



19th January 2017

United Kingdom Slaughter Statistics – December 2016

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Key points

From February 2016 onwards data collection moved from a statistical month to a calendar month basis. Year on year comparisons are therefore calculated using the daily average for throughput and production to account for the varied number of days in each period.

The key results for **December 2016 compared to December 2015** are:

- **Cattle:** UK prime cattle (steers, heifers and young bulls) slaughterings in December 2016 were 8.0% lower than December 2015 at 157,000 head. Beef and veal production was 72,000 tonnes, 7.4% lower than in December 2015.
- **Sheep:** UK clean sheep slaughterings were 6.1% lower than in December 2015 at 1.2 million head. Mutton and lamb production was 26,000 tonnes, 6.1% lower than in December 2015.
- **Pigs:** UK clean pig slaughterings were 8.4% lower than in December 2015 at 855,000 head. Pigmeat production was 73,000 tonnes, 7.2% lower than in December 2015.

This notice will be updated at 09:30 on 16th February 2017. 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>

Enquiries on this publication to: Julie Rumsey, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Room 201, Foss House, Kings Pool, 1 - 2 Peasholme Green, York, YO1 7PX.
Tel: ++ 44 (0)2080 266306, email: julie.rumsey@defra.gsi.gov.uk

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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. From February 2016 onwards, the survey is run according to calendar rather than statistical months. To allow a direct comparison with 2015 data which was based on a statistical month, the number of days in each period is specified below and comparisons are based on average daily throughput in the month.

Table 1: United Kingdom monthly numbers of livestock slaughtered

	thousand head				
	December 2015 28 days	October 2016 31 days	November 2016 30 days	December 2016 31 days	yr on yr % change *
Steers	82	89	92	82	-9.1%
Heifers	58	62	67	61	-5.4%
Young Bulls	14	17	17	14	-11.9%
Cows and Adult Bulls	51	66	78	58	2.3%
Calves(1)	9	11	11	9	-13.2%
Clean Sheep	1161	1165	1220	1207	-6.1%
Ewes and Rams	129	145	138	136	-4.3%
Clean Pigs	843	874	950	855	-8.4%
Sows and Boars	17	19	23	17	-8.2%

(1) The definition of calves from May 2014 is "Bovines less than 1 year". Please see methodology for full details.
*Calculated using average daily throughput in each month.

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			
	December 2015	October 2016	November 2016	December 2016
Steers	374.9	366.1	365.4	368.6
Heifers	330.7	328.1	327.6	319.3
Young Bulls	318.0	320.4	318.4	304.2
Cows and Adult Bulls	308.3	302.7	306.2	308.4
Calves(1)	53.8	58.3	64.8	63.6
Clean Sheep	18.8	19.1	19.3	18.9
Ewes and Rams	26.5	25.7	25.2	25.6
Clean Pigs	81.0	81.9	82.8	82.1
Sows and Boars	147.3	146.9	147.5	146.0

(1)The definition of calves from May 2014 is "Bovines less than 1 year". 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. From February 2016 onwards, the survey is run according to calendar rather than statistical months. To allow a direct comparison with 2015 data which was based on a statistical month, the number of days in each period is specified below.

Table 3: United Kingdom monthly volumes of meat production

	thousand tonnes				
	December 2015 28 days	October 2016 31 days	November 2016 30 days	December 2016 31 days	yr on yr % change
Beef	71	79	85	72	-7.4%
Mutton and Lamb	25	26	27	26	-6.1%
Pigmeat	71	74	82	73	-7.2%

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												
	2015		2016										
	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Steers	20	18	20	20	20	19	19	18	18	20	20	21	19
Heifers	15	13	15	14	14	13	14	12	12	14	14	16	14
Young Bulls	3	3	3	3	4	5	6	6	5	5	4	4	3
Cows and Adult Bulls	13	12	13	12	12	11	11	12	12	14	15	18	13
Calves(1)	2	2	3	4	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	2
Clean Sheep	290	209	209	229	192	202	234	249	272	304	263	285	273
Ewes and Rams	32	29	33	32	29	29	31	31	35	43	33	32	31
Clean Pigs	211	194	212	208	206	195	202	195	203	212	197	222	193
Sows and Boars	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	5	4	5	4

(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

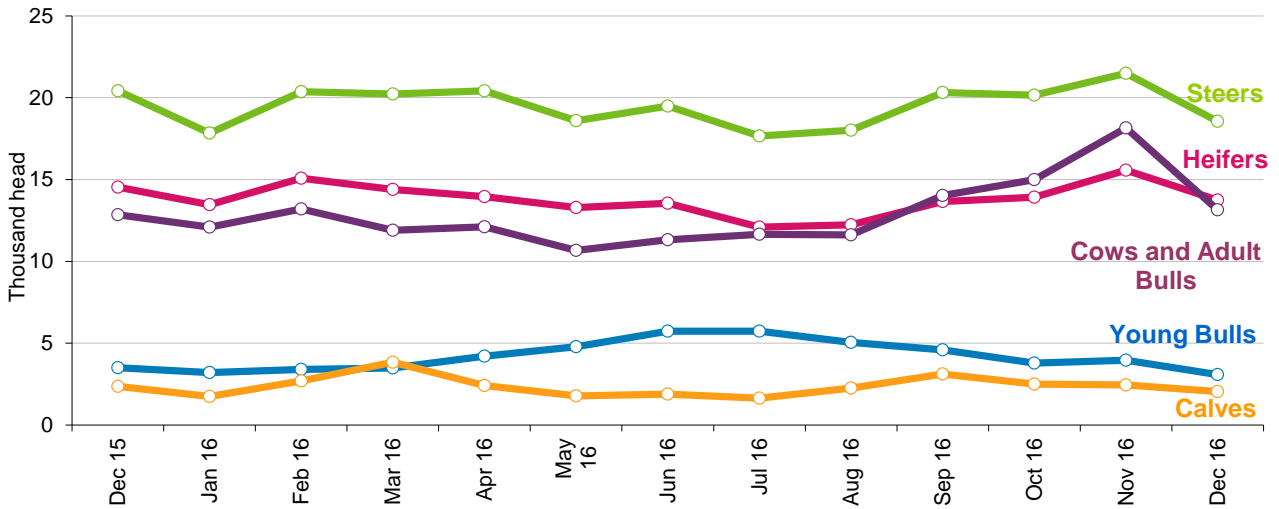


Figure 4:2 United Kingdom average weekly numbers of sheep slaughtered

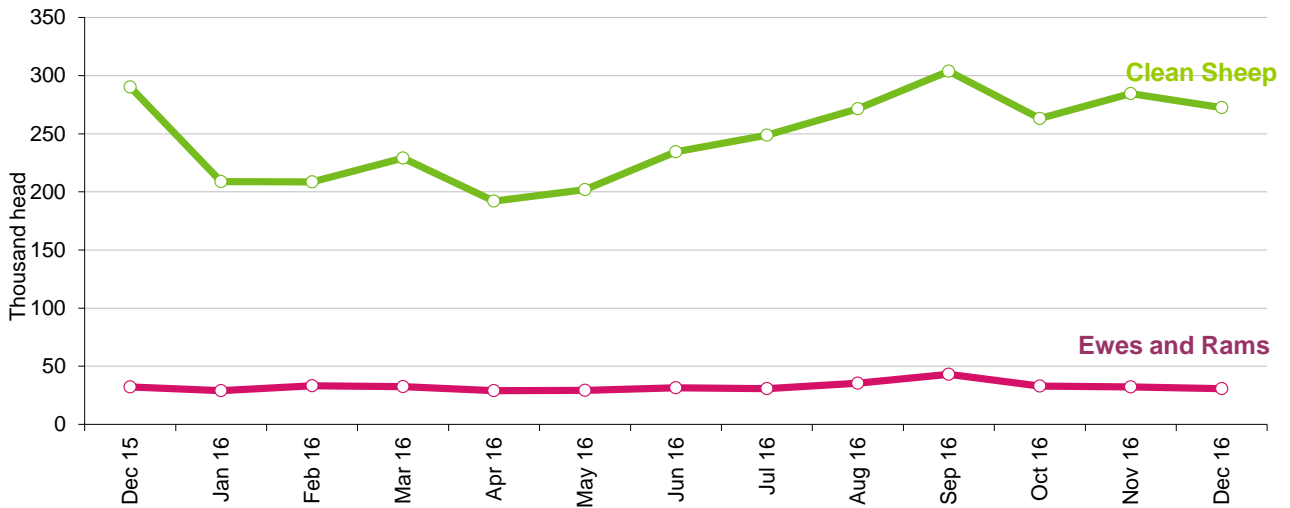
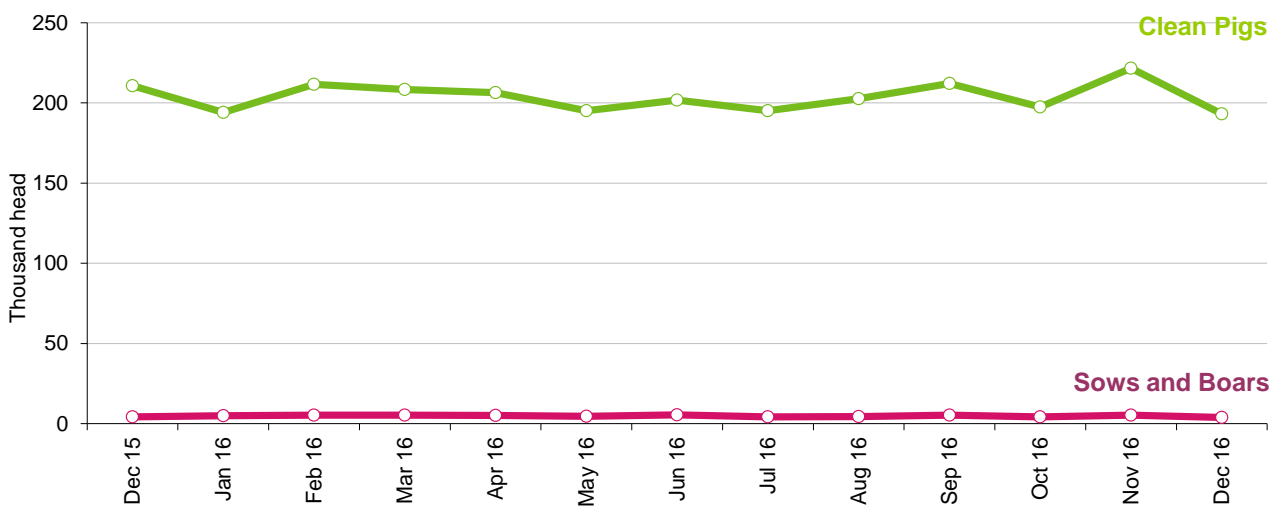


Figure 4:3 United Kingdom average weekly numbers of pigs slaughtered



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		
	October 2016	November 2016	December 2016
	31 days	30 days	31 days
England & Wales			
Steers	54	59	50
Heifers	38	42	37
Young Bulls	12	12	9
Cows and Adult Bulls	48	58	43
Calves	10	10	8
Clean Sheep	1008	1066	1067
Ewes and Rams	141	133	132
Clean Pigs	705	779	697
Sows and Boars	19	23	17
Scotland			
Steers	18	18	18
Heifers	13	14	13
Young Bulls	2	2	2
Cows and Adult Bulls	7	8	6
Calves	0	0	0
Clean Sheep	113	112	107
Ewes and Rams	1	1	1
Clean Pigs	27	29	27
Sows and Boars	0	0	0
Great Britain			
Steers	72	77	68
Heifers	51	56	51
Young Bulls	14	14	11
Cows and Adult Bulls	55	66	49
Calves	10	10	8
Clean Sheep	1121	1178	1174
Ewes and Rams	142	134	133
Clean Pigs	733	808	725
Sows and Boars	19	23	17
Northern Ireland			
Steers	17	15	14
Heifers	10	11	10
Young Bulls	3	3	2
Cows and Adult Bulls	11	12	9
Calves	1	1	1
Clean Sheep	44	42	33
Ewes and Rams	3	4	3
Clean Pigs	142	142	131
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 91) 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 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 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 1st February 2016 onwards the statistics are 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 the slaughter and DCW data from October and November 2016.