

## DOWNWARD MOVEMENT IN LAMB TRADE

Base quotes from the major NI processors for R3 grading lambs have come under pressure with quotes this week ranging from 595-600p/kg up to 21kg. Similar base quotes are expected for early next week. These base quotes have come back 35-40p/kg during the last week.

As the quotes ease back the paid prices has also declined with last week's NI deadweight lamb price at 613.8p/kg. This is back 35.5p/kg from

**Figure 1: Average price of lambs in NI, ROI and GB in the six week period ending 25 June 2022 and the same weeks in 2021 and 2020.**

Source: DAERA, AHDB and DAFM



Analysis of the sheep price reported statistics provided by DAERA has indicated some key changes in the conformation and fat scores of lambs during the six week period the six week period w/e 21 May to w/e 25 June 2022 when compared to the same period in 2021.

### Conformation scores

Current market specifications are for R and U grading lambs and during the six week period ending 25 June 2022, 96 per cent of price reported lambs fulfilled this requirement. This was decrease from the corresponding period in 2021 when 97.6 per cent of lambs were awarded a U or R grade for conformation. In addition there has been some notable changes in the proportion of lambs achieving each grade year on year as shown in **Figure 3**.

The proportion of U grade lambs in the NI slaughter mix has increased from 43.1 per cent in the six week period ending 26 June 2021, to 52.5 per cent in the corresponding period of 2022. This was an increase of 22 per cent year on year. While the proportion of U grading lambs in the NI lamb kill has increased the proportion of lambs awarded an R grade has decreased.

During the six week period ending 25 June 2022, 43.5 per cent of price reported lambs achieved an R grade, a decline of a decline of just over 20 per

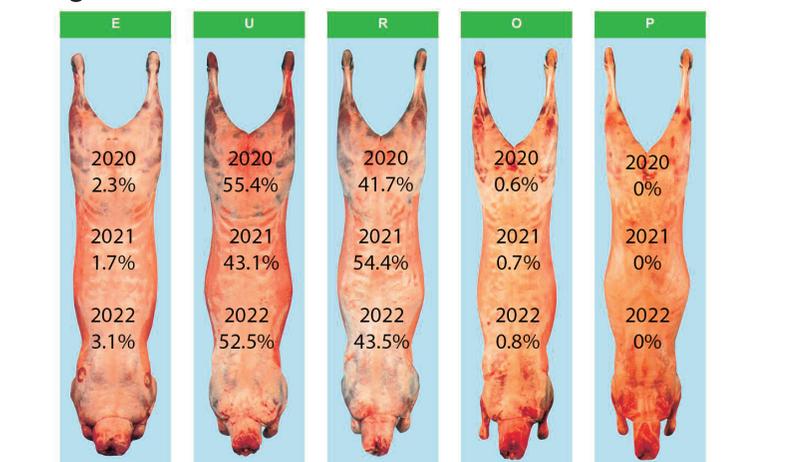
the previous week. The downward pressure on deadweight lamb prices has also been observed in GB, ROI and across the EU with supplies of lambs for slaughter running ahead of market demand. While there has been downward movement in the deadweight lamb trade in the last week the prices still continue to trend above previous years as shown in **Figure 1**, however the differential has narrowed. Last week's deadweight lamb price in NI was 82.4p/kg above the

corresponding week in 2021 equating to a £17.30 differential on a 21kg lamb carcasse. The celebration of Eid-al-Adha from 9th July 2022 will be less impacted by Covid-19 restrictions this year and has helped to boost the sheep meat trade in the past few weeks. Meanwhile last week's price is 164.2p/kg above the same price in 2020 or £34.50 on a 21kg lamb carcasse.

Following seasonal trends lamb throughput in local plants has continued to increase in recent weeks and this is now starting to put some downward pressure on prices. Lamb throughput in local plants last week totalled 9,320 head which takes total lamb throughput during the six weeks ending 25 June to 47,413 head an eight per cent decrease from the levels processed in the corresponding period of 2021.

While the number of lambs processed locally has declined year on year exports have increased. Exports of lambs from NI to ROI for direct slaughter totalled 4,880 head last week which takes the total number of lambs exported for direct slaughter

**Figure 3: Lamb conformation scores achieved during the six week period ending 25 June 2022 and the same weeks in 2021 and 2020.**



cent from the corresponding period in 2021 when 54.4 per cent of lamb carcasses were awarded an R grade.

### Fat scores

The current market specification is for lamb carcasses with a fat score of 2 or 3 and during the six week period from week ending 21 May 2022 to 25 June 2022 91.6 per cent of price reported lambs fulfilled this requirement. This was a slight decline from the corresponding period in 2021 when 94.7 per cent of price reported lambs met this specification as shown in **Figure 4**.

During the six week period to week ending 25 June 2022, 33.3 per cent of price reported lambs achieved a fat

score of 2, which was a decrease from 2021 when 34.2 per cent of lambs were scored 2. The number of lambs awarded a fat class 3 during the six weeks ending 25 June was 58.3 per cent a decrease of 2.3 per cent from the corresponding period in 2021.

A small number of lambs continue to kill out at a fat class 4L and 4H. During the six weeks ending 25 June 2022, 7.3 per cent of the price reported lamb kill were awarded a 4L for fat cover and a further 0.7 per cent were awarded a 4H. In comparison to the same period in 2021, 2.5 per cent more of the price reported lamb kill in the last six weeks was graded 4L, and 0.4 per cent more were awarded fat class 4H.

**Figure 2: The average NI lamb price during week ending 25 June 2022 and the corresponding weeks in 2021 and 2020.** Source: DAERA.



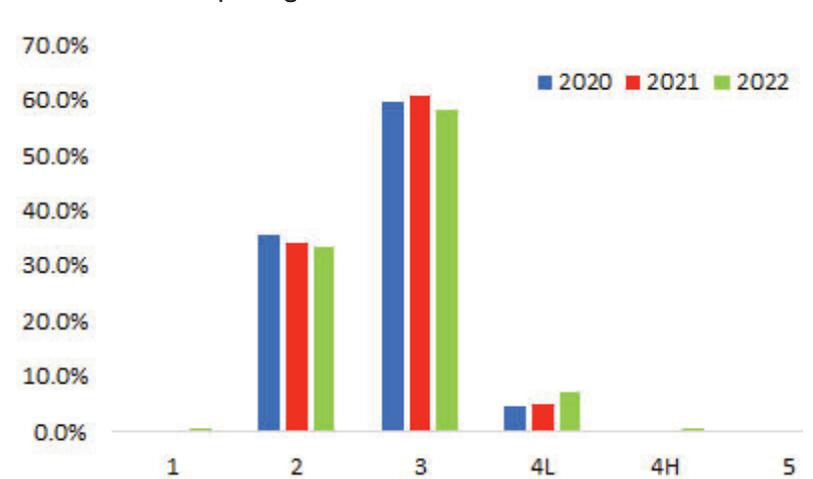
during the six weeks from 21 May 2022 to week ending 25 June 2022 to 22,765 head. This is a 36.8 per cent increase from the same period in 2021 when 16,644 lambs were exported for processing in southern plants. This puts total output from the NI sheep flock at 70,178 head for the six week period ending 25 June 2022, a 2.9 per cent increase from the same period in 2021.

While the availability of finished lambs this year is running only slightly ahead of 2021 levels, 2022 has been a good

grass growing year despite the slow start which has helped producers get lambs ready for slaughter in recent weeks.

Reports from industry have indicated the quality of lambs presented for slaughter during the last six weeks has generally been good. There has been an increase in average carcasse weights of lambs, with an average carcasse weight during the six week period of 21.7kg, up from 21.4kg in the same period last year.

**Figure 4: Lamb fat scores achieved during the six week period ending 25 June 2022 and the corresponding weeks in 2021 and 2020.** Source: DAERA.



## SELECTING LAMBS FOR SLAUGHTER

Producers are reminded to try and produce lambs that meet current market specifications.

**Processors prefer farm quality assured lambs that produce an 18-21 kilo carcasse with a fat cover of 2 or 3** as these lambs meet the consumers demand, with regard to fat content and cut size.

Meeting specification for carcasse weight is of particular importance to

producers as any extra carcasse weight beyond this does not provide any financial return to the producer.

Additional weight often results in lambs only putting on fat. Increasing fat levels beyond optimum increases feed costs per kg produced, can incur price penalties, and also reduces feed availability for sheep remaining on the farm.

### 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 base quotes & mart results Updated 5pm Daily Tel: 028 9263 3011

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Free weekly base quotes sent to your mobile phone Email: bulletin@lmnci.com Tel: 028 9263 3000

# WEEKLY BEEF & LAMB MARKETS

## CATTLE TRADE

### NI FACTORY BASE QUOTES FOR CATTLE

(P/KG DW)	This Week 27/06/22	Next Week 04/07/22
<b>Prime</b>		
U-3	420 - 434p	424 - 432p
R-3	414 - 428p	418 - 426p
O+3	408 - 422p	412 - 420p
P+3	352 - 366p	356 - 364p
	Including bonus where applicable	
<b>Cows</b>		
O+3	334 - 376p	335 - 376p

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 grade prime cattle this week ranged from 420-434p/kg for steers and heifers. Quotes for good quality O+3 grade cows this week ranged from 334-376p/kg with similar quotes expected for early next week.

Last week 7,147 prime cattle were processed in NI beef processing plants. This was up by 123 head from the 7,024 prime cattle processed during the previous week. Numbers remain ahead the 6,183 prime cattle processed locally in the same week last year. Cow throughput increased last week with 2,139 cows processed in NI plants. This was up from the 1,975 cows processed during the previous week and 392 head higher than the same week in 2021 when 1,747 cows were processed locally.

Strong uplift in direct slaughter imports were recorded last week with 480 prime cattle imported from ROI for processing in NI plants, compared to 253 prime cattle imported from ROI the previous week. The number of cows imported to NI last week from ROI was also up to total 158 head, compared to 129 head the week before. Meanwhile there continues to be no cattle imports from GB for direct slaughter in NI. In contrast, cattle exports from NI for slaughter in ROI plants were down last week and consisted of two prime cattle, 42 cows and four bulls, totalling 48 head. In the week prior, 119 cattle were exported out of NI to ROI for direct slaughter. For a fifth consecutive week no cattle were exported last week from NI to GB for direct slaughter.

Last week price reported deadweight figures in NI reported decreases across the majority of grades. Last week the average steer price was unchanged from the previous week at 437.7p/kg with the R3 steer price back by 0.7p/kg to 446.8p/kg. The average heifer price in NI last week was 436.8p/kg, back 1.3p/kg from the previous week, while the R3 heifer price was 446.7p/kg, back 0.4p/kg from the previous week. The average young bull price in NI last week was 429.3p/kg up by a marginal 0.2p/kg from the previous week, while the R3 young bull price was back 0.6p/kg to 439.5p/kg. The average cow price in NI last week was up by 1.5p/kg to 361p/kg with the O3 cow price increasing by 1.2p/kg to 386.9p/kg.

In GB last week the deadweight cattle trade reported a mixed picture, While the average steer price in GB last week increased by a marginal 0.2p/kg to 443.1p/kg with the average R3 steer price up by 0.7p/kg to 448.6p/kg. The average GB heifer price and R3 heifer price both decreased by 1.3p/kg and 1.1p/kg last week to 441.8p/kg and 448.4p/kg respectively. The cow trade was strong throughout GB with the O3 cow price up 3.1p/kg to 387.8p/kg.

Last week in ROI the deadweight cattle trade came under pressure across all grades from previous weeks. The R3 steer price in ROI last week was back by 5.5p/kg to the equivalent of 451.3p/kg while the R3 heifer price reported a decrease of 7.2p/kg to 453.6p/kg. Meanwhile the O3 cow price in ROI reported a decrease of 6.6p/kg to 399.1p/kg last week.

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

	W/E 25/06/22	Northern Ireland	Rep of Ireland	Scotland	Northern England	Midlands & Wales	Southern England	GB
Steers	U3	455.4	459.7	454.5	453.9	453.3	453.8	453.9
	R3	446.8	451.3	452.1	448.3	447.3	447.1	448.6
	R4	447.2	453.6	455.0	453.4	445.1	449.2	452.0
	O3	434.1	439.7	436.5	435.6	426.6	430.4	431.5
	AVG	437.7	-	450.5	444.1	438.4	439.0	443.1
Heifers	U3	454.2	468.5	458.6	457.9	460.2	456.8	458.6
	R3	446.7	453.6	453.3	447.7	448.2	445.6	448.4
	R4	443.1	454.7	455.2	451.4	447.0	445.6	451.0
	O3	433.5	446.0	435.6	430.9	425.2	425.3	427.8
	AVG	436.8	-	452.2	443.5	437.5	434.0	441.8
Young Bulls	U3	444.4	450.3	451.0	451.0	453.1	448.8	451.4
	R3	439.5	441.0	442.1	443.1	445.1	440.4	443.3
	O3	422.0	424.3	408.5	414.7	418.2	432.7	416.2
	AVG	429.3	-	444.8	441.2	432.6	440.9	438.6
Prime Cattle Price Reported	5,748	-	6,219	6,838	7,543	4,871	25,471	
Cows	O3	386.9	399.1	391.9	388.1	386.5	386.5	387.8
	O4	385.8	399.8	394.1	389.6	391.9	390.4	391.3
	P2	335.9	375.2	353.9	347.8	350.2	346.7	349.1
	P3	360.8	391.6	359.5	361.9	367.9	362.5	364.9
	AVG	361.0	-	389.0	372.2	362.4	355.5	366.1

Notes: (i) Prices are p/kg Sterling-ROI prices converted at 1 euro=85.85p 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 25/06/22	Steers	Heifers	Young Bulls
U3	453.2	453.9	444.3
R3	446.1	446.3	440.3
O+3	437.8	438.0	427.0

\*Prices exclude AA, HER and Organic cattle

### REPORTED COW PRICES NI - P/KG

W/E 25/06/22	Weight Bands			
	<220kg	220-250kg	250-280kg	>280kg
P1	273.0	288.3	298.9	315.9
P2	294.7	316.6	339.0	352.7
P3	308.7	325.1	358.8	364.9
O3	-	360.0	382.8	387.3
O4	318.3	-	386.2	386.0
R3	-	-	-	406.8

### LATEST LIVEWEIGHT CATTLE MART PRICES NI

	W/E 25/06/22	1st QUALITY			2nd QUALITY		
		From	To	Avg	From	To	Avg
<b>Finished Cattle (p/kg)</b>							
Steers		260	294	275	215	259	240
Friesians		206	224	212	188	205	198
Heifers		250	299	265	210	249	225
Beef Cows		225	259	235	175	224	200
Dairy Cows		150	191	170	105	149	128
<b>Store Cattle (p/kg)</b>							
Bullocks up to 400kg		255	324	285	210	254	230
Bullocks 400kg - 500kg		250	298	262	200	249	222
Bullocks over 500kg		250	316	265	200	249	222
Heifers up to 450kg		250	289	270	200	249	225
Heifers over 450kg		240	279	250	185	239	220
<b>Dropped Calves (£/head)</b>							
Continental Bulls		400	660	450	300	395	335
Continental Heifers		300	390	350	200	295	250
Friesian Bulls		140	200	170	70	135	105
Holstein Bulls		120	190	155	8	115	60

# SHEEP TRADE

## NI SHEEP BASE QUOTES

(P/Kg DW)	This Week 27/06/22	Next Week 04/07/22
R3 Lambs up to 21kg	595-600p	595-600p

## REPORTED SHEEP PRICES

(P/KG)	W/E 11/06/22	W/E 18/06/22	W/E 25/06/22
NI L/W Lambs	620.5	626.5	557.3
NI D/W Lambs	639.4	649.3	613.8
GB D/W Lambs	692.9	662.6	646.7
ROI D/W	673.6	687.9	654.1

## Deadweight Sheep Trade

Quotes from the major processors for R3 grade lambs came back this week to 595-600p/kg up to 21kg. Quotes are expected to be back early next week. Throughput in local plants slightly decreased from the previous week with 9,320 lambs killed last week. Sheep exports to ROI last week for direct slaughter totalled 4,880 head, back 1,715 head from the previous week. The average deadweight lamb price in NI last week declined with the price back 35.5p/kg from the previous week to 613.8p/kg. Meanwhile in ROI the deadweight trade for lambs decreased by the equivalent of 33.8p/kg from the previous week to 654.1p/kg.

## Liveweight Sheep Trade

Smaller numbers of lambs passed through most of the sale rings this week with the prices also back. In Massereene on Monday 462 lambs sold from 550-583p/kg compared to 482 lambs selling from 565-615p/kg last week. In Rathfriland on Tuesday, 703 lambs sold from 530-570p/kg (avg 543p/kg) compared to 817 lambs last week selling from 565-610p/kg (avg 575p/kg). In Enniskillen on Wednesday 601 lambs sold from 549-575p/kg compared to 502 the previous week selling from 550-595p/kg. The cull ewe trade was back last week across the marts with top reported prices ranging from £140-£212.

## LATEST SHEEP MARTS (P/KG LW)

From: 25/06/22		Lambs			
To: 29/06/22		No	From	To	Avg
Saturday	Swatragh	750	545	620	-
	Omagh	404	532	568	-
Monday	Kilrea	450	570	602	-
	Massereene	462	550	583	-
Tuesday	Saintfield	748	548	600	-
	Rathfriland	703	530	570	543
Wednesday	Ballymena	1314	560	611	580
	Enniskillen	601	549	575	-
	Armoyle	306	560	605	-
	Markethill	800	540	577	-

Information supplied by LMC / DAERA/ AHDB/ DAFM

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## LMC DELIGHTED TO SPONSOR BRITISH GRASSLAND SOCIETY VISIT

This week has seen members of the British Grassland Society (BGS) visiting a selection of top dairy and livestock farms across Northern Ireland. The Livestock and Meat Commission (LMC) was one of the visit's sponsoring organisations which was hosted by the Ulster Grassland Society and Fermanagh Grassland Club. "Grass is our most valuable, natural asset," confirmed LMC chief executive Ian Stevenson. "But more than that, local dairy, beef and sheep farmers are amongst the best exponents of grass based production systems anywhere in the world."

He added: "Our ability to grow high quality grass so efficiently will always be Northern Ireland's ace card when it comes to securing access to domestic and international markets with our dairy produce, beef and lamb. "It is also

**Image 1: Ian Stevenson LMC Chief Executive pictured with Drew McConnell, BGS President 2020 to 2022 and AFBI hosts Dr Elizabeth Magowan and Dr Steven Morrison at the Hillsborough Research Institute**



obvious that the effective use of grassland areas will help deliver improved levels of sustainability across agriculture as a whole here in Northern Ireland." According to the Commission representative, the BGS itinerary provided a perfect platform for the visitors to get a real sense of what grassland farming in Northern Ireland is all about. "LMC was delighted to be involved in such a proactive way," he continued. "Strengthening links between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK in such a meaningful way will always deliver many benefits for our local farming and food sectors."

A registered charity, BGS is a membership organisation which acts as a communication forum, through events and publications, for the profitable and sustainable use of grass and forage. It brings together all those with an active

interest in the science and practice of grass and forage production and utilisation; research workers, farmers, advisers, teachers and technical members of the agricultural industry. BGS is in contact with farmers through its affiliated local grassland societies across the United Kingdom. The society has many active members abroad and is also a member of the European Grassland Federation. The objectives of BGS include the improvement of economic methods of production and utilisation of grass and forage crops for the promotion of profitable agriculture.

Another BGS priority is the advancement of education and research in grass and forage crop production and utilisation. The publication of the results of relevant research is delivered to an international audience via a quarterly journal and academic symposia. In tandem with this comes the interpretation of research plus the active communication of improved methods of production and utilisation to the farming community. But at the very heart of the BGS commitment to farming is the active promotion of grassland farming as an example of sustainable agriculture, which is environmentally benign and visually attractive, for the public benefit. The organisation also represents members' interests to government by responding to consultations and identifying priorities for research.

Ian Stevenson further explained: "BGS has very close ties with the Ulster

**Image 2: John Egerton discussing his grassland management and farming systems with BGS visitors to his family farm at Lisnavoe, County Fermanagh**



Grassland Society and the Fermanagh Grassland Club. "Networking opportunities of this type will be critically important as farming here in Northern Ireland plots a course beyond Brexit and towards a UK Net Zero target for Greenhouse Gas emissions. "And, of course, this will not simply be a one way communication channel. There's no doubt that BGS can learn a lot from developments taking place on this side of the Irish Sea." Northern Ireland is exceptionally well represented on the BGS Council at the present time. Co Tyrone dairy farmer Drew McConnell has held the position of President of the Society between 2020 and 2022.

Ian Stevenson again: "This week's farm visits gave BGS members an opportunity to view agriculture in Northern Ireland at its very best. All of the farmers who hosted visits have to be commended for their warm welcome, excellent communication and demonstration of their farming systems and their passion for growing and

utilising top-quality grass in many different conditions." "Opportunities of this nature do not present themselves that often and I am delighted that the entire event went off so well.

"Drew McConnell, and Chair of the Organising Committee Ian McCluggage, have to be commended for the roles they have played in facilitating this week's visit. "Every region of the UK was represented at the BGS event. They all received a very upbeat perspective on what grass means to farming in Northern Ireland. "Take home messages of this magnitude are vitally important when it comes to communicating what is good about our local beef, sheep and dairy sectors."

He concluded: "There is no substitute for letting people see what agriculture in Northern Ireland is all about at first hand. "This is why it is so important for visits, such as that hosted by BGS this week, to become a fundamental driver of the marketing activity undertaken on behalf of our farming and food sectors."

## SOIL NUTRIENT HEALTH SCHEME YOU MISS THE OPPORTUNITY AT YOUR PERIL!

Livestock and Meat Commission (LMC) Chief Executive Ian Stevenson has highlighted the absolute importance for every farmer in Northern Ireland to sign-up for the new Soil Nutrient Health Scheme (SNHS) He said: "At a strategic level the new scheme will offer farmers a unique opportunity to find out in absolute detail about the fertility and carbon status of their soils and above ground biomass. "This information is the fundamental building block information that will allow every farm business in Northern Ireland to put in place effective and evidence-based soil and nutrient management plans for the future. "And in this, truly invaluable, context, it sets Northern Ireland apart from the rest of the UK and beyond in a very positive manner."

Ian continued: "But this is only part of the story. The fundamental bottom line, which every farmer must realise at this stage, is that a failure to participate in the SNHS brings with it the very real risk of ineligibility for future support schemes. "There is a one-off opportunity to apply for SNHS. Those farmers who miss the deadline first time around will not get a second bite of the cherry.

"And the clock is ticking. Farmers in Zone 1, that's the Down/Armagh region, must have their applications submitted by Friday, 08 July 2022.

The LMC chief executive went on to confirm that registration for SNHS must be carried out online. He added: "There may well be a role for those who submit single payment applications on behalf of client farmers to also play an active role in the submission of their SNHS applications. "But the bottom line here is a very clear one: it is in the best interests of every farmer in Northern Ireland to apply for the scheme.

Ian Stevenson confirmed that information gathered on specific farms, courtesy of SNHS, will not be used by DAERA for enforcement of regulations. "The data generated will be used solely by individual farmers to develop the sustainability of their businesses, and for purposes of informing research and training" he said. "On that basis, there is no reason why any farmer would not want to apply." A budget of £45million has already been allocated for SNHS. Not only does this initiative represent the most in depth soil

sampling survey ever undertaken in Northern Ireland but the accompanying Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR) imagery will help elucidate the carbon storage levels within our soils and that of the entire biomass growing above them." "As a consequence, Northern Ireland will be taking the lead in a truly international sense when it comes to determining the true carbon sequestration potential of our farm land," said Ian Stevenson. "The information gathered will also be used to allow all farmers make use of the slurries, manures and chemical fertiliser they need to produce food in the most efficient way possible."

The new scheme will be delivered by the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI). Contracts for the soil collection and analysis work have now been awarded and collection of soil samples from farms will be carried out under the direction of AFBI. The information that will be made available to farmers includes soil analysis results and farm maps: detailing the nutrient levels in each field; identifying fields prone to nutrient loss via run-off to waterways and an estimation of the amount of carbon stored in their soils, hedgerows and trees.

Backing all this up will be the bespoke training opportunities provided by CAFRE. This will be a two-phase process. During the initial stage, participating farmers will be made aware of the principles associated with nutrient management planning at an overall farm level. This will be followed by the completion of bespoke farm nutrient development plans for each farm business. According to the LMC representative, SNHS is the first tangible example of a 'farming for carbon' strategy being rolled out. Ian Stevenson concluded: "The results generated courtesy of SNHS can be used in the determination of progressive climate change targets for local agriculture over the coming years.

"SNHS will also be used to help determine the future support mechanisms that represent a best fit for our farming sectors. "We are now moving towards an era where exact information, not supposition, will be used to guide agricultural policy decisions. "The scope of such a capability is immense. This is an opportunity that must be fully grasped, which is why I am calling on all farmers to actively participate in the SNHS project."



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