



16<sup>th</sup> March 2017

## United Kingdom Slaughter Statistics – February 2017

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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 calculated using the daily average for throughput and production to account for the February 2016 having 29 days.

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

- **Cattle:** UK prime cattle (steers, heifers and young bulls) slaughterings in February 2017 were 3.7% lower than February 2016 at 150,000 head. Beef and veal production was 69,000 tonnes, 4.6% lower than in February 2016.
- **Sheep:** UK clean sheep slaughterings were 5.2% higher than in February 2016 at 878,000 head. Mutton and lamb production was 21,000 tonnes, 4.5% higher than in February 2016.
- **Pigs:** UK clean pig slaughterings were 9.2% lower than in February 2016 at 769,000 head. Pigmeat production was 67,000 tonnes, 9.1% lower than in February 2016.

This notice will be updated at 09:30 on 13 April 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>

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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 previous data which was based on a 29 day leap year 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				
	February 2016 29 days	December 2016 31 days	January 2017 31 days	February 2017 28 days	yr on yr % change *
Steers	84	82	87	79	-3.7%
Heifers	62	61	67	59	-2.1%
Young Bulls	14	14	14	12	-10.7%
Cows and Adult Bulls	55	58	59	50	-5.7%
Calves(1)	11	9	8	9	-14.5%
Clean Sheep	864	1207	1004	878	5.2%
Ewes and Rams	138	136	123	119	-10.6%
Clean Pigs	876	855	856	769	-9.2%
Sows and Boars	22	17	19	18	-18.3%

(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 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			
	February 2016	December 2016	January 2017	February 2017
Steers	378.7	368.6	371.3	372.0
Heifers	334.8	319.3	333.3	334.2
Young Bulls	315.4	304.2	318.6	313.9
Cows and Adult Bulls	311.2	308.4	316.6	315.9
Calves(1)	52.8	63.6	68.7	56.6
Clean Sheep	19.5	18.9	19.7	19.9
Ewes and Rams	25.9	25.6	26.3	26.1
Clean Pigs	83.4	82.1	83.7	83.9
Sows and Boars	145.9	146.0	146.5	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. From February 2016 onwards, the survey is run according to calendar rather than statistical months. To allow a direct comparison with previous data which was based on a 29 day leap year month, the number of days in each period is specified below.

**Table 3: United Kingdom monthly volumes of meat production**

	thousand tonnes				
	February 2016 29 days	December 2016 31 days	January 2017 31 days	February 2017 28 days	yr on yr % change
Beef	75	72	78	69	-4.6%
Mutton and Lamb	20	26	23	21	4.5%
Pigmeat	76	73	74	67	-9.1%

### 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.

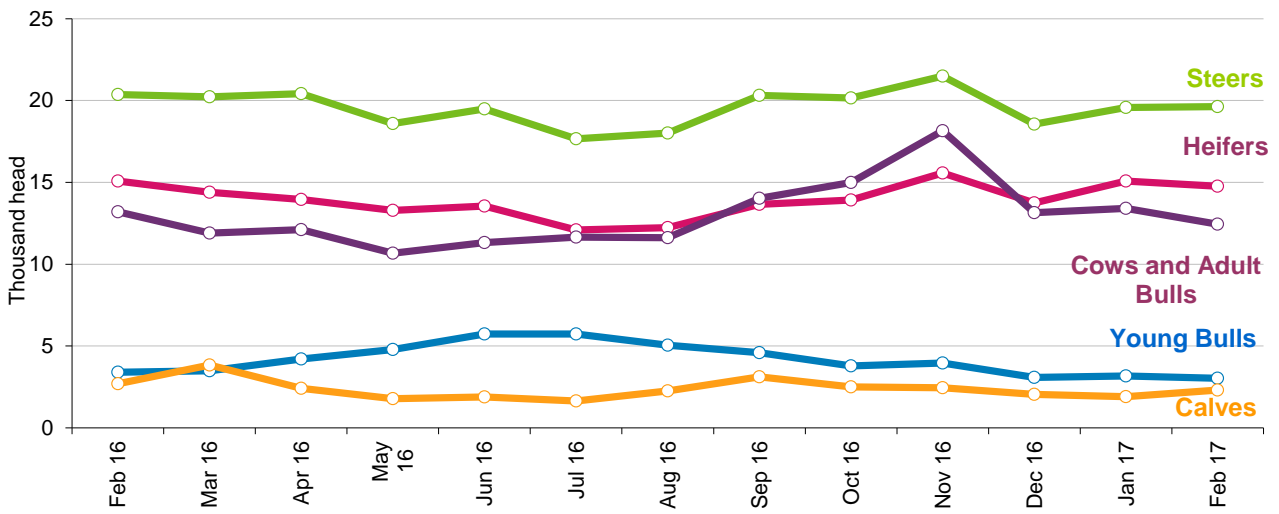
Longer term trends can be seen in Figures 4:1, 4:2 and 4:3, following this table.

**Table 4: United Kingdom average weekly numbers of livestock slaughtered**

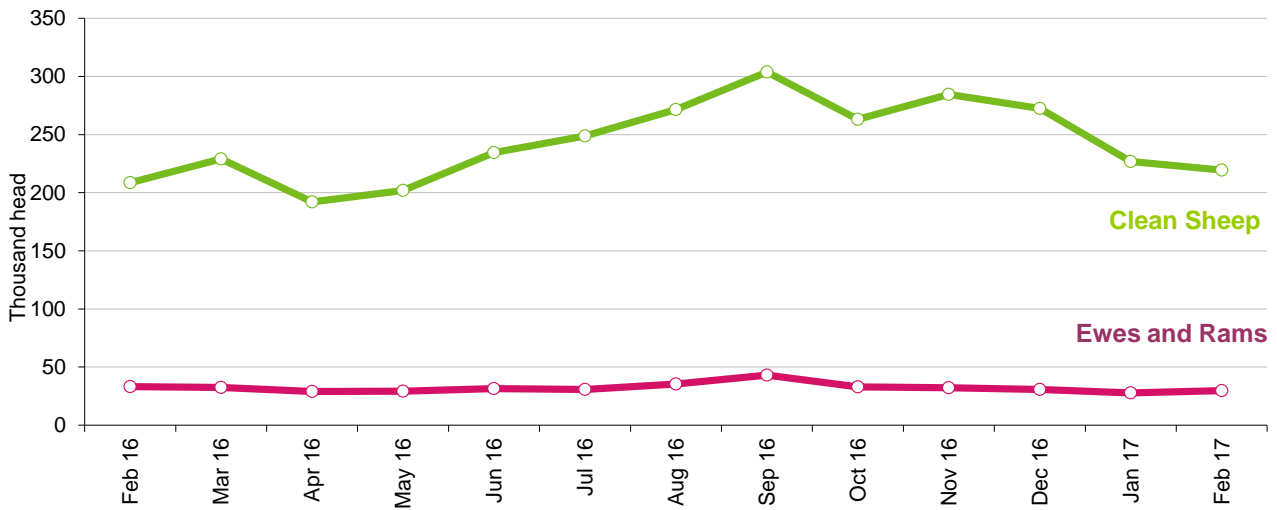
	thousand head													
	2016												2017	
	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	
Steers	20	20	20	19	19	18	18	20	20	21	19	20	20	
Heifers	15	14	14	13	14	12	12	14	14	16	14	15	15	
Young Bulls	3	3	4	5	6	6	5	5	4	4	3	3	3	
Cows and Adult Bulls	13	12	12	11	11	12	12	14	15	18	13	13	12	
Calves(1)	3	4	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	
Clean Sheep	209	229	192	202	234	249	272	304	263	285	273	227	220	
Ewes and Rams	33	32	29	29	31	31	35	43	33	32	31	28	30	
Clean Pigs	212	208	206	195	202	195	203	212	197	222	193	193	192	
Sows and Boars	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	5	4	5	4	4	4	

(1)The definition of calves from May 2014 is "Bovines less than 1 year". Please see methodology for full details.

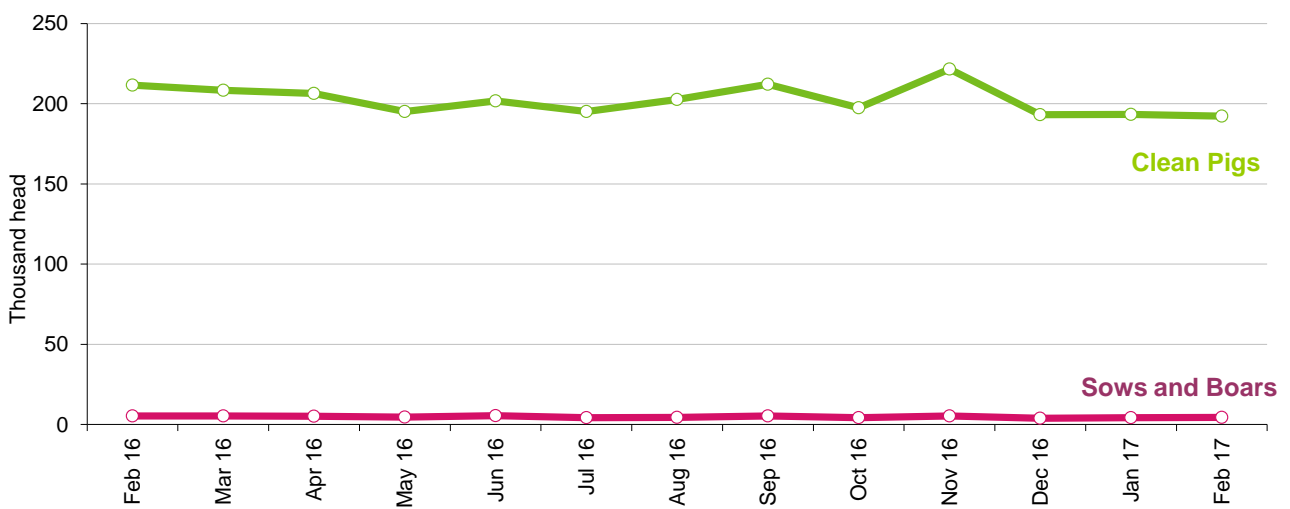
**Figure 4:1 United Kingdom average weekly numbers of cattle slaughtered**



**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		
	December 2016	January 2017	February 2017
	31 days	31 days	28 days
<b>England &amp; Wales</b>			
Steers	50	53	50
Heifers	37	40	38
Young Bulls	9	10	9
Cows and Adult Bulls	43	43	37
Calves	8	8	9
Clean Sheep	1067	858	767
Ewes and Rams	132	119	116
Clean Pigs	697	690	639
Sows and Boars	17	19	18
<b>Scotland</b>			
Steers	18	18	17
Heifers	13	15	13
Young Bulls	2	2	1
Cows and Adult Bulls	6	7	6
Calves	0	0	0
Clean Sheep	107	113	88
Ewes and Rams	1	1	1
Clean Pigs	27	29	25
Sows and Boars	0	0	0
<b>Great Britain</b>			
Steers	68	72	67
Heifers	51	55	51
Young Bulls	11	11	10
Cows and Adult Bulls	49	50	43
Calves	8	8	9
Clean Sheep	1174	971	855
Ewes and Rams	133	120	117
Clean Pigs	725	719	664
Sows and Boars	17	19	18
<b>Northern Ireland</b>			
Steers	14	15	11
Heifers	10	12	9
Young Bulls	2	3	2
Cows and Adult Bulls	9	9	7
Calves	1	1	0
Clean Sheep	33	34	23
Ewes and Rams	3	3	2
Clean Pigs	131	137	105
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](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 1<sup>st</sup> 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.