



16th April 2015

United Kingdom Slaughter Statistics – March 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 **March 2015** are given below:

- **Cattle:** UK prime cattle (steers, heifers and young bulls) slaughterings in February 2015 were 1.0% lower than March 2014 at 153 thousand head. Beef and veal production was 69 thousand tonnes, 0.6% lower than in March 2014.
- **Sheep:** UK clean sheep slaughterings were 15% higher than in March 2014 at 952 thousand head. Throughputs have now been higher year on year every month for the past twelve months. Mutton and lamb production was 22 thousand tonnes, 10% higher than in March 2014.
- **Pigs:** UK clean pig slaughterings were 4.1% higher than in March 2014 at 810 thousand head. Pigmeat production was 69 thousand tonnes, 5.3% higher than in March 2014.

This notice will be updated at 09:30 on 21st May 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

	March 2014 4 weeks	January 2015 5 weeks	February 2015 4 weeks	March 2015 4 weeks	yr on yr % change
Steers	75	93	80	81	8.0%
Heifers	60	74	63	60	-1.4%
Young Bulls	19	16	13	12	-36%
Cows and Adult Bulls	45	63	50	45	1.8%
Calves ⁽¹⁾	11	8	9	11	-3.7%
Clean Sheep	826	1129	889	952	15%
Ewes and Rams	133	137	114	105	-21%
Clean Pigs	778	956	816	810	4.1%
Sows and Boars	20	22	19	20	-1.3%

(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 carcass weights

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

Table 2: United Kingdom average dressed carcass weights kilogramme

	January 2015	February 2015	March 2015
Steers	369.5	370.7	370.4
Heifers	328.3	329.7	330.3
Young Bulls	340.4	337.1	340.6
Cows and Adult Bulls	316.1	316.7	316.5
Calves ⁽¹⁾	46.5	37.0	35.5
Clean Sheep	19.7	20.0	20.5
Ewes and Rams	27.5	26.3	27.3
Clean Pigs	82.8	82.3	81.8
Sows and Boars	154.6	177.0	156.5

(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.

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

	January 2015 5 weeks	February 2015 4 weeks	March 2015 4 weeks
Beef	84	71	69
Mutton and Lamb	26	21	22
Pigmeat	82	71	69

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
	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Steers	19	19	19	18	17	18	20	22	22	18	19	20	20
Heifers	15	14	14	13	12	12	13	14	15	14	15	16	15
Young Bulls	5	5	6	6	6	5	5	4	4	3	3	3	3
Cows and Adult Bulls	11	9	10	10	10	11	12	14	14	12	13	13	11
Calves ⁽¹⁾	3	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	3
Clean Sheep	207	221	201	232	255	270	284	311	287	277	226	222	238
Ewes and Rams	33	32	30	33	34	39	38	40	33	31	27	29	26
Clean Pigs	195	187	188	193	194	194	205	206	217	199	191	204	203
Sows and Boars	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	4	4	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

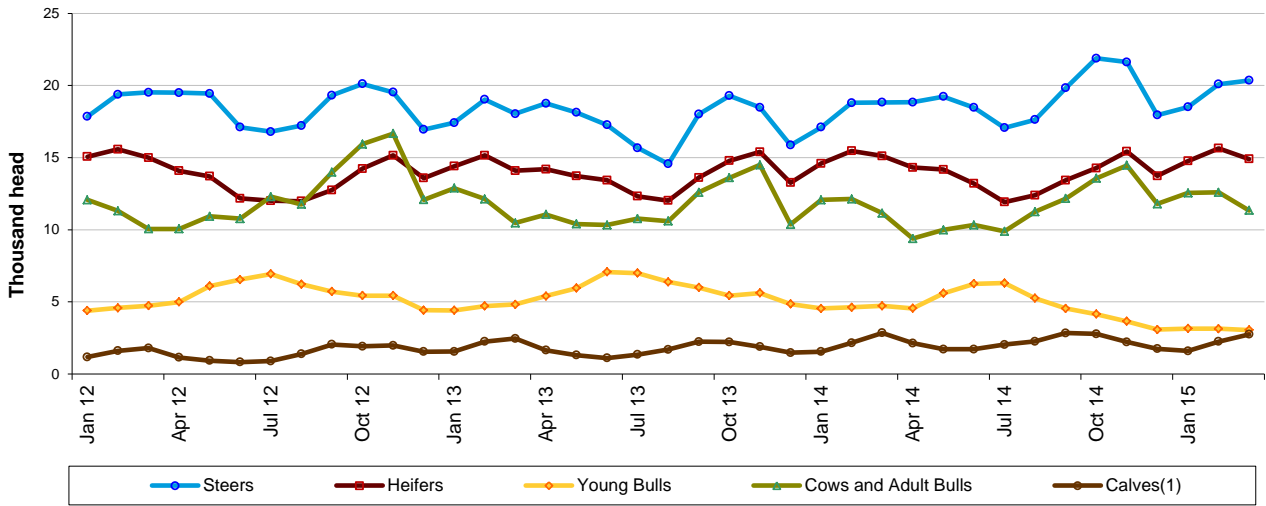


Figure 4:2 United Kingdom average weekly numbers of sheep slaughtered

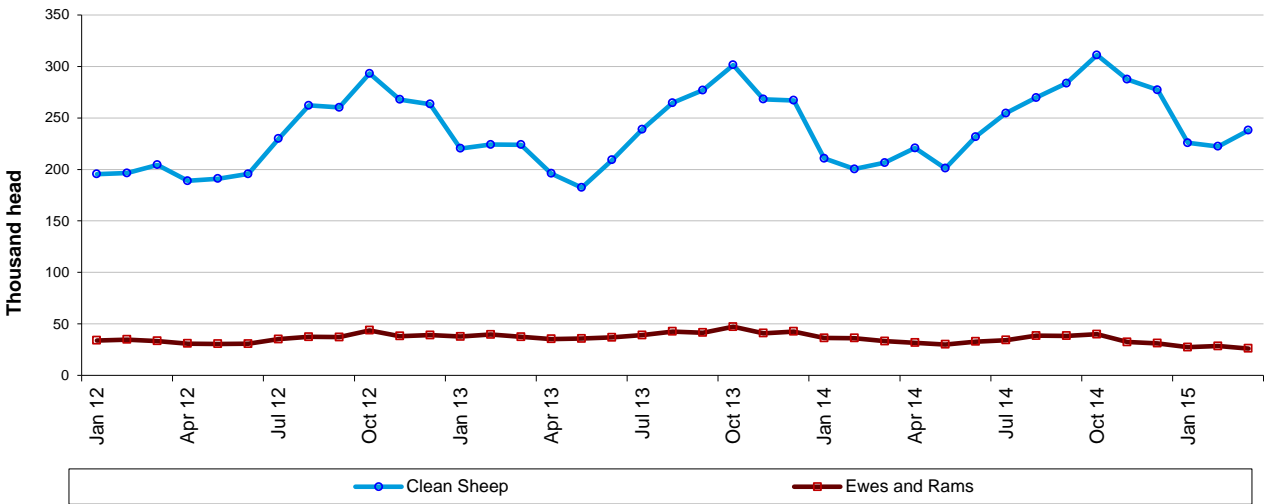
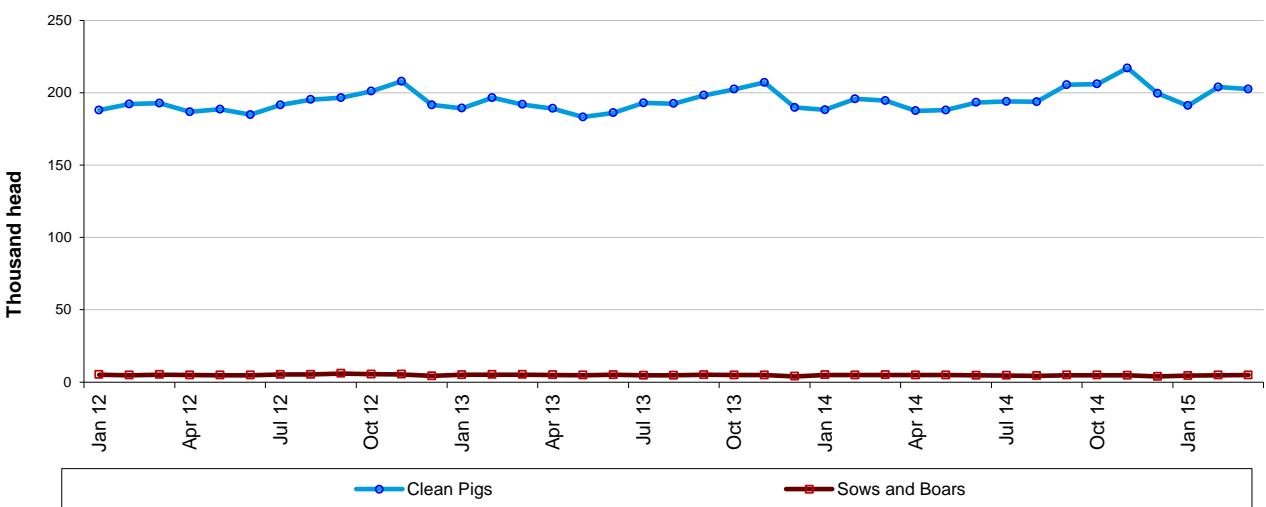


Figure 4:3 United Kingdom average weekly numbers of pigs slaughtered



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		
	January 2015	February 2015	March 2015
	5weeks	4weeks	4weeks
England & Wales			
Steers	57	50	50
Heifers	44	38	37
Young Bulls	11	9	8
Cows and Adult Bulls	49	39	35
Calves ⁽¹⁾	7	8	10
Clean Sheep	963	758	818
Ewes and Rams	131	110	101
Clean Pigs	768	660	662
Sows and Boars	22	19	19
Scotland			
Steers	19	16	17
Heifers	17	14	13
Young Bulls	2	2	1
Cows and Adult Bulls	6	5	4
Calves ⁽¹⁾	0	0	0
Clean Sheep	134	110	112
Ewes and Rams	2	1	1
Clean Pigs	27	24	24
Sows and Boars	0	0	0
Great Britain			
Steers	76	66	67
Heifers	61	52	49
Young Bulls	13	10	10
Cows and Adult Bulls	54	44	39
Calves ⁽¹⁾	7	8	10
Clean Sheep	1097	868	930
Ewes and Rams	133	111	103
Clean Pigs	795	684	686
Sows and Boars	22	19	20
Northern Ireland			
Steers	17	14	15
Heifers	13	11	10
Young Bulls	3	2	2
Cows and Adult Bulls	8	7	6
Calves ⁽¹⁾	1	1	0
Clean Sheep	32	21	22
Ewes and Rams	5	4	2
Clean Pigs	161	132	124
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 2015 data. This is due to actual survey data replacing estimates. The scale of revision is small, February 2015 Scottish pigmeat production has been revised by around 214 tonnes (- 0.3%).**