



17th March 2016

United Kingdom Slaughter Statistics – February 2016

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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 **February 2016** are given below:

- **Cattle:** UK prime cattle (steers, heifers and young bulls) slaughterings in February 2016 were 0.3% higher than February 2015 at 156 thousand head. Beef and veal production was 71 thousand tonnes, 0.5% lower than in February 2015.
- **Sheep:** UK clean sheep slaughterings were 3.7% lower than in February 2015 at 845 thousand head. Mutton and lamb production was 20 thousand tonnes, 1.0% lower than in February 2015.
- **Pigs:** UK clean pig slaughterings were 7.5% higher than in February 2015 at 879 thousand head. Pigmeat production was 76 thousand tonnes, 9.1% higher than in February 2015.

This notice will be updated at 09:30 on 14th April 2016. 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. 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

	February 2015 4 weeks	December 2015 4 weeks	January 2016 5 weeks	February 2016 29 days	yr on yr % change
Steers	81	78	90	82	2.2%
Heifers	63	55	66	60	-4.0%
Young Bulls	13	14	16	14	9.2%
Cows and Adult Bulls	50	48	60	54	7.8%
Calves ⁽¹⁾	9	8	9	10	5.7%
Clean Sheep	877	1065	1061	845	-3.7%
Ewes and Rams	117	120	146	133	13%
Clean Pigs	817	823	979	879	7.5%
Sows and Boars	19	17	25	22	17%

(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

	December 2015	January 2016	February 2016
Steers	360.3	376.3	363.8
Heifers	321.8	333.3	324.8
Young Bulls	307.4	314.3	307.8
Cows and Adult Bulls	307.7	312.1	309.2
Calves ⁽¹⁾	58.5	61.0	57.3
Clean Sheep	18.8	19.4	20.0
Ewes and Rams	26.5	25.8	25.9
Clean Pigs	81.0	83.8	83.3
Sows and Boars	147.3	146.6	145.9

(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

	December 2015 4 weeks	January 2016 5 weeks	February 2016 29 days
Beef	65	80	71
Mutton and Lamb	23	24	20
Pigmeat	69	86	76

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

	2015					2016							
	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb
Steers	20	20	19	19	18	19	18	19	21	22	20	18	20
Heifers	16	15	14	13	12	12	12	12	14	15	14	13	15
Young Bulls	3	3	3	4	5	5	5	4	4	4	3	3	3
Cows and Adult Bulls	13	11	10	9	10	11	12	12	14	16	12	12	13
Calves ⁽¹⁾	2	3	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Clean Sheep	219	234	217	208	245	258	282	324	275	274	266	212	204
Ewes and Rams	29	27	28	26	30	30	33	43	34	32	30	29	32
Clean Pigs	204	203	194	197	203	201	205	207	217	222	206	196	212
Sows and Boars	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	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

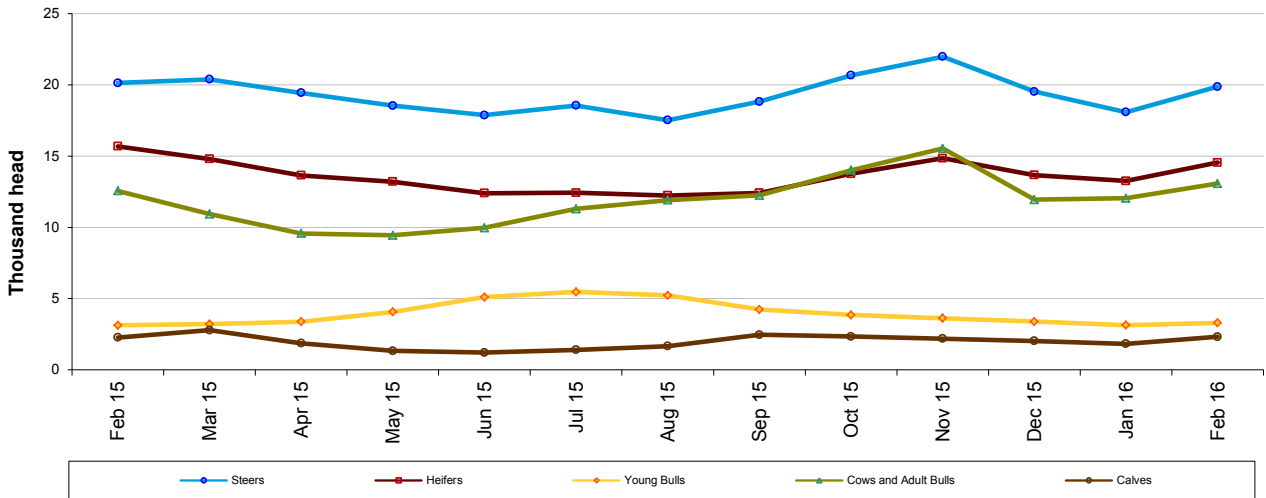


Figure 4:2 United Kingdom average weekly numbers of sheep slaughtered

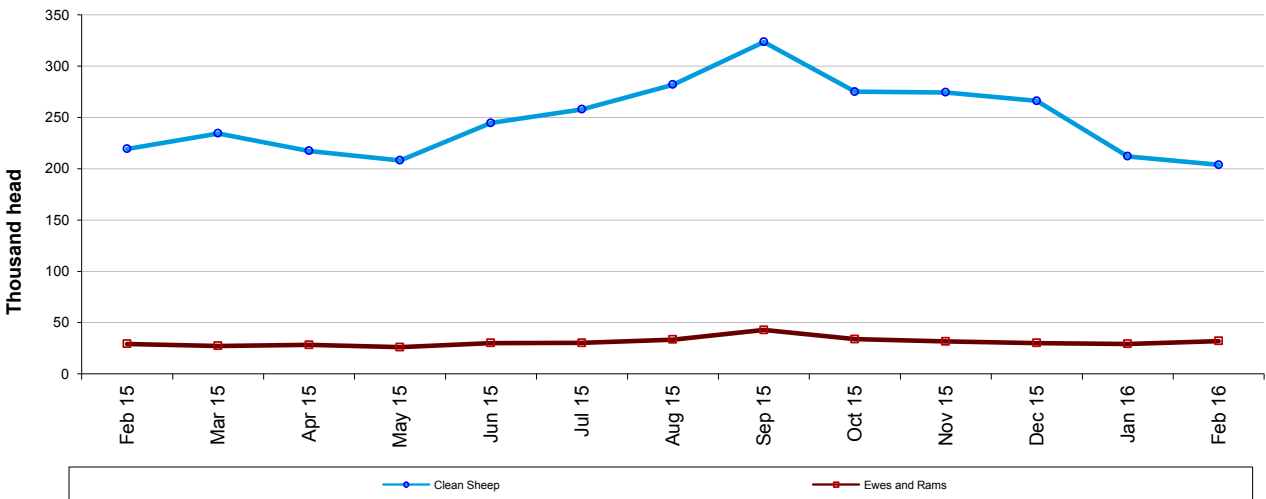
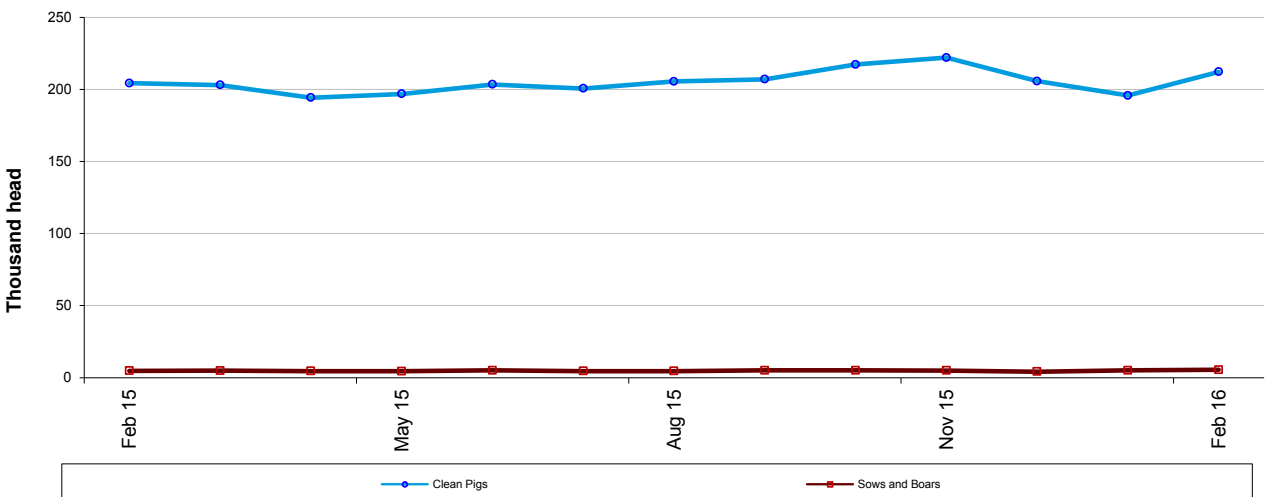


Figure 4:3 United Kingdom average weekly numbers of pigs slaughtered



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		
	December 2015	January 2016	February 2016
	4 weeks	5 weeks	29 days
England & Wales			
Steers	48	58	52
Heifers	32	40	37
Young Bulls	9	10	9
Cows and Adult Bulls	35	46	41
Calves ⁽¹⁾	8	8	9
Clean Sheep	929	915	731
Ewes and Rams	116	141	129
Clean Pigs	677	803	708
Sows and Boars	17	25	22
Scotland			
Steers	16	18	17
Heifers	13	15	13
Young Bulls	2	2	2
Cows and Adult Bulls	5	6	5
Calves ⁽¹⁾	0	0	0
Clean Sheep	103	114	94
Ewes and Rams	1	1	1
Clean Pigs	24	18	21
Sows and Boars	0	0	0
Great Britain			
Steers	64	76	68
Heifers	45	55	50
Young Bulls	11	12	11
Cows and Adult Bulls	40	51	47
Calves ⁽¹⁾	8	8	9
Clean Sheep	1032	1030	824
Ewes and Rams	118	142	130
Clean Pigs	700	821	729
Sows and Boars	17	25	22
Northern Ireland			
Steers	14	14	14
Heifers	9	11	10
Young Bulls	3	3	3
Cows and Adult Bulls	8	9	8
Calves ⁽¹⁾	1	1	1
Clean Sheep	33	31	20
Ewes and Rams	2	4	2
Clean Pigs	123	158	150
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 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 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.
9. With effect from February 2016 the statistics published in this notice will be 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 1st February 2016 onwards the statistics will be 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.
- 13. This month there have been revisions to January 2016 data. This is due to actual E&W survey data replacing estimates. For example UK beef production has increased from 79.2 to 80.4 thousand tonnes (1.5%).**