



10<sup>th</sup> October 2019

## United Kingdom Slaughter Statistics – September 2019

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### Key points

The key results for **September 2019 compared to September 2018** are:

- **Cattle:** UK prime cattle (steers, heifers and young bulls) slaughterings in September 2019 were up 6.8% on September 2018 at 170,000 head. Beef and veal production was 77,000 tonnes, 6.5% higher than in September 2018.
- **Sheep:** UK clean sheep slaughterings were up 6.9% on September 2018 at 1187,000 head. Mutton and lamb production was 27,000 tonnes, 8.4% higher than in September 2018.
- **Pigs:** UK clean pig slaughterings were 4.5% higher than in September 2018 at 887,000 head. Pigmear production was 78,000 tonnes, 5.9% higher than in September 2018.

Response rates for September were 90% for England and Wales.

This notice will be updated at 09:30 on 14<sup>th</sup> November 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				
	September 2018 30 days	July 2019 31 days	August 2019 31 days	September 2019 30 days	yr on yr % change
Steers	82	78	80	87	-5.4%
Heifers	60	60	61	67	-10.0%
Young Bulls	17	24	19	16	3.4%
Cows and Adult Bulls	59	53	55	59	0.1%
Calves(1)	12	9	10	14	-11%
Clean Sheep	1110	1090	1251	1187	-6.4%
Ewes and Rams	129	148	174	147	-12%
Clean Pigs	849	907	939	887	-4.3%
Sows and Boars	21	19	19	19	7.5%

(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 <sup>(2)</sup>

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 <sup>(2)</sup>**

	kilogramme			
	September 2018	July 2019	August 2019	September 2019
Steers	356.1	362.5	360.4	360.5
Heifers	318.7	327.3	325.2	316.6
Young Bulls	336.6	353.6	353.0	342.1
Cows and Adult Bulls	293.6	312.8	308.7	305.8
Calves(1)	58.0	83.0	70.1	56.1
Clean Sheep	19.4	19.5	19.3	19.5
Ewes and Rams	25.9	26.4	26.8	25.7
Clean Pigs	82.9	83.9	84.7	84.4
Sows and Boars	143.0	148.1	146.9	145.8

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

(2) Revised methodology for calculating cattle DCW has been applied from January 2018 onwards. 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					
	September 2018 30 days	July 2019 31 days	August 2019 31 days	September 2019 30 days	yr on yr % change
Beef	72	73	73	77	-6.1%
Mutton and Lamb	25	25	29	27	-7.7%
Pigmeat	73	79	82	78	-5.6%

(1) Revised methodology for calculating cattle DCW has been applied from January 2018 onwards. This change will impact production volume data. Please see methodology for full details.

### 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.

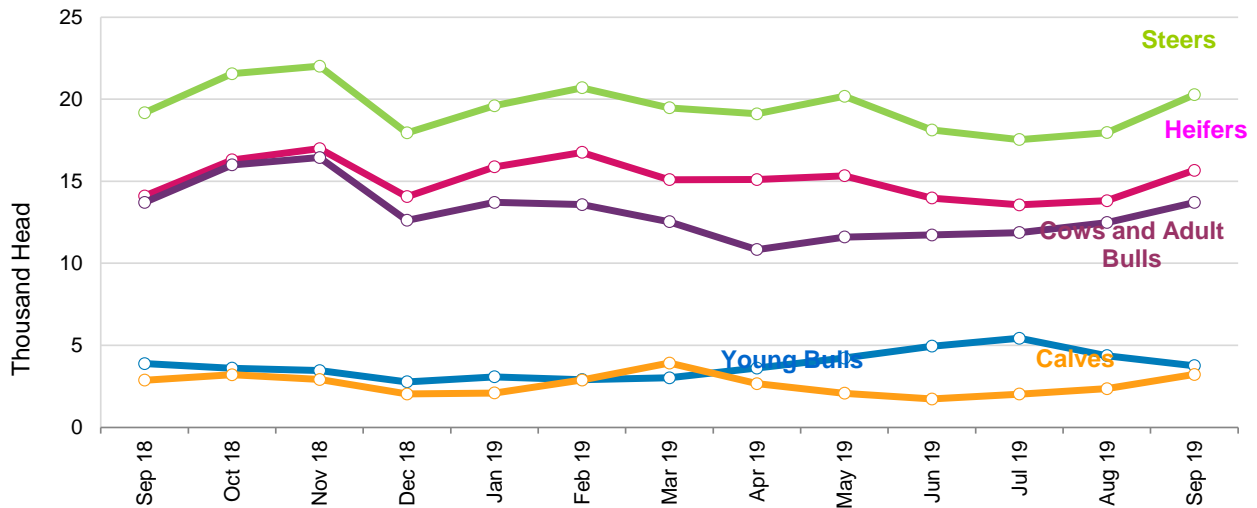
Longer term trends can be seen in Figures 4:1, 4:2 and 4:3, following this table.

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

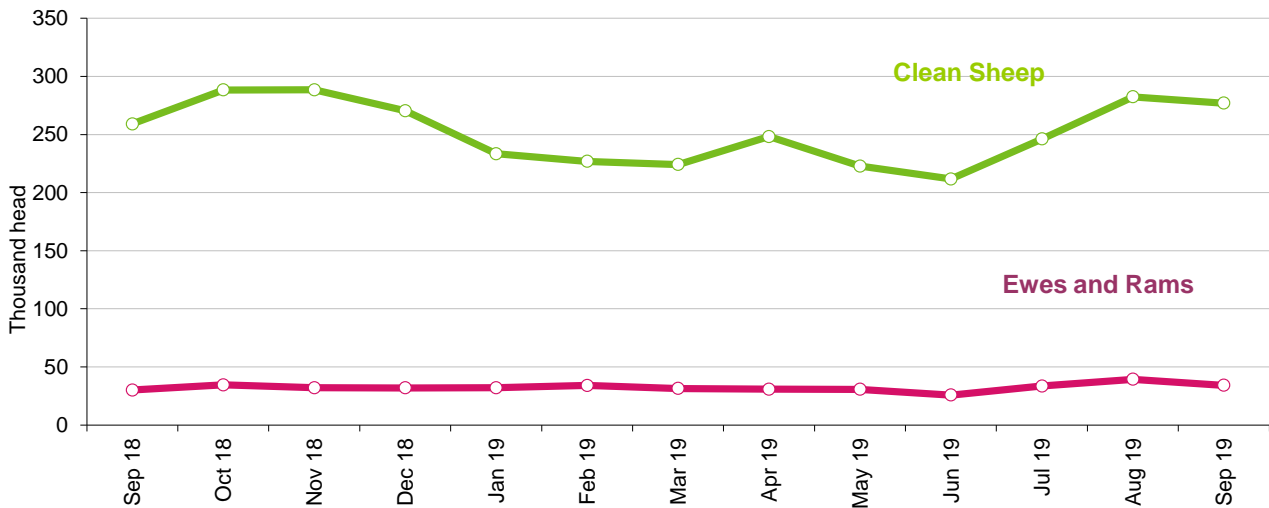
thousand head													
	2018 Sep	2018 Oct	2018 Nov	2018 Dec	2019 Jan	2019 Feb	2019 Mar	2019 Apr	2019 May	2019 Jun	2019 Jul	2019 Aug	2019 Sep
Steers	19	22	22	18	20	21	19	19	20	18	18	18	20
Heifers	14	16	17	14	16	17	15	15	15	14	14	14	16
Young Bulls	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	5	5	4	4
Cows and Adult Bulls	14	16	16	13	14	14	13	11	12	12	12	12	14
Calves	3	3	3	2	2	3	4	3	2	2	2	2	3
Clean Sheep	259	288	288	270	233	227	224	248	223	212	246	282	277
Ewes and Rams	30	35	32	32	32	34	31	31	31	26	34	39	34
Clean Pigs	198	218	222	189	212	209	194	207	206	189	205	212	207
Sows and Boars	5	5	5	4	6	5	5	4	5	4	4	4	5

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

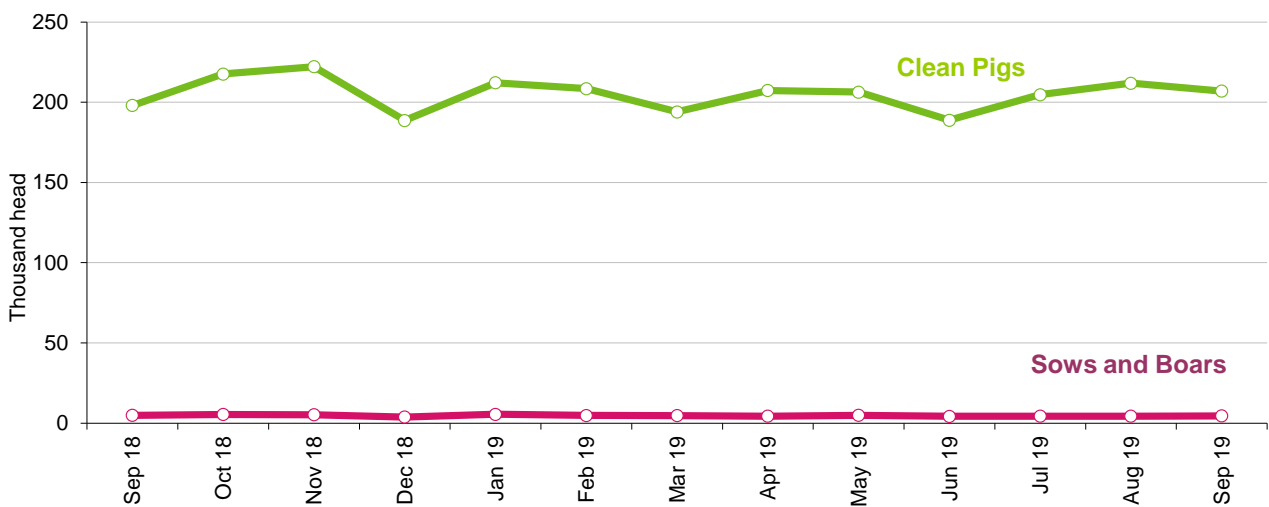
**Figure 4:1 United Kingdom average weekly numbers of cattle slaughtered**



**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		
	July 2019	August 2019	September 2019
	31 days	31 days	30 days
<b>England &amp; Wales</b>			
Steers	53	51	54
Heifers	41	40	44
Young Bulls	13	11	10
Cows and Adult Bulls	40	41	45
Calves	9	10	13
Clean Sheep	958	1090	1029
Ewes and Rams	145	169	142
Clean Pigs	733	747	715
Sows and Boars	18	18	18
<b>Scotland</b>			
Steers	15	16	18
Heifers	10	12	13
Young Bulls	5	4	2
Cows and Adult Bulls	4	5	5
Calves	0	0	0
Clean Sheep	92	113	120
Ewes and Rams	2	2	2
Clean Pigs	30	30	27
Sows and Boars	1	1	1
<b>Great Britain</b>			
Steers	68	67	72
Heifers	51	52	56
Young Bulls	19	15	12
Cows and Adult Bulls	45	46	49
Calves	9	10	13
Clean Sheep	1050	1203	1150
Ewes and Rams	146	171	144
Clean Pigs	763	777	742
Sows and Boars	19	19	19
<b>Northern Ireland</b>			
Steers	10	12	15
Heifers	9	10	11
Young Bulls	6	4	4
Cows and Adult Bulls	8	9	10
Calves	0	1	0
Clean Sheep	40	48	37
Ewes and Rams	2	3	3
Clean Pigs	144	161	145
Sows and Boars	0	0	0

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

## 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 85) 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 carcase 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 carcase weights are recorded.
7. The volume of meat production is estimated from the number of all livestock slaughtered and average dressed carcase 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.
11. We have carried out a review of the methodology for calculating the dressed carcase weights in order to align with UK specifications. Some slaughterhouses provide Cattle Dressed Carcase Weights (DCW) including Kidney Knob and Channel Fat (KKCF); some slaughterhouses provide pig weights at EC specification. From September 2019 cattle DCWs are calculated to UK specification which excludes KKCF; Pigs are dressed to UK specification.
12. To calculate the DCW of animals by category:
  - a. If the slaughterhouse includes KKCF in the total weight, a deduction of 3.9% occurs. This aligns to the UK DCW specification.  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-beef-carcase-classification-scheme-classify-carcases>
  - b. If pigs are dressed to EC specification then an increase of 1.6% to the DCW occurs to align with UK specification.  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-pig-carcase-grading-scheme-dress-and-grade-carcases>
13. Some slaughterhouses specialise for niche markets. These slaughterhouses are treated separately so their DCW are not used to raise the data for those slaughterhouses who do not provide DCW data.
14. Data have been revised to January 2018 using the new methodology. If you have any questions or comments we are happy to discuss. Please contact us at [DEFRA.FISU@defra.gov.uk](mailto:DEFRA.FISU@defra.gov.uk)

## Definitions

15. 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

16. 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.