



15th February 2018

United Kingdom Slaughter Statistics – January 2018

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Key points

The key results for **January 2018 compared to January 2017** are:

- **Cattle:** UK prime cattle (steers, heifers and young bulls) slaughterings in January 2018 were up 3.9% on January 2017 at 170,000 head. Beef and veal production was 81,000 tonnes, 6.0% higher than in January 2017.
- **Sheep:** UK clean sheep slaughterings were up 10% on January 2017 at 1092,000 head. Mutton and lamb production was 24,000 tonnes, 7.4% higher than in January 2017.
- **Pigs:** UK clean pig slaughterings were 8.2% higher than in January 2017 at 929,000 head. Pigmeat production was 82,000 tonnes, 9.5% higher than in January 2017.

This notice will be updated at 09:30 on 15th March 2018. 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.

Table 1: United Kingdom monthly numbers of livestock slaughtered

	thousand head				
	January 2017 31 days	November 2017 30 days	December 2017 31 days	January 2018 31 days	yr on yr % change
Steers	85	95	78	89	5.0%
Heifers	65	68	58	67	3.5%
Young Bulls	14	15	12	14	-1.3%
Cows and Adult Bulls	58	72	54	64	9.7%
Calves(1)	8	11	6	7	-10.4%
Clean Sheep	992	1279	1253	1092	10.1%
Ewes and Rams	123	129	130	129	4.9%
Clean Pigs	859	997	819	929	8.2%
Sows and Boars	19	21	14	19	-3.6%

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

Section 2: Average dressed carcass weights

Table 2 shows the monthly average dressed carcass weight (DCW) of livestock slaughtered for meat for human consumption in the United Kingdom. The increase in average DCW for calves in January 2018 is due to an increased proportion of older calves within this category.

Table 2: United Kingdom average dressed carcass weights

	kilogramme			
	October 2017	November 2017	December 2017	January 2018
Steers	362.9	354.5	368.1	371.6
Heifers	327.8	328.0	331.1	333.5
Young Bulls	322.2	320.7	314.2	321.4
Cows and Adult Bulls	306.1	308.0	310.6	319.1
Calves(1)	67.5	84.6	70.4	103.3
Clean Sheep	19.2	19.1	18.9	19.3
Ewes and Rams	25.1	25.9	25.6	26.0
Clean Pigs	85.1	84.2	82.3	85.3
Sows and Boars	141.8	146.1	144.0	142.3

(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					
	January 2017 31 days	November 2017 30 days	December 2017 31 days	January 2018 31 days	yr on yr % change
Beef	76	84	69	81	6.0%
Mutton and Lamb	23	28	27	24	7.4%
Pigmeat	75	87	69	82	9.5%

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													
	2017												2018
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan
Steers	19	20	21	19	21	20	18	19	20	21	22	18	20
Heifers	15	15	15	13	14	13	13	13	14	15	16	13	15
Young Bulls	3	3	4	4	5	5	5	5	4	3	4	3	3
Cows and Adult Bulls	13	13	12	10	11	11	11	12	13	15	17	12	14
Calves(1)	2	2	3	2	1	2	2	2	2	3	3	1	2
Clean Sheep	224	221	236	230	221	244	240	277	283	283	298	283	247
Ewes and Rams	28	30	30	28	30	30	31	33	34	31	30	29	29
Clean Pigs	194	198	204	181	200	198	188	205	204	209	233	185	210
Sows and Boars	4	4	5	4	4	5	4	5	5	4	5	3	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

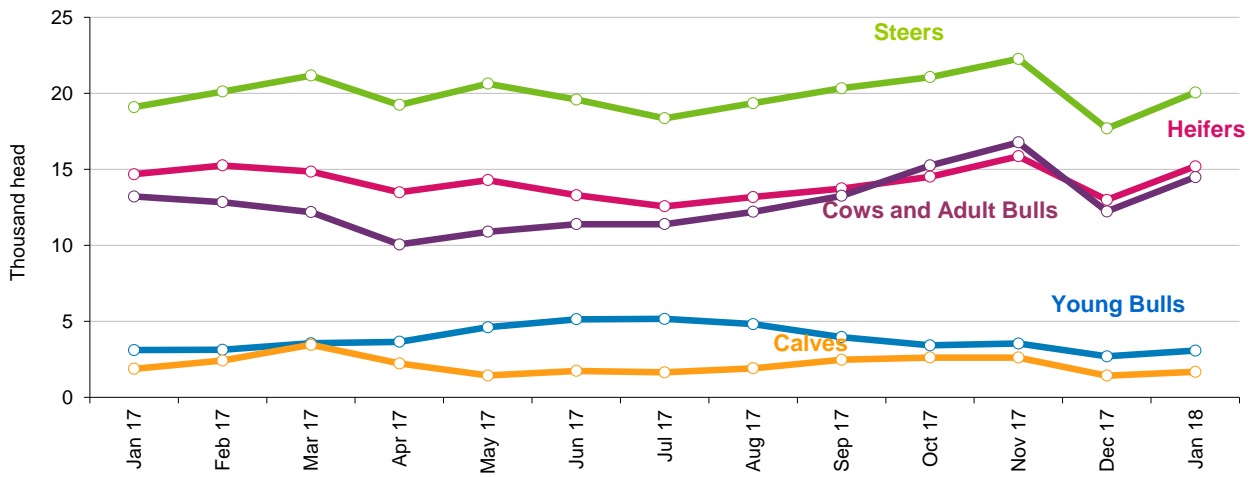


Figure 4:2 United Kingdom average weekly numbers of sheep slaughtered

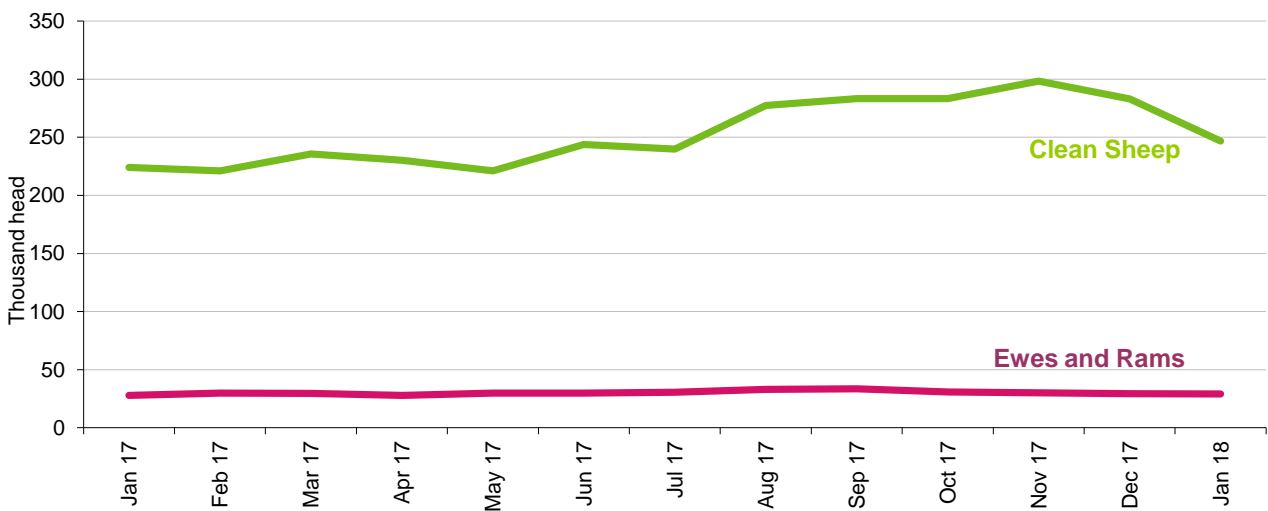
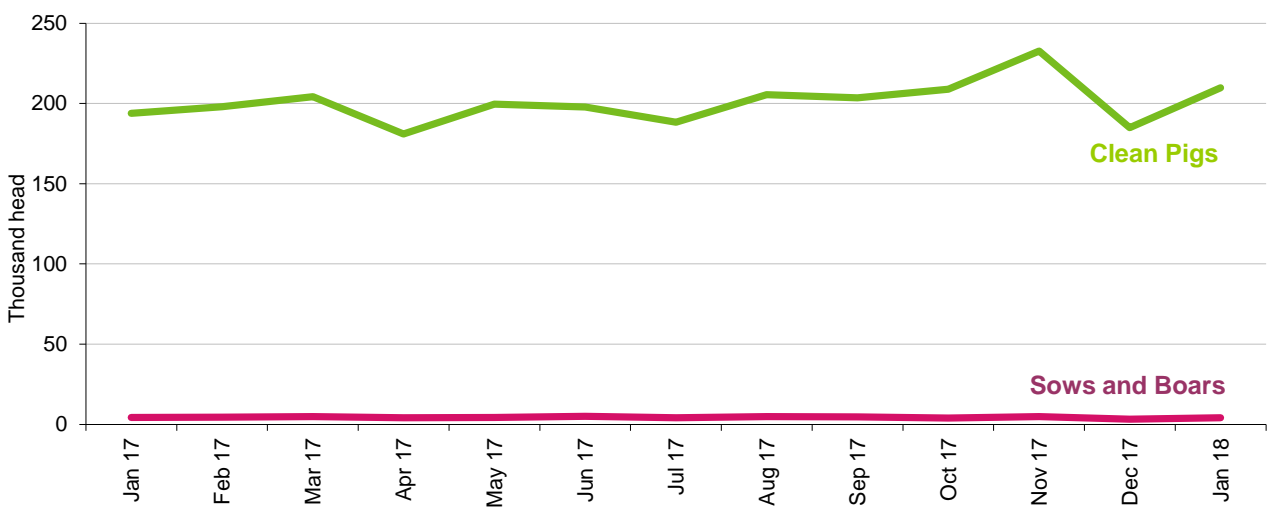


Figure 4:3 United Kingdom average weekly numbers of pigs slaughtered



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		
	November 2017	December 2017	January 2018
	30 days	31 days	31 days
England & Wales			
Steers	61	50	56
Heifers	42	35	41
Young Bulls	11	8	10
Cows and Adult Bulls	53	42	47
Calves	11	6	7
Clean Sheep	1139	1129	959
Ewes and Rams	123	127	125
Clean Pigs	828	691	750
Sows and Boars	20	14	18
Scotland			
Steers	18	17	17
Heifers	14	14	13
Young Bulls	2	2	1
Cows and Adult Bulls	7	6	6
Calves	0	0	0
Clean Sheep	105	102	100
Ewes and Rams	3	2	2
Clean Pigs	21	28	28
Sows and Boars	0	0	1
Great Britain			
Steers	79	67	73
Heifers	56	49	54
Young Bulls	13	10	11
Cows and Adult Bulls	60	48	54
Calves	11	6	7
Clean Sheep	1244	1230	1059
Ewes and Rams	126	129	127
Clean Pigs	848	718	778
Sows and Boars	21	14	19
Northern Ireland			
Steers	16	11	15
Heifers	12	8	13
Young Bulls	2	2	3
Cows and Adult Bulls	12	7	10
Calves	1	0	1
Clean Sheep	34	23	33
Ewes and Rams	3	2	2
Clean Pigs	149	100	151
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.
- d. There has been revisions to data from November 2017 and December 2017.