



18<sup>th</sup> June 2015

## United Kingdom Slaughter Statistics – May 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 carcase weight and meat production information. The key results for **May 2015** are given below:

- **Cattle:** UK prime cattle (steers, heifers and young bulls) slaughterings in May 2015 were 7.8% lower than May 2014 at 144 thousand head. Beef and veal production was 64 thousand tonnes, 6.9% lower than in May 2014.
- **Sheep:** UK clean sheep slaughterings were 0.1% lower than in May 2014 at 803 thousand head. Mutton and lamb production was 19 thousand tonnes, 0.2% lower than in May 2014.
- **Pigs:** UK clean pig slaughterings were 5.0% higher than in May 2014 at 789 thousand head. Pigmeat production was 67 thousand tonnes, 5.5% higher than in May 2014.

This notice will be updated at 09:30 on 16<sup>th</sup> July 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

	May 2014 4 weeks	March 2015 4weeks	April 2015 5weeks	May 2015 4weeks	yr on yr % change
Steers	77	82	97	74	-3.4%
Heifers	57	59	68	53	-6.3%
Young Bulls	22	13	17	16	-27%
Cows and Adult Bulls	40	44	48	39	-3.1%
Calves <sup>(1)</sup>	7	11	9	5	-23%
Clean Sheep	804	938	1083	803	-0.1%
Ewes and Rams	120	109	144	101	-16%
Clean Pigs	752	812	971	789	5.0%
Sows and Boars	19	20	23	18	-7.3%

(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

	March 2015	April 2015	May 2015
Steers	370.4	374.6	374.2
Heifers	330.3	330.2	330.0
Young Bulls	340.8	346.8	356.5
Cows and Adult Bulls	316.8	316.7	316.0
Calves <sup>(1)</sup>	35.3	50.2	56.9
Clean Sheep	20.5	20.3	20.4
Ewes and Rams	27.3	27.6	28.4
Clean Pigs	81.8	81.6	81.2
Sows and Boars	156.5	146.6	146.0

(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

	March 2015 4 weeks	April 2015 5 weeks	May 2015 4 weeks
Beef	68	80	64
Mutton and Lamb	22	26	19
Pigmeat	69	83	67

### 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.

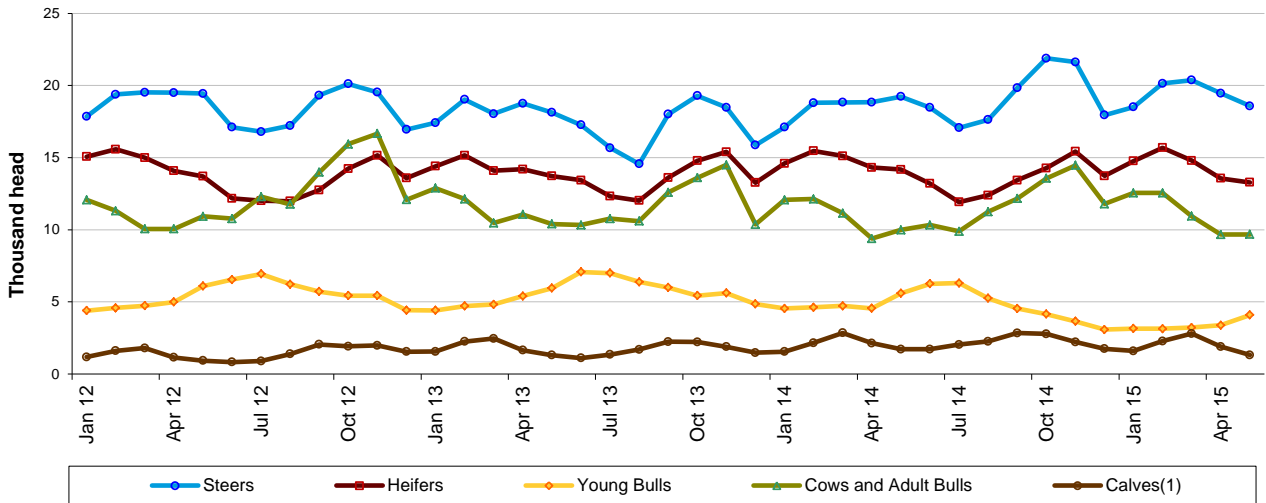
Longer term trends can be seen in Figures 4:1, 4:2 and 4:3, following this table.

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

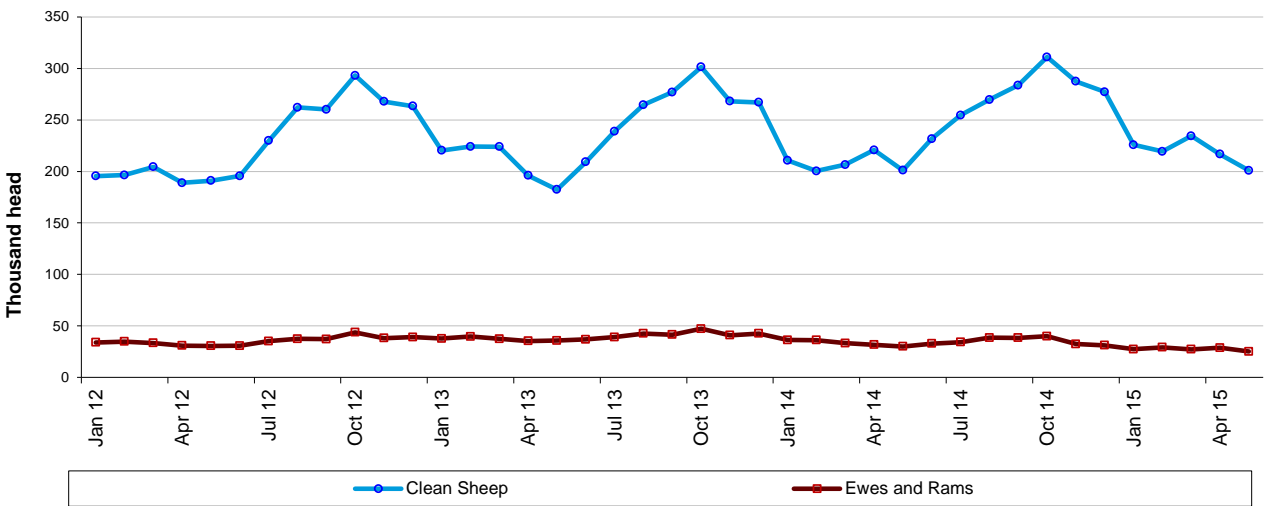
	2014					2015							
	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
Steers	19	18	17	18	20	22	22	18	19	20	20	19	19
Heifers	14	13	12	12	13	14	15	14	15	16	15	14	13
Young Bulls	6	6	6	5	5	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	4
Cows and Adult Bulls	10	10	10	11	12	14	14	12	13	13	11	10	10
Calves <sup>(1)</sup>	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	2	1
Clean Sheep	201	232	255	270	284	311	287	277	226	219	234	217	201
Ewes and Rams	30	33	34	39	38	40	33	31	27	29	27	29	25
Clean Pigs	188	193	194	194	205	206	217	199	191	204	203	194	197
Sows and Boars	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	4	4	5	5	5	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.

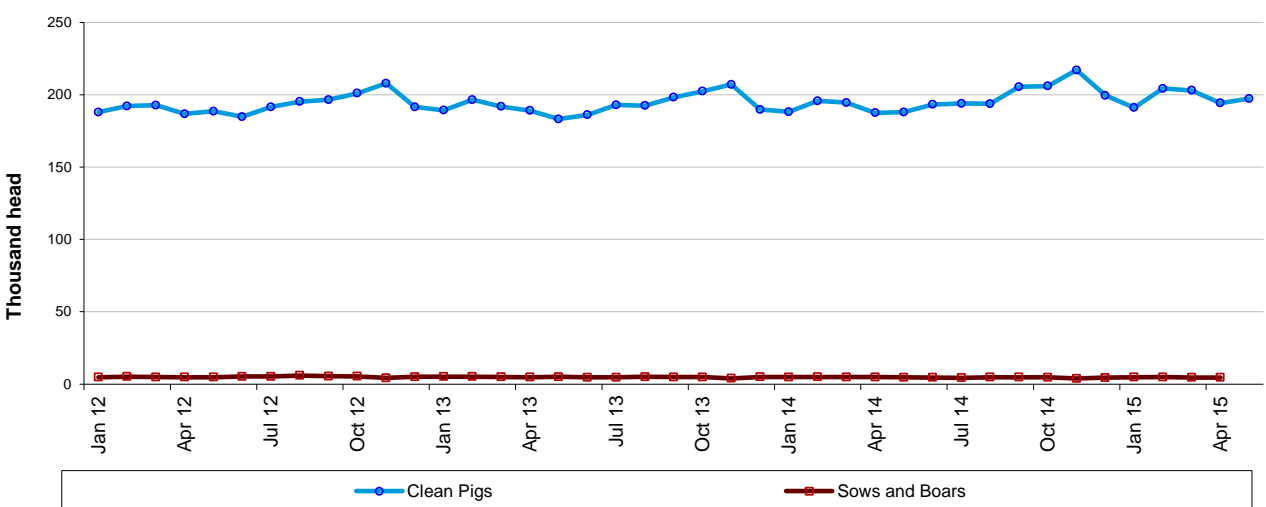
**Figure 4:1 United Kingdom average weekly numbers of cattle slaughtered**



**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		
	March 2015	April 2015	May 2015
	4weeks	5weeks	4weeks
<b>England &amp; Wales</b>			
Steers	50	61	45
Heifers	36	42	33
Young Bulls	9	12	11
Cows and Adult Bulls	33	37	30
Calves <sup>(1)</sup>	11	9	5
Clean Sheep	804	925	715
Ewes and Rams	106	139	97
Clean Pigs	664	791	644
Sows and Boars	19	22	18
<b>Scotland</b>			
Steers	17	21	16
Heifers	13	15	11
Young Bulls	1	2	3
Cows and Adult Bulls	4	5	4
Calves <sup>(1)</sup>	0	0	0
Clean Sheep	112	130	64
Ewes and Rams	1	1	1
Clean Pigs	24	29	22
Sows and Boars	0	0	0
<b>Great Britain</b>			
Steers	67	82	61
Heifers	49	57	44
Young Bulls	10	14	14
Cows and Adult Bulls	38	42	34
Calves <sup>(1)</sup>	11	9	5
Clean Sheep	916	1055	778
Ewes and Rams	107	141	98
Clean Pigs	688	820	667
Sows and Boars	20	23	18
<b>Northern Ireland</b>			
Steers	15	15	13
Heifers	10	11	9
Young Bulls	2	3	2
Cows and Adult Bulls	6	6	5
Calves <sup>(1)</sup>	0	1	0
Clean Sheep	22	28	25
Ewes and Rams	2	3	2
Clean Pigs	124	151	123
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 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 revisions have been made to and March and April 2015 data. This is due to actual data from Scotland replacing estimates and amended survey data. For example April 2015 beef production has been revised by around 115 tonnes (0.1%), mutton and lamb production by around 597 tonnes ( - 2.3%) and Pigmeat has been revised by 188.5 tonnes(- 0.2%).**