



13th April 2017

United Kingdom Slaughter Statistics – March 2017

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Key points

The key results for **March 2017 compared to March 2016** are:

- **Cattle:** UK prime cattle (steers, heifers and young bulls) slaughterings in March 2017 were 4.7% lower than March 2016 at 161,000 head. Beef and veal production was 73,000 tonnes, 3.9% lower than in March 2016.
- **Sheep:** UK clean sheep slaughterings were 1.0% higher than in March 2016 at 1025,000 head. Mutton and lamb production was 24,000 tonnes, 3.4% higher than in March 2016.
- **Pigs:** UK clean pig slaughterings were 5.0% lower than in March 2016 at 877,000 head. Pigmeat production was 76,000 tonnes, 4.7% lower than in March 2016.

This notice will be updated at 09:30 on 18th May 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.

Table 1: United Kingdom monthly numbers of livestock slaughtered

	thousand head				
	March 2016 31 days	January 2017 31 days	February 2017 28 days	March 2017 31 days	yr on yr % change *
Steers	90	87	79	86	-3.6%
Heifers	64	67	59	60	-5.9%
Young Bulls	15	14	12	15	-5.7%
Cows and Adult Bulls	53	59	50	50	-4.7%
Calves(1)	17	8	10	15	-10.7%
Clean Sheep	1015	1004	878	1025	1.0%
Ewes and Rams	143	123	119	130	-9.3%
Clean Pigs	923	863	769	877	-5.0%
Sows and Boars	23	19	18	22	-7.3%

(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 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 2016	January 2017	February 2017	March 2017
Steers	377.0	371.3	372.0	372.7
Heifers	317.2	333.2	334.0	333.1
Young Bulls	312.8	319.0	314.1	309.6
Cows and Adult Bulls	311.5	316.4	315.8	314.9
Calves(1)	40.4	69.1	54.5	30.8
Clean Sheep	19.4	19.7	19.9	20.3
Ewes and Rams	26.0	26.3	26.0	25.9
Clean Pigs	82.8	83.8	83.9	83.2
Sows and Boars	143.6	146.5	145.3	145.3

(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.

Table 3: United Kingdom monthly volumes of meat production

	thousand tonnes				
	March 2016 31 days	January 2017 31 days	February 2017 28 days	March 2017 31 days	yr on yr % change
Beef	76	78	69	73	-3.9%
Mutton and Lamb	23	23	21	24	3.4%
Pigmeat	80	75	67	76	-4.7%

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												
	2016						2017						
	Mar	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Steers	20	20	19	19	18	18	20	20	21	19	20	20	19
Heifers	14	14	13	14	12	12	14	14	16	14	15	15	14
Young Bulls	3	4	5	6	6	5	5	4	4	3	3	3	3
Cows and Adult Bulls	12	12	11	11	12	12	14	15	18	13	13	12	11
Calves(1)	4	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	3
Clean Sheep	229	192	202	234	249	272	304	263	285	273	227	220	232
Ewes and Rams	32	29	29	31	31	35	43	33	32	31	28	30	29
Clean Pigs	208	206	195	202	195	203	212	197	222	193	195	192	198
Sows and Boars	5	5	5	5	4	4	5	4	5	4	4	4	5

(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

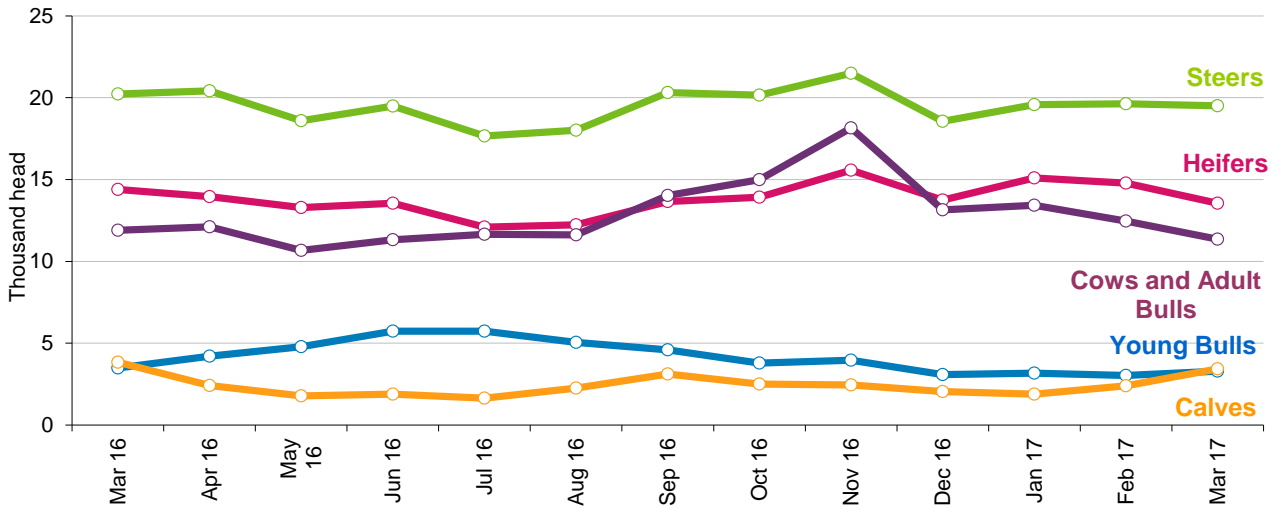


Figure 4:2 United Kingdom average weekly numbers of sheep slaughtered

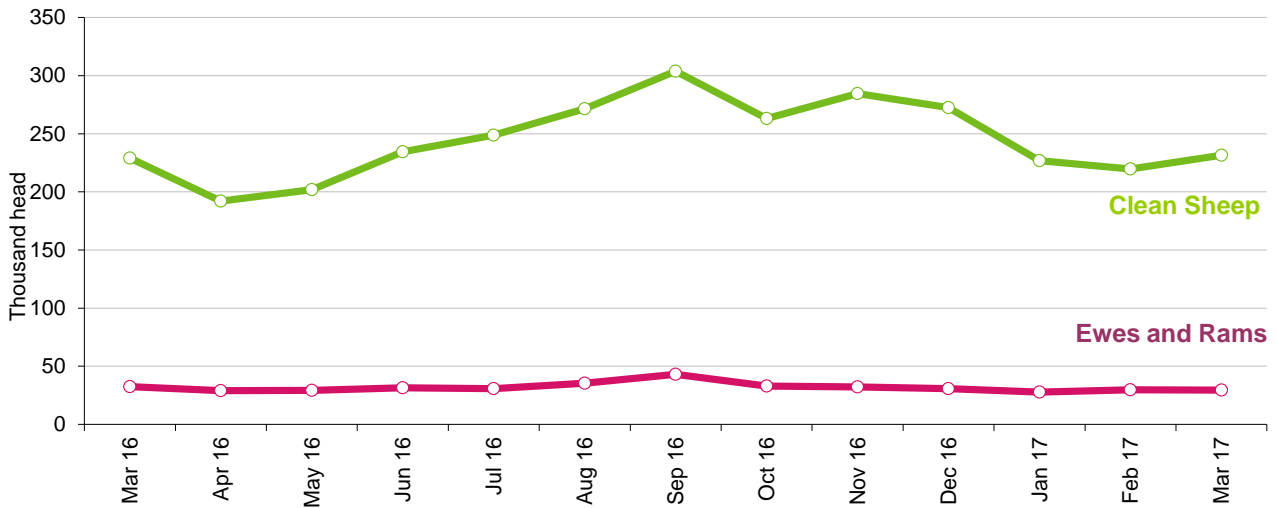
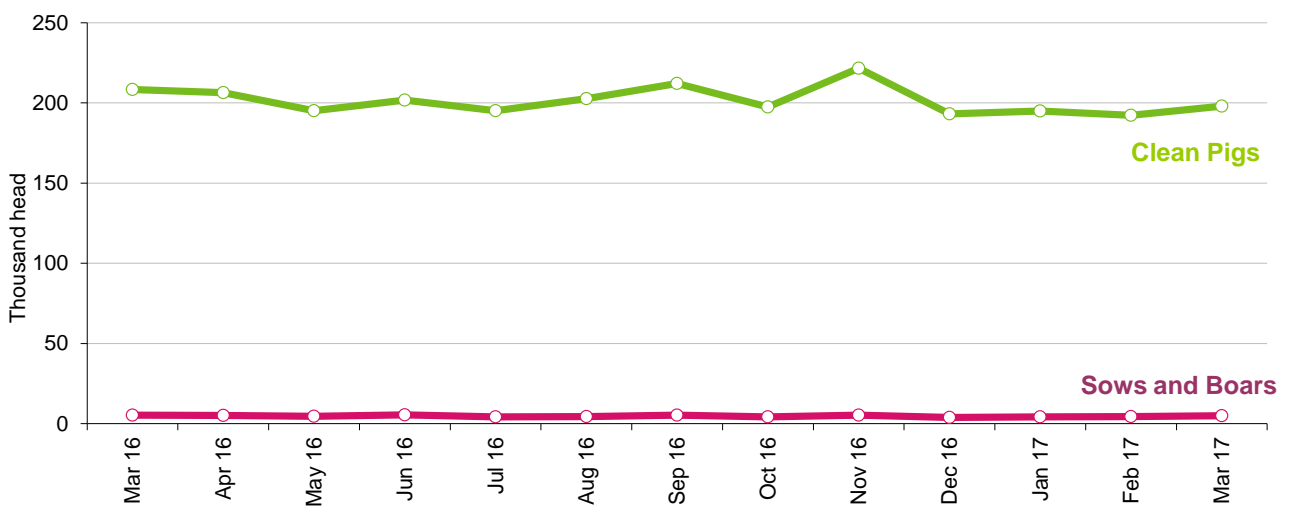


Figure 4:3 United Kingdom average weekly numbers of pigs slaughtered



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		
	January 2017	February 2017	March 2017
	31 days	28 days	31 days
England & Wales			
Steers	53	50	60
Heifers	40	38	41
Young Bulls	10	9	12
Cows and Adult Bulls	43	37	40
Calves	8	9	15
Clean Sheep	858	767	920
Ewes and Rams	119	116	128
Clean Pigs	689	639	742
Sows and Boars	19	18	22
Scotland			
Steers	18	17	17
Heifers	15	13	12
Young Bulls	2	1	1
Cows and Adult Bulls	7	6	5
Calves	0	0	0
Clean Sheep	113	88	93
Ewes and Rams	1	1	1
Clean Pigs	29	25	22
Sows and Boars	0	0	0
Great Britain			
Steers	72	67	77
Heifers	55	51	53
Young Bulls	11	10	13
Cows and Adult Bulls	50	43	45
Calves	8	9	15
Clean Sheep	971	855	1012
Ewes and Rams	120	117	129
Clean Pigs	719	664	764
Sows and Boars	19	18	22
Northern Ireland			
Steers	15	11	9
Heifers	12	9	7
Young Bulls	3	2	1
Cows and Adult Bulls	9	7	5
Calves	1	0	0
Clean Sheep	34	23	13
Ewes and Rams	3	2	1
Clean Pigs	144	105	112
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.