352.5
	AVG	362.9	-	385.0	369.2	360.9	353.2	367.7
Young Bulls	U3	361.2	323.9	379.2	360.5	364.3	370.9	370.1
	R3	357.0	314.9	374.6	366.8	359.9	364.0	365.5
	O3	342.2	298.5	346.1	331.4	338.8	325.4	337.1
	AVG	344.9	-	362.0	351.3	353.7	332.9	353.6
Prime Cattle Price Reported	6,307	-	6,441	6,518	7,954	4,826	25,739	
Cows	O3	277.5	260.8	268.4	265.6	265.7	260.8	265.1
	O4	278.0	261.4	270.2	265.4	263.8	257.0	264.0
	P2	238.6	228.0	233.2	221.6	226.5	223.6	225.4
	P3	258.6	249.7	238.9	234.1	238.1	235.2	236.9
	AVG	249.9	-	260.1	243.2	234.8	226.5	237.8

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=90.56p 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

REPORTED NI CATTLE PRICES - P/KG

W/E 31/10/20	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	368.2	373.7	361.4
R3	365.0	368.2	357.4
O+3	359.2	358.2	347.8

*Prices exclude AA, HER and Organic cattle

REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

W/E 31/10/20	Weight Bands			
	<220kg	220-250kg	250-280kg	>280kg
P1	168.2	183.8	192.3	206.0
P2	190.6	216.9	233.8	249.9
P3	210.0	237.0	254.3	260.0
O3	-	260.1	276.5	277.7
O4	-	270.0	268.4	278.5
R3	-	-	-	294.7

LATEST LIVEWEIGHT CATTLE MART PRICES NI

	W/E 31/10/20	1st QUALITY			2nd QUALITY		
		From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
Finished Cattle (p/kg)							
Steers		224	243	230	200	223	212
Friesians		168	183	175	128	163	149
Heifers		210	226	217	190	209	200
Beef Cows		175	204	181	135	174	150
Dairy Cows		123	152	129	105	122	112
Store Cattle (p/kg)							
Bullocks up to 400kg		230	274	247	200	229	215
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg		220	238	230	200	219	210
Bullocks over 500kg		205	219	212	170	204	190
Heifers up to 450kg		230	266	240	190	229	210
Heifers over 450kg		220	254	230	185	219	200
Dropped Calves (£/head)							
Continental Bulls		380	500	440	270	370	320
Continental Heifers		340	440	385	235	335	280
Friesian Bulls		180	285	200	100	175	130
Holstein Bulls		90	145	120	30	85	55

SHEEP TRADE

NI SHEEP BASE QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 02/11/20	Next Week 09/11/20
Lambs up to 21kg	435 - 445p	440 - 445p

REPORTED SHEEP PRICES

(P/KG)	W/E 17/10/20	W/E 24/10/20	W/E 31/10/20
NI L/W Lambs	399.2	398.2	402.5
NI D/W Lambs	423.2	429.3	430.2
GB D/W Lambs	441.6	441.1	436.1
ROI D/W	444.4	445.1	443.2

Deadweight Sheep Trade

Quotes from local processors started this week ranging from 435-445p/kg for R3 grading lambs up to 21kg. Base quotes for next week are expected to firm slightly to 440-445p/kg up to 21kg. There were 10,220 lambs processed in local plants last week, back 563 head from the previous week. Throughput of hoggets/lambs during 2020 to date totalled 364,253 head, a 13 per cent increase on the same period in 2019 when 322,276 hoggets/lambs were processed locally. Lamb exports to ROI for direct slaughter came back last week by 1,914 lambs to 5,472 head. This takes the total lamb/hogget exports for the year to date to 254,306 head, a three per cent decrease when compared to 262,322 lambs/hoggets in 2019. The deadweight lamb price in NI last week increased by almost 1p/kg to 430.2p/kg.

Liveweight Sheep Trade

Smaller numbers of lambs passed through many of the sale rings this week. In Omagh last Saturday 643 lambs sold from 401-489p/kg compared to the previous week when 862 lambs sold from 406-476p/kg. On Monday in Massereene 660 fat lambs sold from 395-415p/kg compared to 755 lambs last week selling from 395-418p/kg. In Rathfriland on Tuesday a slightly firmer trade of 444 lambs sold from 400-480p/kg (avg 421p/kg) compared to 724 lambs last week selling from 384-481p/kg (avg 415p/kg). In Ballymena this week 1,540 lambs sold to an average of 392p/kg compared to 2,100 lambs last week selling to an average of 395p/kg. Top reported prices for cull ewes of over £100 were reported across many of the marts.

LATEST SHEEP MARTS (P/KG LW)

From: 31/10/20		Lambs			
To: 05/11/20		No	From	To	Avg
Saturday	Omagh	643	401	489	-
	Swatragh	800	395	460	-
Monday	Massereene	660	395	415	-
	Kilrea	450	396	452	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	555	390	470	-
	Rathfriland	444	400	480	421
Wednesday	Ballymena	1540	350	462	392
	Enniskillen	676	385	466	-
	Armoy	285	380	410	-
	Markethill	670	400	436	-

Strict Covid - 19 restrictions are in place across all of the livestock marts

Information supplied by LMC / DAERA/ AHDB/ DAFM

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SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR 24 MONTH CALF TO BEEF SYSTEMS



Seamus McMenamin, Economist with the Livestock and Meat Commission for Northern Ireland (LMC), was one of the speakers taking part in the recent series of CAFRE/Teagasc calf to beef webinars. He believes that beef from the dairy herd has a lot to offer the livestock sector moving forward.

He commented: "Cattle sourced from the dairy herd now accounts for 40 per cent of the total prime kill in Northern

Ireland. And it's very likely this figure will increase further. Milk producers are now using sexed semen on both heifers and cows which means they need less breeding animals to get the replacement heifers they require. This gives them a greater scope to use a beef-bred bull or beef semen as part of their overall breeding plans."

Seamus continued: "Steers and beef bred heifers from the dairy herd tend to kill out between 280-400kgs. This aligns them perfectly with the carcass weights that processors need to meet their supply contracts with major retail and foodservice customers.

Achieving better conformation scores, though, is the big challenge in order to add further value to beef cattle sourced from the dairy herd. To achieve this there is an obvious need for milk producers to use better beef genetics on their dairy cows and strongly

consider the use of proven AI sires."

Seamus went on to confirm that significant numbers of Aberdeen Angus and Hereford cross cattle are now coming from dairy herds. During 2020 to date Aberdeen Angus and Hereford cattle have accounted for more than 25 per cent of prime cattle throughput in local price reporting plants.

He said: "This reflects the value of the beef quality schemes that are linked to both these native breeds. "I thought the numbers of native bred cattle would have 'maxed out' five or six years ago but this has proven not to be the case with demand for both Aberdeen Angus and Hereford beef continuing to increase."

LMC Chief Executive Ian Stevenson highlights that all steps taken to lower the slaughter age of cattle will help reduce the Carbon Footprint of the beef

sector as a whole. "Responding to the challenge of the environment in a positive and proactive manner will be a critical factor in developing a sustainable future for the NI beef sector. It is also important for farmers

to be fully supported in ways that will make this happen." Ian highlighted the ongoing calf to beef development work at both CAFRE and Teagasc, citing the key role that improved grassland management will make in this context.

Image 1: A growing proportion of the NI cattle kill is sourced from the dairy herd and these largely meet the specifications of major retail customers.



HELPING TO IMPROVE FARM HEALTH AND SAFETY STANDARDS REMAINS AN LMC PRIORITY

LMC is a fully committed affiliate member of Northern Ireland's Farm Safety Partnership (FSP). According to LMC Chief Executive Ian Stevenson, the work to improve farm safety standards must remain a priority for all stakeholders working to improve the sustainability of local agriculture.

"LMC has been an affiliate member of FSP since 2016. It was an obvious step to take at that stage given LMC's longstanding commitment to advocate for the highest possible health and safety standards on our farms. This commitment has always recognised the importance of improving physical safety standards while also fully mindful of farmers' mental health and wellbeing."

In compliance with its affiliate membership obligations, LMC has recently updated FSP with the health and safety related activities it has undertaken during 2019/20. These include the distribution of free, high-viz vests to children visiting Balmoral Show in 2019. These can be worn on-farm, while travelling to school or at any other location, where they might not be seen.

Communication of the farm safety message throughout 2019/20 was an important activity for LMC with a number of press releases issued to remind farmers that farm safety needs to be part of their focus all year round and not just for Farm Safety Week.



Ian Stevenson added: "In October 2019 LMC was one of the key sponsors of the Resilient Farmer Tour when Doug Avery came to NI. Four well attended public meetings were held at venues across NI with the aim of inspiring members of the farming community to change their approach to their business and personal life. Feedback from these events was extremely positive.

"Covid 19 has impacted on every aspect of life here in NI. LMC very quickly recognised the age and risk profile of its FQAS members and took the decision to suspend all on farm FQAS inspections from 18 March to 07 June this year, in order to protect the health and safety of farmers and inspectors. During this time a Covid-19 protocol for safely resuming on farm inspections on 08 June 2020 was developed and agreed with industry. NIFCC inspectors were also trained to carry out FQAS farm assessments remotely using technology where farmers had any concerns."

During the last year LMC has significantly upped its presence on its social media platforms using Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube to communicate important messages to industry stakeholders, consumers and wider society.

Looking to the future, Ian Stevenson confirmed that LMC's work will help to address objectives in the Farm Safety Partnership's Action Plan for 2020-2023 including the key areas of occupational health, mental health and wellbeing. "Farmers often feel pressure from multiple angles with concerns about Brexit and Covid-19 being to the fore currently, but they also have to deal with pressures of farm incomes, farm inspections, dealing with adverse weather and animal health challenges to name but a few.

Hearing misinformation about the industry being communicated in the media, challenges to the livestock industry from climate change activist groups, the anti-meat lobby and vegan activist groups all provide unwelcome background noise and pressure.

LMC will continue to focus its attention on positive work that is being done by industry to help change the narrative and promote the significant contribution made by the Northern Ireland agri-food industry to the economy, society and the environment."

COOKERY DEMONSTRATIONS GET A BIG 'THUMBS-UP'

LMC has received some tremendously positive feedback from schools across Northern Ireland in response to the their amended cookery demonstrations. The new protocol was introduced at the beginning of the current school year in response to the Covid-19 procedures now operating in all schools.

LMC Education and Consumer Promotions' Manager, Lauren Hyde said "The LMC cookery demonstration protocol allows demonstrators to continue to conduct an entire NIFQA beef and lamb cookery demonstrations from start to finish while the students observe in a socially distanced setting. Demonstrators wear PPE throughout the demonstration which has provided confidence to schools in allowing the team on site.

Lauren continued: "Practical cookery classes are extremely limited, or in most cases unable to take place because of Covid-19 measures, therefore highlighting the asset that LMC cookery demonstrations are to pupils and teachers in NI right now, as they always have been. Demonstrations can be targeted to different age groups from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 5 and across a range of courses from Food Science, Hospitality, Childcare and Agriculture."

We have carried out over 80 school cookery demonstrations from mid-September until the half term break, and demand is high with another 130 booked between November and the end of term."



Lauren pointed out that the demonstrations encourage students to go home and practice cookery skills they are learning about in the classroom, in preparation for practical examinations which will take place next year. Each demonstration gives the students a full appreciation of an entire cookery procedure from conception through to completion. Students are provided with recipe books that complement the additional resources on www.food4life.org.uk.

Lauren commented "Teachers across Northern Ireland have become fully aware of this reality and, as a consequence, we fully expect that demand for LMC school cookery demonstration will continue to grow. The team are working to continue supporting Food Teachers across NI at this challenging time."



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