LMC
Livestock & Meat Commission

MONTHLY NEWS

Saturday 07 May 2022 Issue No. 0065

IT'S BUSINESS AS USUAL FOR LMC AT BALMORAL SHOW 2022

Normal service will be resumed 'in full' by the Livestock and Meat Commission (LMC) at Balmoral Show 2022. Commission Chief Executive Ian Stevenson takes up the story: "Our pavilion in the show grounds will be fully re-opened to our stakeholders and members of the public throughout the four days of the upcoming event. "Making a welcome return to Balmoral will be our team of demonstrators, who will be hosting beef and lamb cookery events from the Wednesday through to the Saturday. "These are extremely popular with visitors to the LMC pavilion. They help show case the provenance and quality of the beef and lamb that we produce here in Northern Ireland. "Covid-19 prevented us from interacting with consumers on a face-to-face basis. However, Balmoral 2022 is about to change all of that in a very meaningful and positive way."LMC board members and staff will be on the Commission stand throughout the show. According to Ian Stevenson, Balmoral provides the entire LMC team with a unique opportunity to communicate with farmers, supply chain participants and consumers in equal measure.

Image 1: A family pictured looking very content after visiting the LMC stand at Balmoral show last year!

"These objectives have been a priority in developing the exhibition that encapsulates our presence at Balmoral 2022," he said.

Ian continued: "The buzz surrounding this year's Balmoral Show is already tangible. It is that all-important shop window for farming and food in Northern Ireland. "Every facet of the farming and food chain throughout Northern Ireland, Great Britain and across many of our export destinations will be represented at the event. "The associated networking opportunities that can be developed against this backdrop will be more than significant."

The LMC representative also confirmed that Balmoral Show 2022 will provide farming and food leaders with a unique opportunity to exchange ideas and insight on a wide range of issues, the resolution of which will shape the industries for many years to come. "Farming and food in Northern Ireland is very much at a crossroads. The period ahead will see decisions taken that will shape its future irrevocably," he commented "Where we go in terms of farm support and the need to work through realistic responses to the challenge of climate change are just two that come to mind immediately."

Ian continued: "But it is also vitally important to get the views of farmers and food producers, across the board, on these matters. "And this is why it is so relevant to have the opportunity of, once again, being able to meet and greet visitors to our Balmoral Pavilion." But driving all the activities that LMC undertakes at this year's Balmoral Show will be the organisation's commitment to communicating the sustainability principles that underpin every facet of beef and lamb production here in Northern Ireland.Approximately 22,000 farmers are involved in the production of beef and lamb locally. Output from both sectors combined to help generate sales of approximately £1.5 billion last year by Northern Ireland's beef and lamb processing sector.

Output from production agriculture underpins a total of 113,000 jobs across the local economy as a whole. "Quite rightly, a lot of emphasis is now being placed on the environmental sustainability of farming and food systems, not just here but around the world. "The good news, in this regard, for livestock farmers in Northern Ireland is that they are able to produce beef and lamb from grazed grass. "This is, possibly, the most sustainable food production model that is available to farmers anywhere in the world. "Grass production totally complements our soils and climate. As a result, locally produced farm quality assured beef and lamb are two of the most naturally produced foods available to consumers."

Ian also confirmed that beef and lamb are extremely nutrient dense foods. He explained: "The demand for high quality protein continues to grow around the world. As a result, our beef and lamb is well placed to meet this market requirement. "And, of course, there is also the pleasure associated with eating high quality beef and lamb. For all these reasons, livestock farmers here in Northern Ireland are at the very heart of an industry that is sustainable in so many ways." He concluded: "Our aim is to communicate all of these themes in the most effective way possible, courtesy of our presence at Balmoral Show 2022. "It is shaping up to be a tremendous event. We have a very simple message to all those visitors making their way to Balmoral 2022. Come and join us: you will be made more than welcome."

BALMORAL SHOW 2022
11TH-14TH MAY

IN MY OPINION BY RICHARD HALLERON... FQAS : YOU COULDN'T PUT A VALUE ON IT

Putting a value on the Northern Ireland Beef and Lamb Farm Quality Assurance Scheme (NIBL FQAS) is nigh-on impossible. The scheme, which celebrates its 30th anniversary this year, is at the heart of everything that is positive regarding livestock production in this part of the world.

In fact, it wouldn't be too strong to assert that NIBL FQAS is what makes beef and lamb production in Northern Ireland truly unique. It encompasses every facet of our beef and lamb management systems, plus so much more: animal traceability, health & safety, animal welfare and the implementation of rigorous husbandry standards.

Without NIBL FQAS, entry into the main retail and food service sectors across the UK with home produced beef and lamb would not be possible. In other words, the scheme is at the heart of a process that is delivering a market worth over £1.4 billion per annum for local beef farmers and processors. And the same principle holds, where sheep meat is concerned.

There are a number of facets to NIBL FQAS that make it truly unique. It was the first scheme of its kind to be developed in the UK and, secondly, it is owned by farmers and processors. We sometimes forget that Northern Ireland has led the way in so many innovative ways, when it comes to delivering for farmers and consumers. The truly unique APHIS traceability system is another excellent example of what has been achieved in this context. But what has been achieved thus far – and this is truly significant - where NIBL FQAS is concerned, is only scratching the surface in terms of what is coming down the track.

We already know that farm quality assurance will be a key determinant when it comes to securing Northern Ireland's inclusion in the proposed Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) for Irish Grass Fed Beef. But more than this, NIBL FQAS will be at the heart of delivering the beef and sheep sectors' response to the challenge of climate change.

Information gathering and the communication of data will be critically important right along the farming and food chain as our livestock sectors look to the future. The good news is that our farm quality assurance scheme can be further developed in a very sustainable manner in order to help meet this need. It will not be a case of starting from scratch but rather building successfully on the platform we already have.

Initially, NIBL FQAS was established to meet the export needs of our beef and lamb sectors. The work was carried out, very much in tandem, with the development of the Greenfields brand. This initiative saw beef from Northern Ireland sold in a wide array of European supermarkets. Today, the need to find new export markets for every component of our beef and lamb has never been greater. It is only in this way that processors can add full value to every animal that is supplied to them by our farmers.

Again, NIBL FQAS will be at the very centre of making this happen. Consumers around the world want total reassurance regarding the provenance, quality and sustainability of the beef and lamb they are eating. farm quality assurance comes into its own in this regard. Today, we are an integral part of a common framework agreement with the 'Red Tractor' beef and lamb quality assurance scheme that guarantees consumers throughout the UK access to home produced beef and lamb that is produced to a uniquely high set of core assurance pillars and independently accredited as such. But there is also full recognition given to the fact that farmers in each region of the UK may be operating under slightly different local conditions than those pertaining in other regions. It is the autonomy that each region enjoys that, again, helps to make the principles associated with farm quality assurance so transparent and relevant.

The good news is that Northern Ireland's farm quality assurance scheme for beef and lamb has been, and will continue to be, developed in ways that best reflect the unique heritage and qualities of our cattle and sheep industries.

A lot of water has flown under the bridge over the last thirty years. The beef and lamb industries have had many economic challenges to overcome however, the one reassuring constant within all of this flux has been the existence of NIBL FQAS. Its role over the past three decades in delivering for livestock farmers and processors cannot be questioned. And I sense its significance, as we look to the future, will become even greater.

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NI DEADWEIGHT COW TRADE REACHES RECORD HIGH

The deadweight cow trade in Northern Ireland remains strong with prices continuing to increase from the beginning of 2022 and staying well ahead of previous years, reporting the highest prices in 13 years. Quotes from the Northern Ireland processing plants this week have reached 280-352p/kg for O+3 grading cows with only one processor quoting at the lower end of the scale. Quotes for early next week range from 280-356p/kg. Producers should use these quotes as a starting point for negotiation with higher prices available.

Figure 1 shows the O3 cow price in the correspondings weeks during 2022, 2021 and 2020. As indicated in the chart, the O3 cow prices last week in Northern Ireland are significatly ahead of previous years. Last week's O3 cow price of 356.3p/kg, continued the steady increase in prices from the start of the year, almost 6p/kg from the previous week when the price was 350.5p/kg. Cow prices across the grades remain well ahead of 2021 levels when the O3 cow price was 296.9p/kg, last week's O3 cow price was 59.4p/kg ahead of this, which equates to an additional £178 for the producer on a 300kg carcase.

Meanwhile last week's O3 cow price was a notable 115p/kg ahead of the corresponding week during 2020, with the spring of 2020 being a particularly turbulent period for cow prices in Northern Ireland as Covid-19 struck. The differential in the 2 year period equates to an additional £345 for the producer on a 300kg carcase today.

Throughput

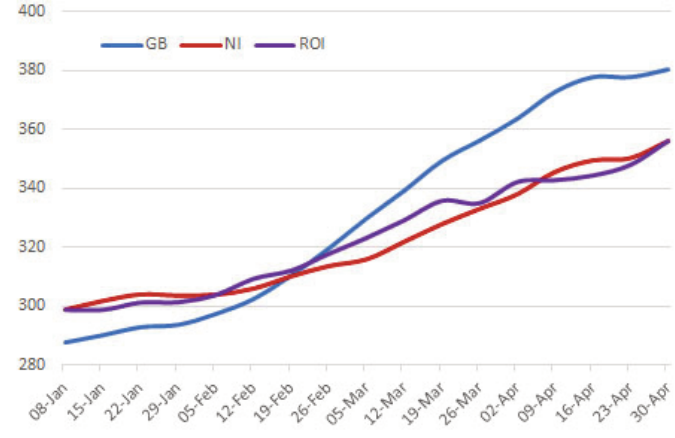
Cow throughput in local processing plants during recent weeks has remained ahead of last year's levels. Last week's cow throughput in Northern Ireland processing plants totalled 2,396 head which is up 37 per cent from the previous week. This takes the total cows processed in Northern Ireland to date in 2022 to 36,994 head. This is an increase of 6,589 head or 22 per cent relative to the same period in 2021.

Average Cow Weight

The average carcase weight of cows slaughtered in local processing plants to date this year was 308.4kg, a 5kg decrease from the same period in 2021 when the average carcase weight was 313.4kg, and a 2.9kg decrease from the relative period in 2020, when the average cow carcase weighed 311.3kg.

Figure 1: O3 cow price in NI during the week ending 30 April 2022 and the relative weeks in 2021 and 2020.

Figure 2: Weekly O3 cow price in NI, GB & ROI to date in 2022 (p/kg)
Source: LMC, AHDB & DAFM



Great Britain

The cow trade in Great Britain remains strong with prices firming in recent weeks, with a 78p/kg increase recorded in the last 12 weeks to w/e 30 April. The O3 cow prices in this region overtook the trade in Northern Ireland in mid-February of this year, before which NI prices were ahead for a period of 22 consecutive weeks. GB prices remain ahead with last week's O3 paid price in Great Britain at 380.4p/kg as outlined in **Figure 2**. This is 24.1p/kg ahead of Northern Ireland and equates to an additional £72.30 on a 300kg carcase.

Republic of Ireland

The cow trade in the Republic of Ireland is currently running behind Northern Ireland however the differential between the two regions has narrowed in recent weeks. Last week's O3 cow price in the Republic of Ireland was the equivalent of 356p/kg, an increase of 8.1p/kg from the previous week. This takes the differential between ROI and NI to 0.3p/kg which equates to an additional £9 on a 300kg carcase. In the corresponding week last year the ROI O3 cow price was the equivalent of 293.1p/kg.

EU & UK LEAGUE TABLE OF R3 HEIFER PRICES

The EU & UK deadweight cattle prices table provides a useful update on farmgate R3 heifer prices across the EU & UK. Deadweight prices for heifers have strengthened across the EU in recent times with the majority of reported countries recording an increase in R3 heifer prices as outlined in **Table 1**. The EU average R3 heifer price was 497.6c/kg during the week ending 23/04/2022, up 6c/kg from the previous month's week ending 26/03/2022. The euro was equivalent of 83.3p in the week ending 23/04/2022.

Northern Ireland

In the week ending 23/04/2022 NI moved down one position to fifth place in the EU league table with an R3 heifer price the equivalent of 513.1c/kg. This was a 14.6c/kg increase from the 498.5c/kg paid during the week ending 26/03/2022. The differential between the R3 heifer price in NI and the EU average increased from 6.9c/kg in the week ending 26/03/2022 to 15.5c/kg in the week ending 23/04/2022.

Great Britain

GB moved to fourth place on the league table in the week ending 23/04/2022 with an equivalent R3 heifer price of 529.7c/kg. This was a 19.4c/kg increase from the 510.4c/kg paid during the week ending 26/03/2022. The differential between R3 heifer prices in GB and the EU average widened from 18.8c/kg in the week ending 26/03/2022 to 32.1c/kg in the week ending 23/04/2022.

Republic of Ireland

In ROI the R3 heifer price was 488.1c/kg in the w/e 23/04/2022, an increase of 11.4c/kg from the 476.7c/kg paid in the w/e 26/03/2022. ROI moved down one position into tenth place on the EU league table. The R3 heifer price in ROI was 9.5c/kg behind the EU average price and 25c/kg lower than the equivalent price in NI.

Other EU countries

The most notable change in reported R3 heifer prices last week was recorded in the Netherlands where the R3 heifer price increased by 138c/kg to 539c/kg. This moved it up 14 positions on the league table into second position. Increases in reported prices were reported in all countries but Germany where an 8.6c/kg drop was recorded and in Italy a marginal decrease was reported.

The EU & UK deadweight cattle prices league table compiled weekly by LMC and is hosted on the LMC website at www.lmcni.com/market-information/market-reports/

Table 1: EU & UK R3 Heifers prices w/e 23 April 2022 compared to w/e 26 March 2022 (c/kg)
Source: LMC, AHDB & EU Commission

Position last Month	Position this Month	Country	Price last Month (w/e 26.03.22)	Price this Month (w/e 23.04.22)	Change on Month (cents)
2	1	Luxembourg	534.9	543.4	+8.5
16	2	Netherlands	401.0	539.0	+138.0
1	3	Germany	545.8	537.2	-8.6
3	4	Great Britain	510.4	529.7	+19.4
4	5	Northern Ireland	498.5	513.1	+14.6
6	6	Sweden	489.8	507.1	+17.3
11	7	Poland	467.5	505.1	+37.6
7	8	France	489.0	505.0	+16.0
5	9	Italy	494.5	494.4	-0.1
9	10	Ireland	476.7	488.1	+11.4
10	11	Austria	470.2	474.8	+4.6
12	12	Portugal	457.5	472.3	+14.8
13	13	Belguim	434.3	463.7	+29.4
14	14	Denmark	412.3	461.2	+48.9
8	15	Spain	477.7	459.1	-18.6
15	16	Slovenia	404.8	416.9	+12.1
19	17	Romania	362.5	404.5	+42.0
17	18	Lithuania	375.5	392.7	+17.2
18	19	Czech Republic	372.0	383.6	+11.6
EU Average			491.6	497.6	+6.0
Euro (€1=)			83.4	83.3	+0.0

WEEKLY BEEF & LAMB MARKETS

LMC Livestock & Meat Commission

CATTLE TRADE

NI FACTORY BASE QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 02/05/22	Next Week 09/05/22
Prime		
U-3	392 - 424p	392 - 426p
R-3	386 - 418p	386 - 420p
O+3	380 - 412p	380 - 414p
P+3	324 - 362p	324 - 364p
	Including bonus where applicable	
Cows		
O+3	280 - 352p	280 - 356p

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 30/04/22	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	435.6	438.0	424.9
R3	429.9	431.7	420.7
O+3	420.9	423.8	409.7

*Prices exclude AA, HER and Organic cattle

REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

W/E 30/04/22	Weight Bands			
	<220kg	220-250kg	250-280kg	>280kg
P1	249.9	266.5	275.7	286.1
P2	271.9	293.2	309.6	329.3
P3	279.0	302.9	326.4	338.7
O3	-	338.4	345.9	357.3
O4	277.2	-	337.9	354.7
R3	-	-	-	371.6

Deadweight Cattle Trade

Base quotes for U-3 grade prime cattle this week ranged from 392-424p/kg, with the majority of plants quoting 420-424p/kg for steers and heifers. Quotes of 392-426p/kg are expected for U-3 grade prime cattle next week. Quotes for good quality O+3 grade cows ranged from 280-352p/kg, with quotes for early next week ranging from 280-356p/kg.

Throughput of prime cattle in NI plants last week totalled 8,052 head an increase of 1,812 head or 29 per cent when compared to the previous week. This is also up 1,360 head or 20 per cent from the 6,692 prime cattle processed in the same week in 2021. Cow throughput in NI last week increased by 37 per cent to 2,396 from the previous week. This is an increase of 40 per cent or 683 head compared to the corresponding week last year when 1,713 cows were processed locally.

Imports of prime cattle from ROI for direct slaughter in NI plants last week totalled 204 head with 128 cows and one bull also imported. Last week no cattle were imported from GB for direct slaughter in NI, with no cattle making this journey since the first week of January 2021, post Brexit. Meanwhile cattle exports from NI for slaughter in ROI plants consisted of 11 prime cattle, 39 cows and 8 cull bulls. Last week for the seventh consecutive week cattle made the journey from NI to GB for direct slaughter with 35 cows exported.

The deadweight cattle trade in NI continued to strengthen last week with the average steer price up 2p/kg to 422.2p/kg while the R3 steer price was up 1.8p/kg to 431.2p/kg. The average heifer price in NI last week was 424.5p/kg, up almost 3p/kg, while the R3 heifer price was 432.3p/kg, up 2.1p/kg from the previous week. The average young bull price recorded an increase of 3.8p/kg to 406.1p/kg with the R3 young bull price increasing by 4.5p/kg to 419.6p/kg. Meanwhile the average cow price in NI last week was up marginally to 329p/kg with the O3 cow price up 5.8p/kg to 356.3p/kg.

The deadweight prime cattle trade last week in GB generally improved from the previous week. The average steer price was up by 1.3p/kg to 439.2p/kg with the average R3 steer price up by 0.7p/kg to 444.1p/kg. The average heifer price in GB was also up 1.3p/kg to 439.3p/kg while the average R3 heifer price increased by 1.4p/kg to 445.6p/kg. In GB last week all of the regions recorded declines in average young bull prices with the strongest decline reported in the Midlands and Wales (-4.4p/kg).There were variations across the regions in the R3 young bull price with prices increasing in Scotland (+1p/kg) and Northern England (+0.6p/kg) while declines of 1.5p/kg and 2.2p/kg were recorded in the Midlands and Wales, and Southern England respectively.

In ROI last week the deadweight prime cattle trade reported strengthening prices across the grades. The R3 steer price last week was up by the equivalent of 8.2p/kg to 414.7p/kg with the R3 heifer price increasing 8.1p/kg to 417.3p/kg from the previous week. R3 young bulls in ROI recorded an increase of 6.2p/kg bringing the price to the equivalent of 400.9p/kg.

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

W/E 30/04/22		Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	436.2	421.6	446.2	449.8	451.8	450.7	449.4
	R3	431.2	414.7	445.8	444.8	444.3	441.6	444.1
	R4	429.5	416.0	447.1	451.9	444.8	442.2	447.6
	O3	417.9	405.7	433.4	426.8	425.9	423.3	426.8
	AVG	422.2	-	442.8	441.9	436.6	434.4	439.2
Heifers	U3	437.6	427.2	453.0	454.1	456.0	454.5	454.5
	R3	432.3	417.3	448.3	446.7	445.3	443.1	445.6
	R4	428.7	419.7	448.6	450.8	445.7	440.3	447.3
	O3	420.7	410.0	433.1	427.9	417.9	422.2	423.7
	AVG	424.5	-	445.6	443.2	434.8	433.1	439.3
Young Bulls	U3	424.6	410.0	444.3	447.6	445.1	449.7	445.7
	R3	419.6	400.9	440.1	439.6	438.9	437.7	439.2
	O3	401.8	386.9	416.7	413.3	410.5	398.8	412.1
	AVG	406.1	-	431.7	429.0	422.1	431.6	427.5
Prime Cattle Price Reported		6,685	-	6,382	6,115	6,272	4,368	23,137
Cows	O3	356.3	356.0	387.2	380.1	379.6	378.3	380.4
	O4	353.9	353.2	387.2	383.4	380.1	377.6	381.1
	P2	312.2	325.8	336.2	336.9	337.8	337.7	337.5
	P3	334.7	344.7	364.8	357.9	355.4	354.4	355.9
	AVG	329.0	-	379.2	365.9	353.9	350.3	358.2

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=84.19p 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 30/04/22	1st QUALITY			2nd QUALITY		
	From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
Finished Cattle (p/kg)						
Steers	270	291	275	215	269	235
Friesians	186	212	192	136	182	160
Heifers	250	272	260	205	249	225
Beef Cows	215	266	225	165	214	185
Dairy Cows	158	188	168	115	157	135
Store Cattle (p/kg)						
Bullocks up to 400kg	255	327	280	210	254	230
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg	245	300	258	190	244	220
Bullocks over 500kg	235	264	245	185	234	210
Heifers up to 450kg	245	328	270	200	244	218
Heifers over 450kg	225	269	240	180	224	200
Dropped Calves (£/head)						
Continental Bulls	300	400	350	200	295	250
Continental Heifers	280	415	320	140	275	200
Friesian Bulls	105	190	140	30	100	70
Holstein Bulls	90	165	120	1	85	45

SHEEP TRADE

NI SHEEP BASE QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 02/05/22	Next Week 09/05/22
R3 Hoggets up to 22kg	570-575p	570-575p
R3 Spring Lambs up to 21kg	615-620p	610-620p

REPORTED SHEEP PRICES

(P/KG)	W/E 16/04/22	W/E 23/04/22	W/E 30/04/22
NI L/W Hoggets	520.3	497.8	496.4
NI L/W Spring Lambs	590.4	566.5	582.8
NI D/W Hoggets	573.3	563.6	559.2
NI D/W Spring Lambs	606.1	591.8	587.8
GB D/W Hoggets	595.4	597.9	605.9
GB D/W Spring Lambs	643.4	648.2	655.0
ROI D/W	608.1	611.2	620.3

Deadweight Sheep Trade

Quotes for hoggets and spring lambs from the major processors tightened this week. Quotes for R3 grade hoggets ended this week ranging from 570-575p/kg up to 22kg with quotes for spring lambs ending this week ranging from 615-620p/kg up to 21kg. Hogget/lamb throughput in NI last week totalled 7,322 head a 61 per cent increase, or 2,780 head more compared to the previous week. A further 4,682 hoggets/lambs were exported to ROI for direct slaughter last week 1,385 head more than the previous week. The average deadweight hogget price in NI last week decreased by 4.4p/kg to 559.2p/kg from the previous week with the NI spring lamb deadweight price decreasing by 4p/kg to 587.8p/kg. Last week the ROI deadweight lamb/hogget price was up 9.1p/kg from the previous week to 620.3p/kg.

Liveweight Sheep Trade

Smaller numbers of hoggets passed through most of the sale rings this week while the numbers of spring lambs on offer generally increased across the marts. In Massereene on Monday 267 hoggets sold from 480-521p/kg while 135 spring lambs sold from 560-602p/kg. In Rathfriland on Tuesday, 348 spring lambs sold from 547-600p/kg (avg 577p/kg) compared to 361 spring lambs last week selling from 545-602p/kg (avg 575p/kg). In Enniskillen on Wednesday 140 hoggets sold from 450-520p/kg with 147 spring lambs selling from 540-608p/kg. The cull ewe trade has remained firm across the marts with top reported prices ranging from £183-236.

LATEST SHEEP MARTS (P/KG LW)

From: 30/04/22		Hoggets				Spring Lambs			
To: 04/05/22		No	From	To	Avg	No	From	To	Avg
Saturday	Swatragh	-	-	-	-	500	547	610	-
	Omagh	225	455	519	-	24	479	565	-
Monday	Massereene	267	480	521	-	135	560	602	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	-	-	-	-	385	570	630	-
	Rathfriland	-	-	-	-	348	547	600	577
Wednesday	Ballymena	224	430	490	450	331	550	642	575
	Enniskillen	140	450	520	-	147	540	608	-
	Armoy	295	500	535	-	33	540	580	-
	Markethill	160	460	527	-	380	570	615	-

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