

GREATER LAMB THROUGHPUT AND STRONGER PRICES DURING MAY 2021

Table 1 outlines the key performance indicators for Northern Ireland's sheep industry during May 2021 relative to the same period in 2020. The figures indicate the sheep trade remains well ahead of 2020 with higher throughput and stronger prices reported.

Deadweight Prices

The average deadweight lamb price in Northern Ireland during May 2021 was 625.8p/kg, an increase of 131.6p/kg from May 2020 when the average deadweight price was 494.2p/kg. This equates to a 26.6 per cent increase year on year or £28 increase in the value of a 21kg lamb carcase.

Meanwhile the average liveweight price of lambs in NI also increased by over 20 per cent or 98.2p/kg during May 2021 when compared to the relative period in 2020.

The average deadweight lamb price in Great Britain during May 2021 was 662.3p/kg which is up 170.9p/kg from May 2020 when the price was 491.4p/kg. This brings the differential between NI and GB to 36.5p/kg which equates to £8 on a 21kg lamb carcase.

The Republic of Ireland also reported an increase in the average deadweight lamb price, up by the equivalent of 155.8p/kg to 653.4p/kg in May 2021. This equates to an increase of 31.3 per cent year on year. The differential in deadweight lamb price between ROI and NI during May 2021 was 27.6p/kg equating to a difference of £6 on a 21kg carcase.

Throughput

Lamb throughput in Northern Ireland during May 2021 totalled 26,268 head, up 3,428 head or 15 per cent

from 2020 figures. Meanwhile ewe and ram throughput increased by a proportionally larger 35.2 per cent year on year.

Carcase Weights

Lamb and hogget carcase weights during May 2021 remained at similar levels to May 2020 with an average carcase weight of 21.5kg. However the average ewe and ram carcase weight decreased by 1.8kg to average 29.1kg during May 2021.

Imports/Exports

No Sheep were imported in to NI during May 2021 or May 2020. Meanwhile, exports from NI of sheep for direct slaughter totalled 18,056 head during May 2021 with 86 per cent of exports going to ROI and the remaining 14 per cent making the journey to GB. Exports are up 330 head or almost two per cent from the relative period in 2020.

Table 1: Northern Ireland Sheep Market key performance indicators May 2021 and 2020 (weeks 5-8). Source: DAERA/DAFM/AHDB

	May 2020	May 2021	% Change
Sheep Prices (p/kg)			
Average Deadweight Price NI	494.2	625.8	+26.6%
Average Liveweight Price NI	485.7	583.9	+20.2%
Average Deadweight Price GB	491.4	662.3	+34.8%
Average Deadweight Price ROI	497.6	653.4	+31.3%
NI Throughput			
Total Hoggets & Lambs Slaughtering (Head)	22,840	26,268	+15.0%
Total Ewes & Rams Slaughtering (Head)	1,640	2,217	+35.2%
Average Hogget & Lambs Carcase Weight (kg)	21.4	21.5	+0.4%
Average Ewe & Rams Carcase Weight (kg)	30.9	29.1	-5.8%
Trade (Head)			
Live Imports for Direct Slaughter	-	-	-
Live Exports for Direct Slaughter	17,726	18,056	+1.9%
Euro / Stg Exchange Rate (€ / £)	88.7	86.3	-2.1%
All NI Figures Unless Otherwise Stated			

NI DEADWEIGHT CATTLE TRADE UPDATE

Base quotes from the major beef processing plants in NI this week were in the range of 362-380p/kg for in spec U-3 grading prime cattle with the majority of plants quoting towards the upper end of this range. Producers should use these quotes as a starting point for negotiation with higher prices available, particularly for cattle that meet current market specifications.

Deadweight cattle price reporting had indicated some downward movement in R3 steer prices in

recent weeks however last weeks price has increased from the previous week as outlined in **Figure 1**. The R3 steer price last week in NI was 388p/kg up marginally from the previous week.

The deadweight cattle trade continues well ahead of previous years with last weeks R3 steer price 33.3p/kg ahead of the corresponding week in 2020 when the price was 354.7p/kg. This equates to an additional £117 on a 350kg steer carcass.

Meanwhile last weeks R3 steer price was also 43.8p/kg ahead of the same week in 2019, equating to a £153 differential on a 350kg carcass.

Throughput

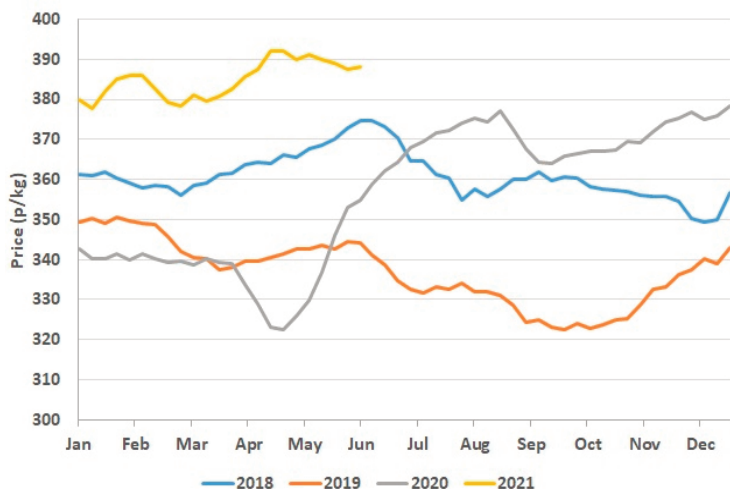
Last week there were 6,581 prime cattle killed in local beef processing plants. This takes prime cattle throughput during the last 12 weeks to 77,413 head, up 5.2 per cent or 3,854 head from the same period last year.

Imports/Exports

Imports of prime cattle to NI for direct slaughter totalled 338 head last week which takes the total imports during the last 12 weeks to 3,694 prime cattle with all these imports coming from ROI. This equates to an increase of 61.7 per cent relative to the corresponding period in 2020 when 2,284 prime cattle were imported to NI from GB and ROI.

Meanwhile exports of prime cattle out of NI to ROI and GB totalled 35 head last week which is back marginally from the previous week. This brings the total number of prime cattle exports to 286 head during the last 12 weeks in 2021, up 215 head year on year.

Figure 1. Weekly Northern Ireland R3 steer price during 2018-2021.
Source: LMC Deadweight Cattle Price Reporting



DECLINE IN LAMB THROUGHPUT IN ROI

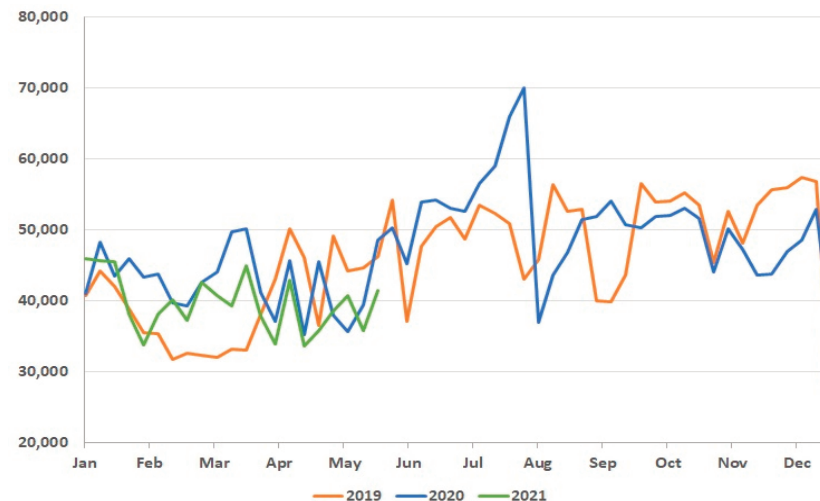
Lamb throughput in the Republic of Ireland totalled 41,375 head during the week ending 29 May 2021, up 5,558 head from the previous week. This takes the total lamb slaughterings in this region to 465,212 head during the 12 weeks ending 29 May 2021 as outlined in **Figure 2**. This is a decline of almost 10 per cent or 50,935 head from the corresponding 12 week period in 2020.

During the week ending 29 May 2021 there were 2,386 lambs exported from Northern Ireland to the Republic of Ireland for direct slaughter which is back just over

1,000 head from the previous week. This brings the total lamb exports for direct slaughter from NI to ROI in the 12 weeks ending 29 May 2021 to 35,591 head which is a 28.8 per cent decrease from the relative period in 2020. NI origin lambs accounted for 7.7 per cent of the total lamb throughput in ROI which is back slightly from 9.7 per cent during the corresponding period in 2020.

Exports of lambs from NI to ROI for direct slaughter provide a valuable outlet for the NI sheep sector while also supporting ROI processors to maintain plant throughput.

Figure 2. Weekly lamb and hogget throughput in ROI processing plants during 2019-2021. Source: DAFM



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WEEKLY BEEF & LAMB MARKETS



CATTLE TRADE

NI FACTORY BASE QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 07/06/21	Next Week 14/06/21
Prime		
U-3	362 - 380p	362 - 380p
R-3	356 - 374p	356 - 374p
O+3	350 - 368p	350 - 368p
P+3	296 - 318p	296 - 318p
	Including bonus where applicable	
Cows		
O+3	265 - 290p	265 - 290p

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 for in-spec U-3 grading steers and heifers ended this week ranging from 362-380p/kg. With a range in the base quotes available producers are encouraged to shop around for the best deal and to use these quotes as a starting point for negotiation. Quotes for O+3 grading cows this week held steady ranging from 265-290p/kg. Similar quotes are expected for all types of cattle early next week.

Last week 6,581 prime cattle were processed in NI beef processing plants back just over 400 head from the 6,982 prime cattle processed during the previous week. This is also a decline from the same week last year when 6,748 prime cattle were processed locally. Cow throughput also decreased last week with 1,649 cows processed in local plants. This was back from the 1,959 cows processed during the previous week and also a decrease from the 1,878 cows processed in the same week in 2020.

Imports from ROI for direct slaughter in local plants last week consisted of 338 prime cattle and 109 cows with no cattle imported from GB for direct slaughter locally. Meanwhile exports of cattle out of NI for direct slaughter last week continued to run at low levels with one steer and 44 cows exported to ROI and a further 34 prime cattle and five cows exported to GB for direct slaughter.

The NI deadweight prime cattle trade last week reported improvements from the previous week across the majority of grades. The average NI steer price last week increased by 0.6p/kg to 379.5p/kg while the R3 steer price was up by a similar margin to 388p/kg. The average NI heifer price last week increased by 1.8p/kg to 381.6p/kg while the R3 heifer price was up just over 3p/kg to 390.4p/kg. The average young bull price in NI last week increased by 1.8p/kg to 370.1p/kg while the R3 young bull price was up half a penny to 378.6p/kg. The NI cow trade also improved last week from the previous week with the average cow price up by a penny to 280.5p/kg and the O3 cow price increasing by 1.7p/kg to 300.3p/kg.

The deadweight trade for prime cattle in GB continued to come under pressure last week. The average GB steer price last week was back by 2.5p/kg to 392.4p/kg while the average R3 steer price reported a decrease of 0.7p/kg to 398.1p/kg. The differential between NI and the GB R3 steer price last week narrowed from the previous week to just over 10p/kg. The average heifer price in GB last week was 392p/kg, back 1.6p/kg while the R3 heifer price decreased by almost a penny from the previous week to 397.9p/kg. This puts the R3 heifer price in GB at 7.5p/kg above NI levels. The average cow price in GB increased by 2.8p/kg to 280p/kg last week, however the O3 cow price in GB declined by just over a penny from the previous week to 301.2p/kg.

In ROI last week the R3 steer price was marginally back from the previous week to the equivalent of 357.6p/kg while the R3 heifer price held steady at the equivalent of 360.8p/kg. Meanwhile last week the O3 cow price was the equivalent of 283.6p/kg back 2p/kg from the previous week and 16.7p/kg below the same price in NI.

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

	W/E 05/06/21	Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	389.5	367.4	414.0	401.7	399.5	397.4	404.7
	R3	388.0	357.6	412.7	397.7	394.7	387.8	398.1
	R4	386.9	359.4	413.0	397.5	393.6	388.1	402.4
	O3	378.1	344.8	396.2	384.9	369.7	367.9	377.5
	AVG	379.5	-	409.3	391.7	384.0	380.6	392.4
Heifers	U3	390.9	371.8	419.2	406.8	404.7	397.1	408.2
	R3	390.4	360.8	414.5	399.9	393.3	386.4	397.9
	R4	386.7	361.8	414.7	400.7	393.2	385.3	402.0
	O3	379.9	350.6	392.2	387.7	372.1	370.0	379.6
	AVG	381.6	-	410.1	394.9	382.8	376.5	392.0
Young Bulls	U3	383.4	356.8	407.9	395.6	393.7	388.4	400.7
	R3	378.6	345.8	399.0	387.2	384.9	378.0	390.7
	O3	360.4	329.7	373.6	355.1	360.4	348.3	361.0
	AVG	370.1	-	399.1	382.4	375.9	371.6	384.7
Prime Cattle Price Reported	4812	-	6650	6247	6853	4194	23944	
Cows	O3	300.3	283.6	305.7	302.0	300.3	298.0	301.2
	O4	302.0	283.1	308.1	306.4	300.7	295.1	302.2
	P2	264.1	256.6	262.9	253.8	255.4	260.1	257.0
	P3	282.1	274.4	278.1	267.2	274.3	274.6	274.0
	AVG	280.5	-	304.8	287.2	272.8	272.0	280.0

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=86.01p 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 05/06/21	1st QUALITY			2nd QUALITY		
		From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
Finished Cattle (p/kg)							
Steers		239	250	244	205	238	220
Friesians		181	196	188	163	178	171
Heifers		217	238	225	200	216	208
Beef Cows		179	223	192	140	178	158
Dairy Cows		127	139	133	100	126	112
Store Cattle (p/kg)							
Bullocks up to 400kg		230	268	250	200	229	215
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg		220	251	230	195	219	207
Bullocks over 500kg		206	226	214	170	204	188
Heifers up to 450kg		223	260	240	200	222	210
Heifers over 450kg		200	215	210	175	199	185
Dropped Calves (£/head)							
Continental Bulls up to 2 months		400	510	440	300	395	350
Continental Heifers up to 2 months		340	480	400	225	335	275
Friesian Bulls		140	200	170	90	135	115
Holstein Bulls		120	180	145	4	115	60

REPORTED NI CATTLE PRICES - P/KG

W/E 05/06/21	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	389.7	392.0	383.3
R3	386.4	388.4	378.8
O+3	378.0	380.9	364.4

*Prices exclude AA, HER and Organic cattle

REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

W/E 05/06/21	Weight Bands			
	<220kg	220-250kg	250-280kg	>280kg
P1	181.0	204.5	222.2	229.8
P2	221.1	239.0	266.1	274.1
P3	250.7	267.6	280.6	283.6
O3	-	310.0	296.5	300.6
O4	-	287.9	308.4	301.6
R3	-	-	354.0	316.3

SHEEP TRADE

NI SHEEP BASE QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 07/06/21	Next Week 14/06/21
R3 Lambs up to 21kg	590 - 600p	580 - 590p

REPORTED SHEEP PRICES

(P/KG)	W/E 22/05/21	W/E 29/05/21	W/E 05/06/21
NI L/W Lambs	624.5	591.1	546.4
NI D/W Lambs	642.1	624.8	593.1
GB D/W Lambs	669.4	663.7	669.5
ROI D/W	660.5	654.4	633.0

Deadweight Sheep Trade

Quotes from the plants for R3 grading lambs ended this week ranging from 580-590p/kg up to 21kg. Lamb throughput in NI plants last week totalled 8,532 head. This is an increase from the previous week however it is a decline from the same week in 2020 when 8,801 lambs were processed locally. A further 2,122 lambs were exported to ROI for direct slaughter last week, back 264 head from the previous week. In the same week last year 4,716 lambs were exported to ROI for direct slaughter. Last week the average NI deadweight lamb price decreased by 31.7p/kg to 593.1p/kg. In the corresponding week last year the deadweight lamb price was 472.1p/kg. In ROI last week the average lamb price was the equivalent of 633p/kg, back 21.4p/kg from the previous week.

Liveweight Sheep Trade

This week a good trade was reported across the marts with steady numbers passing through many of the sale rings. On Monday in Kilrea 400 lambs sold from 555-595p/kg compared to 280 lambs last week selling from 548-591p/kg. On Tuesday in Saintfield 488 lambs sold from 545-580p/kg compared to 606 lambs selling from 545-625p/kg last week. In Rathfriland this week 516 lambs sold from 540-580p/kg (avg 553p/kg) compared to 518 lambs last week selling from 510-585p/kg (avg 540p/kg). On Wednesday in Markethill 720 lambs sold from 540-592p/kg compared to 882 lambs selling from 540-581p/kg last week. The strong trade continues for well fleshed cull ewes with top reported prices this week ranging from £160-£207.

LATEST SHEEP MARTS (P/KG LW)

From: 05/06/21		Lambs			
To: 10/06/21		No	From	To	Avg
Saturday	Omagh	557	539	582	-
	Swatragh	750	540	593	-
Monday	Kilrea	400	555	595	-
	Massereene	517	550	595	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	488	545	580	-
	Rathfriland	516	540	580	553
Wednesday	Ballymena	950	540	604	559
	Enniskillen	384	538	590	-
	Arroy	320	560	605	-
	Markethill	720	540	592	-

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