



21st May 2015

United Kingdom Slaughter Statistics – April 2015

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Key points

This release shows the latest monthly information on the slaughtering of cattle, sheep and pigs. It also includes dressed carcass weight and meat production information. The key results for **April 2015** are given below:

- **Cattle:** UK prime cattle (steers, heifers and young bulls) slaughterings in February 2015 were 2.6% lower than April 2014 at 184 thousand head. Beef and veal production was 81 thousand tonnes, 2.2% lower than in April 2014.
- **Sheep:** UK clean sheep slaughterings were 4.2% lower than in April 2014 at 1058 thousand head. This is the first month there has been a drop in throughput year on year since March 2014. Mutton and lamb production was 25 thousand tonnes, 6.1% lower than in April 2014.
- **Pigs:** UK clean pig slaughterings were 3.4% higher than in April 2014 at 969 thousand head. Pigmeat production was 82 thousand tonnes, 4.4% higher than in April 2014.

This notice will be updated at 09:30 on 18th June 2015. Additional time series which include weekly slaughter averages, production and trade data can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/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. The survey is run according to statistical, rather than calendar months, the number of weeks in the statistical month is specified below.

Table 1: United Kingdom monthly numbers of livestock slaughtered thousand head

	April 2014 5 weeks	February 2015 4weeks	March 2015 4weeks	April 2015 5weeks	yr on yr % change
Steers	94	81	82	98	4.2%
Heifers	72	63	59	69	-4.3%
Young Bulls	23	13	13	17	-26%
Cows and Adult Bulls	47	50	44	48	1.6%
Calves ⁽¹⁾	11	9	11	8	-24%
Clean Sheep	1104	877	938	1058	-4.2%
Ewes and Rams	159	117	109	143	-10%
Clean Pigs	937	817	812	969	3.4%
Sows and Boars	24	19	20	23	-5.6%

(1)The definition of Calves from May 2014 is "Bovines less than 1 year old". Pre-May 2014, the definition was "Bovines weighing less than 165kg". Please see Methodology page for full details.

Section 2: Average dressed carcase weights

Table 2 shows the monthly average dressed carcase weight of livestock slaughtered for meat for human consumption in the United Kingdom.

Table 2: United Kingdom average dressed carcase weights kilogramme

	February 2015	March 2015	April 2015
Steers	370.7	370.4	373.1
Heifers	329.7	330.3	328.9
Young Bulls	337.1	340.8	346.9
Cows and Adult Bulls	316.7	316.8	317.5
Calves ⁽¹⁾	36.8	35.3	52.1
Clean Sheep	20.0	20.5	20.2
Ewes and Rams	26.3	27.3	27.6
Clean Pigs	82.3	81.8	81.6
Sows and Boars	177.0	156.5	146.4

(1)The definition of Calves from May 2014 is "Bovines less than 1 year old". Pre-May 2014, the definition was "Bovines weighing less than 165kg". Please see Methodology page for full details.

Section 3: Monthly volumes of home killed meat production

Table 3 shows the monthly volumes of meat produced in UK abattoirs. Data is shown according to statistical, rather than calendar months, number of weeks in statistical month as specified.

Table 3: United Kingdom monthly volumes of meat production thousand tonnes

	February 2015 4 weeks	March 2015 4 weeks	April 2015 5 weeks
Beef	71	68	81
Mutton and Lamb	21	22	25
Pigmeat	71	69	82

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 weeks in the statistical month. To get a clearer measure of trends weekly averages are calculated by dividing the number of livestock slaughtered each month by the number of weeks in the statistical month.

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

	2014					2015							
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
Steers	19	19	18	17	18	20	22	22	18	19	20	20	20
Heifers	14	14	13	12	12	13	14	15	14	15	16	15	14
Young Bulls	5	6	6	6	5	5	4	4	3	3	3	3	3
Cows and Adult Bulls	9	10	10	10	11	12	14	14	12	13	13	11	10
Calves ⁽¹⁾	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	2
Clean Sheep	221	201	232	255	270	284	311	287	277	226	219	234	212
Ewes and Rams	32	30	33	34	39	38	40	33	31	27	29	27	29
Clean Pigs	187	188	193	194	194	205	206	217	199	191	204	203	194
Sows and Boars	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	4	4	5	5	5

(1)The definition of Calves from May 2014 is "Bovines less than 1 year old". Pre-May 2014, the definition was "Bovines weighing less than 165kg". Please see Methodology page for full details.

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

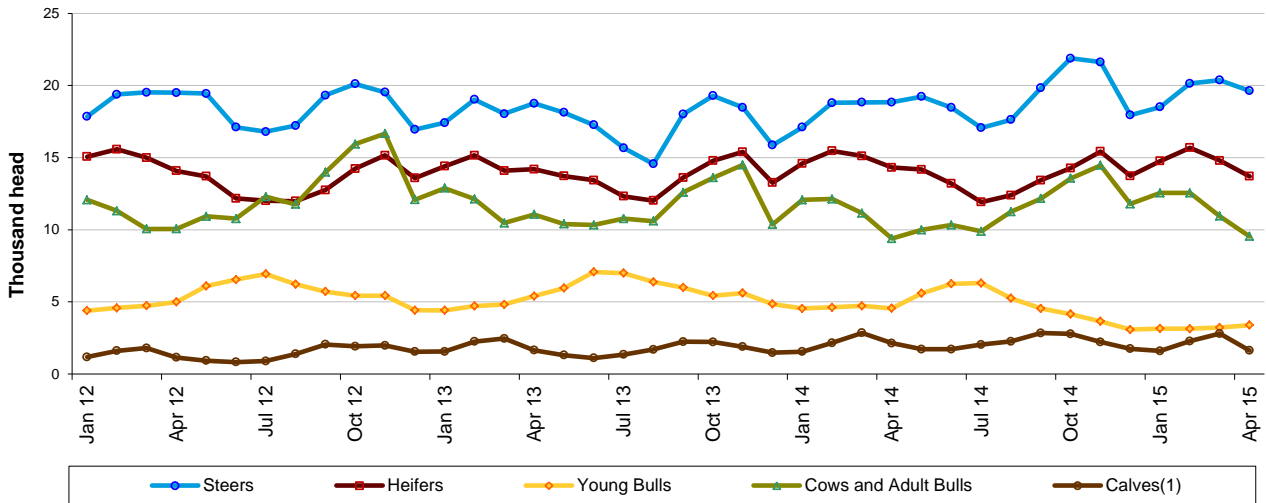


Figure 4:2 United Kingdom average weekly numbers of sheep slaughtered

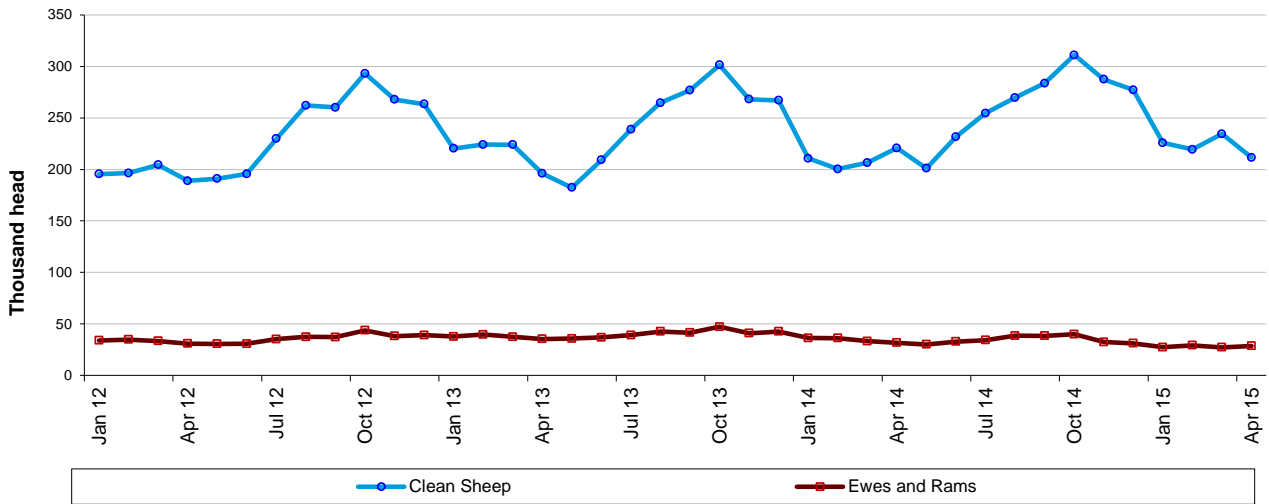
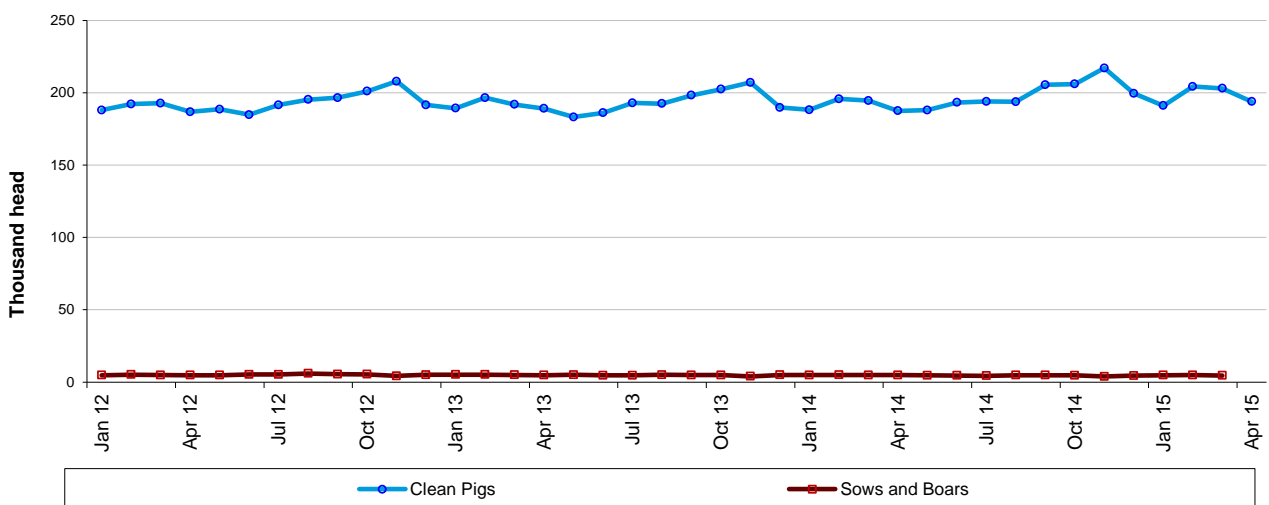


Figure 4:3 United Kingdom average weekly numbers of pigs slaughtered



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		
	February 2015	March 2015	April 2015
	4weeks	4weeks	5weeks
England & Wales			
Steers	50	50	61
Heifers	39	36	41
Young Bulls	9	9	12
Cows and Adult Bulls	39	33	36
Calves ⁽¹⁾	9	11	7
Clean Sheep	746	804	904
Ewes and Rams	112	106	137
Clean Pigs	662	664	791
Sows and Boars	19	19	22
Scotland			
Steers	16	17	22
Heifers	14	13	16
Young Bulls	2	1	2
Cows and Adult Bulls	5	4	5
Calves ⁽¹⁾	0	0	0
Clean Sheep	110	112	125
Ewes and Rams	1	1	3
Clean Pigs	24	24	27
Sows and Boars	0	0	0
Great Britain			
Steers	67	67	83
Heifers	52	49	57
Young Bulls	10	10	14
Cows and Adult Bulls	43	38	41
Calves ⁽¹⁾	9	11	7
Clean Sheep	856	916	1029
Ewes and Rams	114	107	140
Clean Pigs	686	688	818
Sows and Boars	19	20	23
Northern Ireland			
Steers	14	15	15
Heifers	11	10	11
Young Bulls	2	2	3
Cows and Adult Bulls	7	6	6
Calves ⁽¹⁾	1	0	1
Clean Sheep	21	22	28
Ewes and Rams	4	2	3
Clean Pigs	132	124	151
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
2. The livestock industry are also major users of the data, including divisions of the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) known as BPEX (representing the English pig industry) and 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 EBLEX website refer consistently to our statistics at <http://markets.eblex.org.uk/markets/market-intelligence-publications.aspx>. The BPEX site provides more in-depth analysis of pigmeat production statistics at <http://www.bpex.org.uk/prices-facts-figures/production/UKpigmeatsuppliesforecasts.aspx>
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 97) 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 DARD 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 <http://www.dardni.gov.uk/index/statistics/agricultural-inputs-and-outputs.htm>
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 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.

Definitions

9. To align with EU regulatory requirements, the definition of calves has been changed in this survey from May 2014 onwards to refer to age of animals, rather than weight. The new definition of calves is "bovines aged 12 months or under", whereas previous data (pre-May 2014) referred to "bovines weighing less than 165kg". This change in definition has had negligible impact to both the numbers of slaughterings and the volumes of production as the levels of UK calf slaughterings are so small. Veal production only contributes around 0.7% (470 tonnes) to the total 68 thousand tonnes of beef and veal produced in May 2014. This compares to 0.4% (280 tonnes) in May 2013.

The main difference can be seen in the calf weights as they have jumped up from an average 52kg in April 2014 to 67kg in May 2014. This is due to extra (heavier) animals which are less than a year old so which now fall into the calf category.

10. 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" but this has been amended in line with EU Regulation 1165/2008 definitions. See "Revisions" section for details of the impact of this change.

Revisions policy

11. 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.
12. The change in Calves definition in May 2014 (from <165kg to 1 year old or younger) has had negligible impact to both the numbers of slaughterings and the volumes of production as the levels of UK calf slaughterings are so small. Veal production only contributes around 0.7% (470 tonnes) to the total 68 thousand tonnes of beef and veal produced in May 2014. This compares to 0.4% (280 tonnes) in May 2013. The main difference can be seen in the calf weights as they have jumped up from an average 52kg in April 2014 to 67kg in May 2014. This is due to extra (heavier) animals which are less than a year old so which now fall into the calf category.
13. **This month minor revisions have been made to February and March 2015 data. This is due to actual survey data replacing estimates. The scale of revision is small. For example March 2015 beef production has been revised by around 360 tonnes (- 0.5%), mutton and lamb production by around 170 tonnes (0.17%) and Pigmear has been revised by 162 tonnes(-0.16%).**