



14th April 2016

United Kingdom Slaughter Statistics – March 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 average daily throughput to account for the varied number of days in each period.

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

- **Cattle:** UK prime cattle (steers, heifers and young bulls) slaughterings in March 2016 were 4.0% lower than March 2015 at 163,000 head. Beef and veal production was 74,000 tonnes, 3.2% lower than in March 2015.
- **Sheep:** UK clean sheep slaughterings were 4.6% lower than in March 2015 at 990,000 head. Mutton and lamb production was 23,000 tonnes, 6.6% lower than in March 2015.
- **Pigs:** UK clean pig slaughterings were 2.4% higher than in March 2015 at 920,000 head. Pigmeat production was 77,000 tonnes, 0.2% lower than in March 2015.

This notice will be updated at 09:30 on 19th May 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. 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

	March 2015 28 days	January 2016 35 days	February 2016 29 days	March 2016 31 days	yr on yr % change *
Steers	82	90	83	87	-3.7%
Heifers	59	66	61	61	-6.3%
Young Bulls	13	16	14	15	4.4%
Cows and Adult Bulls	44	60	55	52	7.9%
Calves ⁽¹⁾	11	9	10	15	20%
Clean Sheep	938	1062	851	990	-4.6%
Ewes and Rams	109	146	136	141	17%
Clean Pigs	812	979	876	920	2.4%
Sows and Boars	20	25	22	23	8.2%

(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.

*Calculated using average daily throughput in each month.

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

	March 2015	January 2016	February 2016	March 2016
Steers	374.5	376.3	363.7	376.6
Heifers	331.8	333.3	324.8	316.8
Young Bulls	340.9	314.3	307.9	312.3
Cows and Adult Bulls	316.5	312.1	309.3	311.2
Calves ⁽¹⁾	35.9	61.0	56.2	43.0
Clean Sheep	20.4	19.4	19.5	19.4
Ewes and Rams	26.7	25.8	25.9	26.0
Clean Pigs	81.8	83.8	83.4	79.5
Sows and Boars	146.4	146.6	145.9	143.6

(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 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

	March 2015 28 days	January 2016 35 days	February 2016 29 days	March 2016 31 days
Beef	69	80	72	74
Mutton and Lamb	22	24	20	23
Pigmeat	69	86	76	77

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							
	Mar	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Steers	20	19	19	18	19	18	19	21	22	20	18	20	20
Heifers	15	14	13	12	12	12	12	14	15	14	13	15	14
Young Bulls	3	3	4	5	5	5	4	4	4	3	3	3	3
Cows and Adult Bulls	11	10	9	10	11	12	12	14	16	12	12	13	12
Calves ⁽¹⁾	3	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
Clean Sheep	234	217	208	245	258	282	324	275	274	266	212	205	223
Ewes and Rams	27	28	26	30	30	33	43	34	32	30	29	33	32
Clean Pigs	203	194	197	203	201	205	207	217	222	206	196	212	208
Sows and Boars	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	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

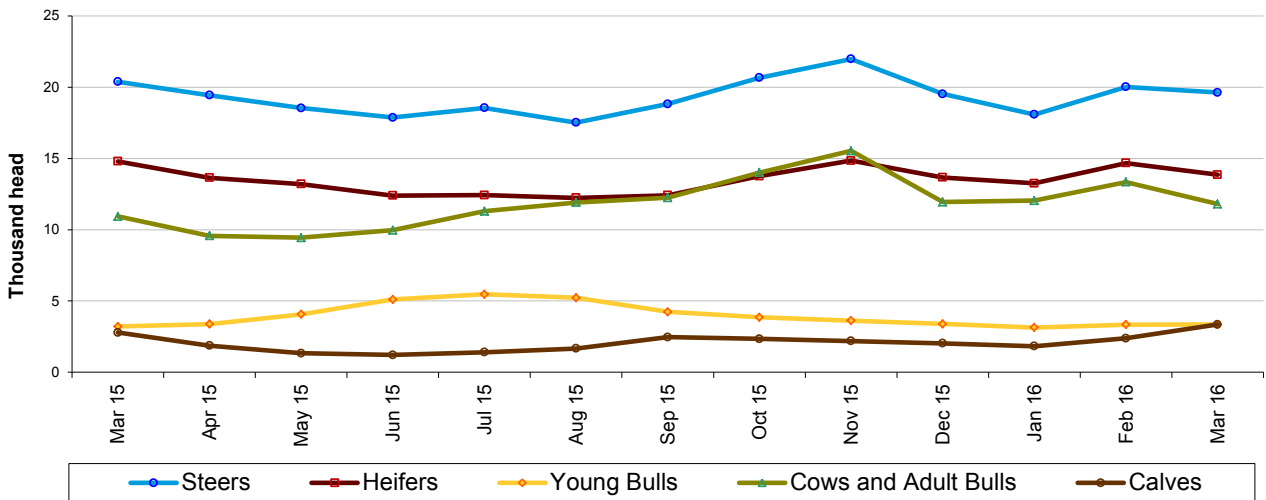


Figure 4:2 United Kingdom average weekly numbers of sheep slaughtered

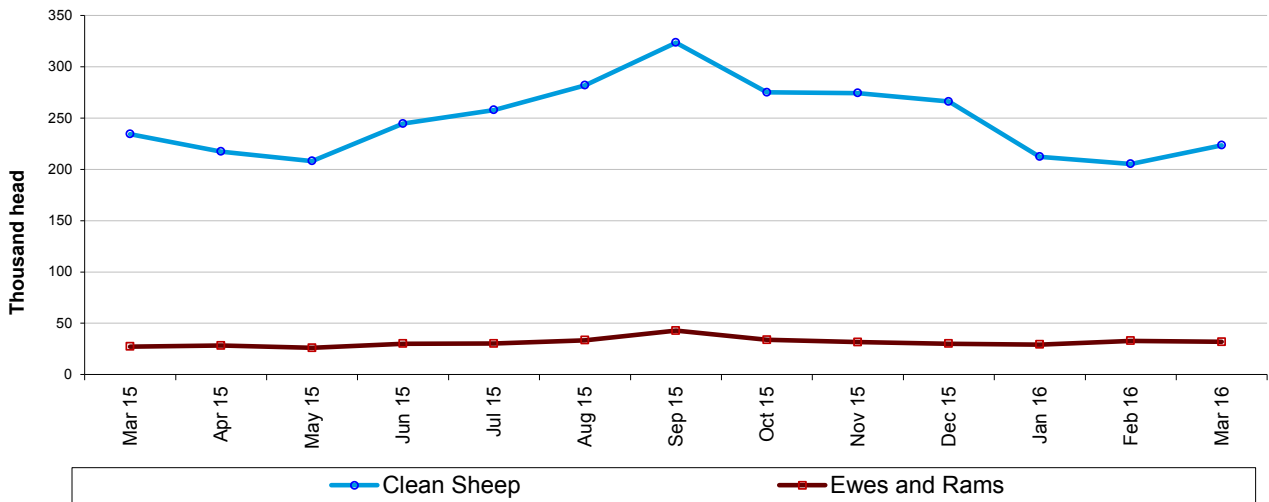
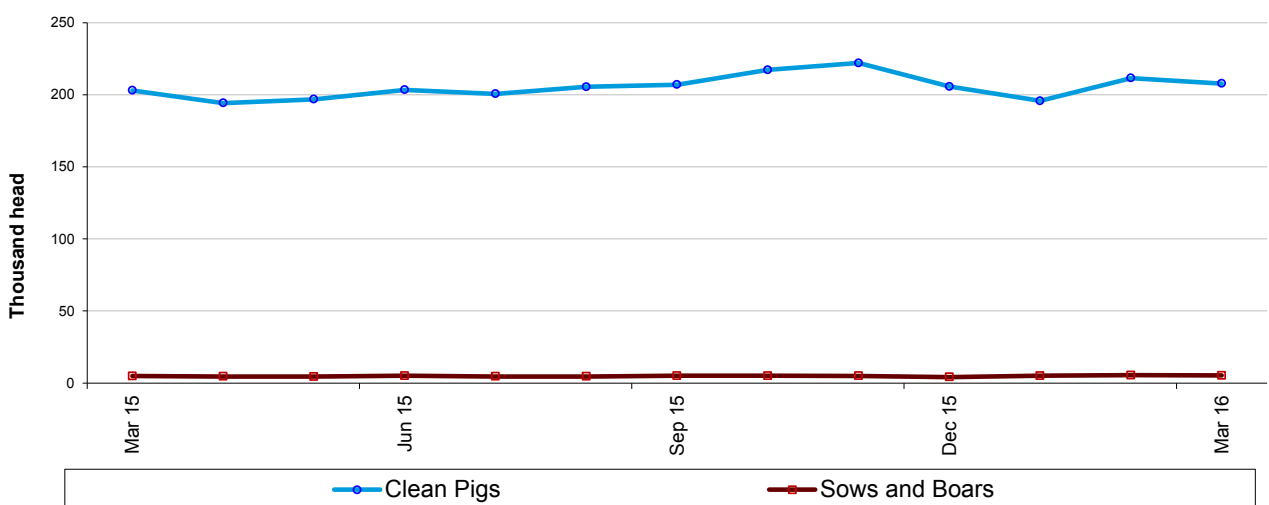


Figure 4:3 United Kingdom average weekly numbers of pigs slaughtered



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		
	January 2016	February 2016	March 2016
	35 days	29 days	31 days
England & Wales			
Steers	58	52	55
Heifers	40	37	38
Young Bulls	10	9	10
Cows and Adult Bulls	46	42	40
Calves ⁽¹⁾	8	9	14
Clean Sheep	915	736	868
Ewes and Rams	141	133	138
Clean Pigs	803	710	767
Sows and Boars	25	22	23
Scotland			
Steers	18	17	17
Heifers	15	13	13
Young Bulls	2	2	1
Cows and Adult Bulls	6	5	5
Calves ⁽¹⁾	0	0	0
Clean Sheep	114	94	100
Ewes and Rams	1	1	1
Clean Pigs	18	21	23
Sows and Boars	0	0	0
Great Britain			
Steers	76	69	72
Heifers	55	50	51
Young Bulls	12	11	12
Cows and Adult Bulls	51	47	45
Calves ⁽¹⁾	8	9	14
Clean Sheep	1030	830	967
Ewes and Rams	142	134	139
Clean Pigs	821	732	791
Sows and Boars	25	22	23
Northern Ireland			
Steers	14	14	14
Heifers	11	10	10
Young Bulls	3	3	3
Cows and Adult Bulls	9	8	7
Calves ⁽¹⁾	1	1	1
Clean Sheep	32	21	22
Ewes and Rams	4	2	2
Clean Pigs	158	145	130
Sows and Boars	0	0	0

*Data for January 2016 was based on a 5 week statistical month therefore equating to 35 days.

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 carcase weights are recorded.

7. The volume of meat production is estimated from the number of all livestock slaughtered and average dressed carcase 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 January and February 2016 data. This is due to actual E&W survey data replacing estimates and revisions to Northern Ireland data. For example UK beef production has increased from 69.7 thousand tonnes to 71.8 thousand tonnes (3.0%).**