



17<sup>th</sup> January 2019

## United Kingdom Slaughter Statistics – December 2018

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### Key points

The key results for **December 2018 compared to December 2017** are:

- **Cattle:** UK prime cattle (steers, heifers and young bulls) slaughterings in December 2018 were up 0.3% on December 2017 at 154,000 head. Beef and veal production was 72,000 tonnes, 0.3% higher than in December 2017.
- **Sheep:** UK clean sheep slaughterings were down 7.5% on December 2017 at 1184,000 head. Mutton and lamb production was 26,000 tonnes, 3.9% lower than in December 2017.
- **Pigs:** UK clean pig slaughterings were 0.1% higher than in December 2017 at 835,000 head. Pigmeat production was 72,000 tonnes, 0.9% higher than in December 2017.

This notice will be updated at 09:30 on 14th February 2019. Additional time series which include weekly slaughter averages, production and trade data can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/cattle-sheep-and-pig-slaughter>

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## Section 1: Monthly numbers of home killed livestock slaughtered

Table 1 shows monthly estimates of the number of home killed cattle, sheep and pigs, slaughtered as meat for human consumption in UK abattoirs.

**Table 1: United Kingdom monthly numbers of livestock slaughtered**

	thousand head				
	December 2017 31 days	October 2018 31 days	November 2018 30 days	December 2018 31 days	yr on yr % change
Steers	81	95	94	80	-1.9%
Heifers	60	72	73	62	3.7%
Young Bulls	12	16	15	12	-1.8%
Cows and Adult Bulls	57	71	71	56	-1.2%
Calves(1)	7	14	11	9	40%
Clean Sheep	1281	1276	1226	1184	-7.5%
Ewes and Rams	133	153	146	147	11%
Clean Pigs	834	964	952	835	0.1%
Sows and Boars	17	24	22	17	2.3%

(1) The definition of calves from May 2014 is "Bovines less than 1 year". Please see methodology for full details.

## Section 2: Average dressed carcass weights

Table 2 shows the monthly average dressed carcass weight (DCW) of livestock slaughtered for meat for human consumption in the United Kingdom.

**Table 2: United Kingdom average dressed carcass weights**

	kilogramme			
	December 2017	October 2018	November 2018	December 2018
Steers	367.5	365.1	365.9	367.3
Heifers	330.6	327.0	329.3	331.6
Young Bulls	314.9	327.6	327.0	323.5
Cows and Adult Bulls	310.3	305.0	306.8	309.1
Calves(1)	73.3	59.4	59.8	75.7
Clean Sheep	18.9	19.4	19.2	19.1
Ewes and Rams	25.6	25.0	25.6	25.9
Clean Pigs	82.6	83.6	83.8	83.2
Sows and Boars	144.3	144.3	143.5	145.3

(1)The definition of calves from May 2014 is "Bovines less than 1 year". Please see methodology for full details.

### Section 3: Monthly volumes of home killed meat production

Table 3 shows the monthly volumes of meat produced in UK abattoirs.

**Table 3: United Kingdom monthly volumes of meat production**

thousand tonnes					
	December 2017 31 days	October 2018 31 days	November 2018 30 days	December 2018 31 days	yr on yr % change
Beef	72	86	86	72	0.3%
Mutton and Lamb	28	29	27	26	-3.9%
Pigmeat	71	84	83	72	0.9%

### Section 4: Average weekly numbers of home killed livestock slaughtered

Table 4 shows the average weekly slaughter figures for the last thirteen months. The monthly slaughter figures in section one are affected by the number of days in the survey period. To get a clearer measure of trends weekly averages are calculated using the number of livestock slaughtered and the number of days in each period.

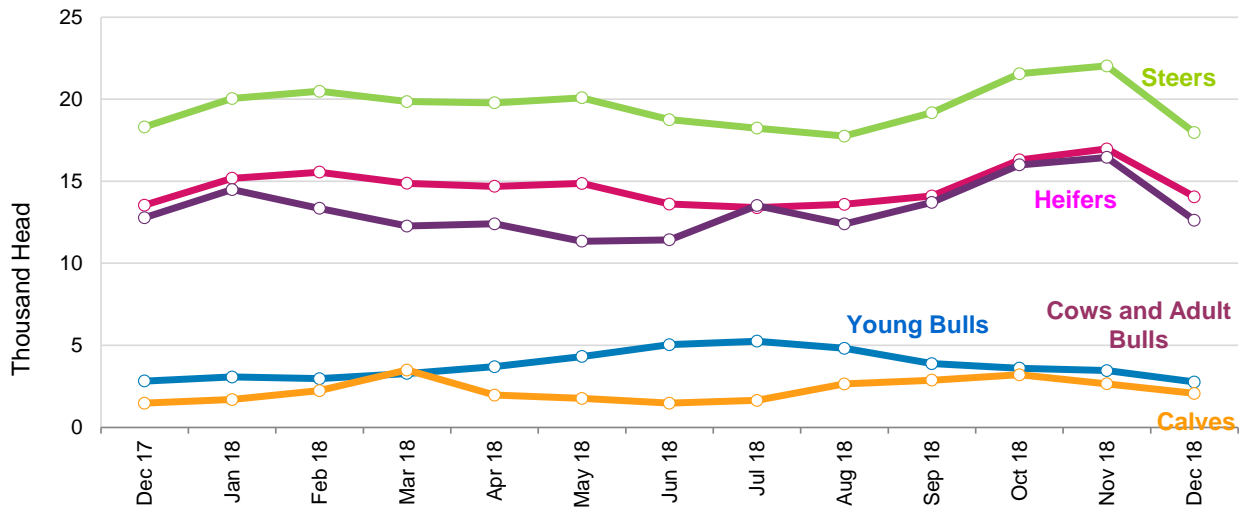
Longer term trends can be seen in Figures 4:1, 4:2 and 4:3, following this table.

**Table 4: United Kingdom average weekly numbers of livestock slaughtered**

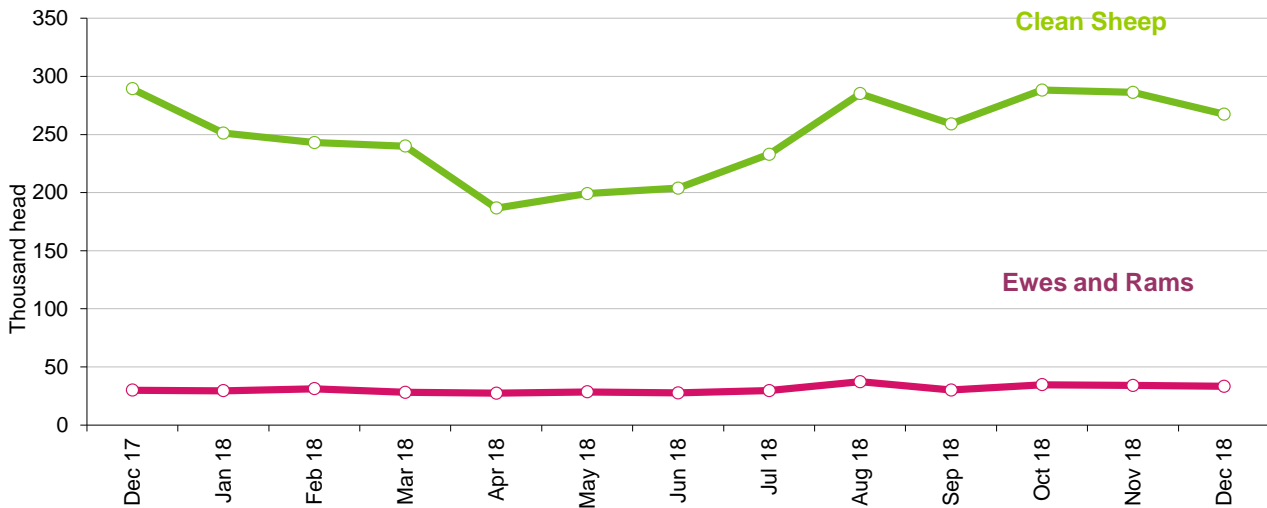
thousand head													
	2017		2018										
	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Steers	18	20	20	20	20	20	19	18	18	19	22	22	18
Heifers	14	15	16	15	15	15	14	13	14	14	16	17	14
Young Bulls	3	3	3	3	4	4	5	5	5	4	4	3	3
Cows and Adult Bulls	13	14	13	12	12	11	11	14	12	14	16	16	13
Calves	1	2	2	3	2	2	1	2	3	3	3	3	2
Clean Sheep	289	251	243	240	187	199	204	233	285	259	288	286	267
Ewes and Rams	30	29	31	28	27	28	28	30	37	30	35	34	33
Clean Pigs	188	206	217	195	205	203	194	199	213	198	218	222	189
Sows and Boars	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4

(1)The definition of calves from May 2014 is "Bovines less than 1 year". Please see methodology for full details.

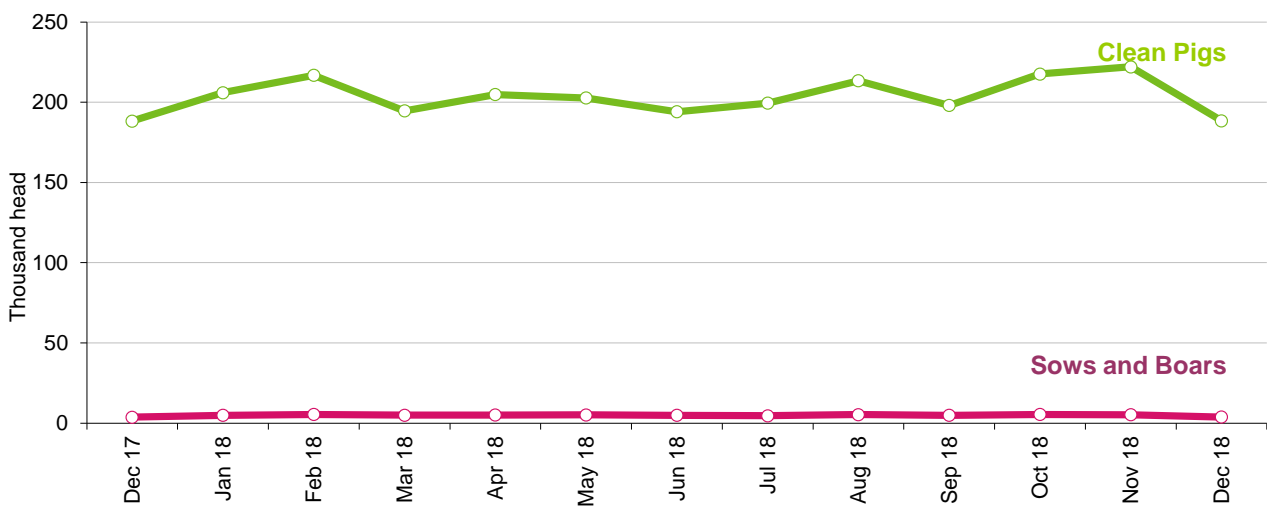
**Figure 4:1 United Kingdom average weekly numbers of cattle slaughtered**



**Figure 4:2 United Kingdom average weekly numbers of sheep slaughtered**



**Figure 4:3 United Kingdom average weekly numbers of pigs slaughtered**



## Section 5: Monthly numbers of home killed livestock slaughtered by country

Table 5 shows monthly estimates of the number of cattle, sheep and pigs slaughtered for meat in England and Wales, Scotland, Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

**Table 5: United Kingdom monthly numbers of livestock slaughtered by country**

	thousand head		
	October 2018	November 2018	December 2018
	31 days	30 days	31 days
<b>England &amp; Wales</b>			
Steers	60	60	50
Heifers	46	46	37
Young Bulls	11	10	8
Cows and Adult Bulls	54	54	44
Calves	14	11	9
Clean Sheep	1123	1077	1046
Ewes and Rams	149	141	143
Clean Pigs	775	766	663
Sows and Boars	23	21	16
<b>Scotland</b>			
Steers	18	19	16
Heifers	14	14	13
Young Bulls	2	2	2
Cows and Adult Bulls	6	6	4
Calves	0	0	0
Clean Sheep	114	112	108
Ewes and Rams	2	2	2
Clean Pigs	31	31	27
Sows and Boars	1	1	1
<b>Great Britain</b>			
Steers	78	79	66
Heifers	60	60	51
Young Bulls	13	12	9
Cows and Adult Bulls	60	60	48
Calves	14	11	9
Clean Sheep	1237	1189	1154
Ewes and Rams	151	143	145
Clean Pigs	806	797	690
Sows and Boars	24	22	17
<b>Northern Ireland</b>			
Steers	17	16	14
Heifers	12	13	12
Young Bulls	3	3	3
Cows and Adult Bulls	11	10	8
Calves	1	1	0
Clean Sheep	39	37	30
Ewes and Rams	3	3	2
Clean Pigs	158	155	144
Sows and Boars	0	0	0

## Section 6: Data users, methodology, Definitions and revisions policy

### Data users

1. Users of the data include the EU Commission where these slaughtering statistics are required monthly under Regulation no. EC.1165/2008. Detailed information on this legislation is available by selecting “Animal Production” at <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/agriculture/legislation>. European level statistics on meat products (which includes data tables showing results at EU Member State level) are available at [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics\\_explained/index.php/Agricultural\\_products#Meat\\_and\\_milk](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Agricultural_products#Meat_and_milk)
2. The livestock industry is also a major user of the data, including divisions of the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB). AHDB Pork (formally known as BPEX, representing the English pig industry) and AHDB Beef and Lamb (formerly EBLEX, representing the English beef and sheep industry). Industry users rely heavily on the numbers of slaughterings and meat production to assess the current state of the industry and predict the available supplies of meat for the coming year. This, in turn, can affect meat prices and trade decisions on levels of imports and exports to maintain supply. Users have always been very keen for the slaughtering statistics to be produced as quickly as possible so that the data is still relevant. For this reason, we collect and publish these statistics to a very tight timetable, publishing within three weeks of the survey date. The “Market Intelligence” and “Market Outlook” Reports on the AHDB Beef and Lamb website refer consistently to our statistics at <http://beefandlamb.ahdb.org.uk/markets/> The AHDB Pork site provides more in-depth analysis of pigmeat production statistics at <http://pork.ahdb.org.uk/prices-stats/>
3. Contact details are available on the front page of this notice, for you to send feedback or ask questions about the information provided.

### Methodology

4. Defra runs a monthly survey of registered England and Wales slaughterhouses. It is a statutory survey (approximately 91) that collects information on livestock slaughter numbers and weight of meat produced. All major slaughterhouses participate in the survey and the response rate is typically 100%. Similar surveys are run by RERAD in Scotland and by DAERA in Northern Ireland. Scottish statistics on livestock slaughterings are available in the Economic Report on Scottish Agriculture at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Agriculture-Fisheries/PubEconomicReport> (Tables A5 and A6). This website also contains contact details and more information. Northern Ireland results are available at <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/slaughtering-cattle-and-sheep> and <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/slaughtering-pigs-2003>
5. The England and Wales slaughter survey accounts for around 90% of the E&W slaughterhouse throughput for each livestock type. These data are supplemented by administrative data from the Food Standards Agency (FSA) for smaller slaughterhouses to give complete monthly coverage of livestock slaughterings.

6. Information on the weight of meat produced from a sample of animals weighed at slaughterhouses is obtained from survey respondents, around 55 slaughterhouse respondents. From the information provided average dressed carcass weights for each animal type are primarily calculated by adding up the total weight of the meat produced and dividing by the number of animals weighed. Cold dressed carcass weights are recorded.
7. The volume of meat production is estimated from the number of all livestock slaughtered and average dressed carcass weight information collected. This total 'Home killed' production includes livestock imported into the United Kingdom for slaughter.
8. The data are subject to a variety of validation checks which identify inconsistencies in the data. All data are cleaned prior to publication in discussion with the survey respondents.
9. With effect from February 2016 the statistics published in this notice are based on calendar rather than statistical months. This change simplifies our survey processes and brings our slaughter survey in line with our milk surveys which are already run on a calendar month basis; it also removes the need for the 53 week year (which would have to be 2016). Since the end of weekly slaughter survey several years ago, there is no legislative requirement for weekly data, so since then we have derived the average weekly throughput from the monthly survey data.
10. The January 2016 data will include the last week of December 2015 and therefore be classed as a 5 week month. From 1<sup>st</sup> February 2016 onwards the statistics are based on calendar months.

## **Definitions**

11. Steers (or Bullocks): Castrated males over 1 year old, raised for beef.

Heifers: Female animals that have not calved. Over 1 year old, raised for beef.

Young bulls: Non-castrated young males, raised for beef, generally slaughtered around 13 months old.

Prime cattle: All those raised specifically for beef production. Total of Steers + Heifers + Young Bulls.

Breeding bulls: Older cull males, previously used for breeding

Cows: Older cull females, previously used for breeding

Calves: All bovine animals aged 1 year old or younger. Prior to May 2014, the definition was "animals weighing less than 165kg".

## **Revisions policy**

12. Figures in this notice are provisional and subject to revision. We will provide information about any revisions we make to previously published information in this statistics notice and the associated datasets. Revisions could occur for various reasons, including:

- a. if we have not received survey data from respondents we make an estimate based on their previous returns. These estimates will be replaced with actual survey data when it is received.
- b. survey respondents occasionally supply amended figures for previous periods.
- c. if we have not received administrative data for the smaller slaughterhouses we make an estimate based on previous data received. These estimates will be replaced with actual data when it is received.