



12th April 2018

United Kingdom Slaughter Statistics – March 2018

Contents

Section 1	Monthly numbers of home killed livestock slaughtered	page 2
Section 2	Average dressed carcase weights	page 2
Section 3	Monthly volumes of home killed meat production	page 3
Section 4	Average weekly numbers of livestock slaughtered	page 3
Section 5	Monthly numbers of livestock slaughtered by country	page 5
Section 6	Methodology, notes and revisions policy	page 6

Key points

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

- **Cattle:** UK prime cattle (steers, heifers and young bulls) slaughterings in March 2018 were down 4.3% on March 2017 at 168,000 head. Beef and veal production was 77,000 tonnes, 3.0% lower than in March 2017.
- **Sheep:** UK clean sheep slaughterings were up 0.4% on March 2017 at 1,048,000 head. Mutton and lamb production was 24,000 tonnes, 3.8% lower than in March 2017.
- **Pigs:** UK clean pig slaughterings were 3.3% lower than in March 2017 at 874,000 head. Pigmeat production was 76,000 tonnes, 3.8% lower than in March 2017.

This notice will be updated at 09:30 on 17th May 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				
	March 2017 31 days	January 2018 31 days	February 2018 28 days	March 2018 31 days	yr on yr % change
Steers	94	89	82	88	-6.4%
Heifers	66	67	62	65	-0.7%
Young Bulls	16	14	12	15	-7.0%
Cows and Adult Bulls	54	64	53	54	-0.3%
Calves(1)	15	7	9	15	0.8%
Clean Sheep	1044	1092	952	1048	0.4%
Ewes and Rams	131	129	123	123	-5.9%
Clean Pigs	905	928	883	874	-3.3%
Sows and Boars	22	19	18	18	-16%

(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			
	March 2017	January 2018	February 2018	March 2018
Steers	371.6	371.6	371.9	370.4
Heifers	332.2	333.6	334.7	332.7
Young Bulls	310.7	321.4	322.7	320.8
Cows and Adult Bulls	314.7	319.1	316.5	313.5
Calves(1)	32.6	103.3	75.0	55.7
Clean Sheep	20.3	19.3	19.2	19.6
Ewes and Rams	25.9	26.0	26.3	25.3
Clean Pigs	83.3	85.2	83.8	83.4
Sows and Boars	145.3	142.3	143.4	143.8

(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 2017 31 days	January 2018 31 days	February 2018 28 days	March 2018 31 days	yr on yr % change
Beef	79	81	73	77	-3.0%
Mutton and Lamb	25	24	22	24	-3.8%
Pigmeat	79	82	77	76	-3.8%

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		
	Mar	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Steers	21	19	21	20	18	19	20	21	22	18	20	21	20
Heifers	15	13	14	13	13	13	14	15	16	13	15	16	15
Young Bulls	4	4	5	5	5	5	4	3	4	3	3	3	3
Cows and Adult Bulls	12	10	11	11	11	12	13	15	17	12	14	13	12
Calves(1)	3	2	1	2	2	2	2	3	3	1	2	2	3
Clean Sheep	236	230	221	244	240	277	283	283	298	283	247	238	237
Ewes and Rams	30	28	30	30	31	33	34	31	30	29	29	31	28
Clean Pigs	204	181	200	198	188	205	204	209	233	185	210	221	197
Sows and Boars	5	4	4	5	4	5	5	4	5	3	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

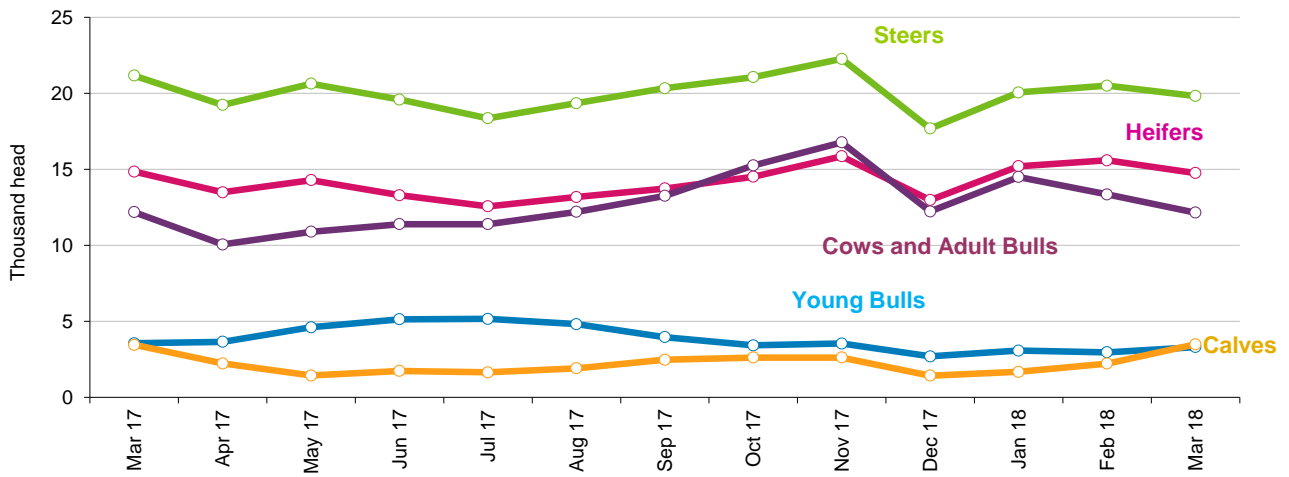


Figure 4:2 United Kingdom average weekly numbers of sheep slaughtered

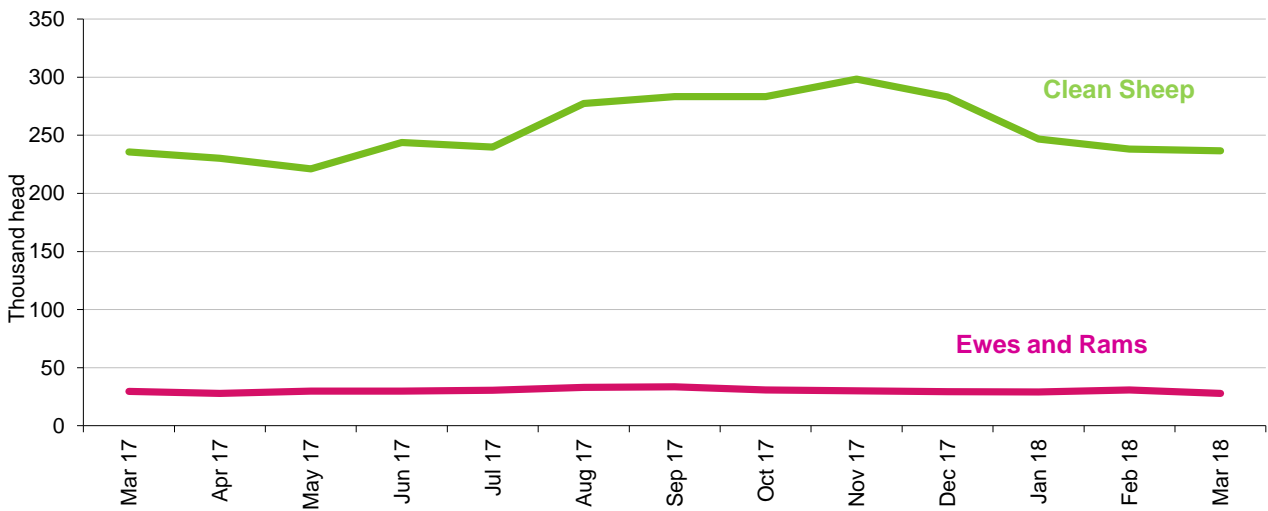
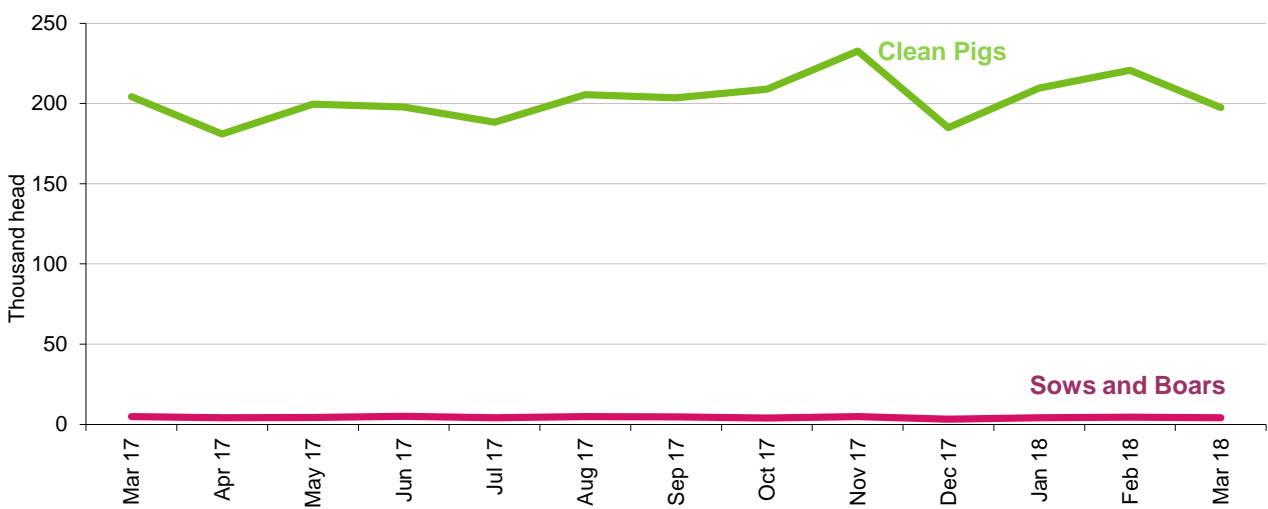


Figure 4:3 United Kingdom average weekly numbers of pigs slaughtered



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		
	January 2018	February 2018	March 2018
	31 days	28 days	31 days
England & Wales			
Steers	56	52	56
Heifers	41	39	40
Young Bulls	10	8	10
Cows and Adult Bulls	47	39	39
Calves	7	8	15
Clean Sheep	959	840	923
Ewes and Rams	125	120	120
Clean Pigs	750	727	709
Sows and Boars	18	17	17
Scotland			
Steers	17	16	19
Heifers	13	12	14
Young Bulls	1	1	1
Cows and Adult Bulls	6	6	6
Calves	0	0	0
Clean Sheep	100	88	99
Ewes and Rams	2	1	2
Clean Pigs	28	25	30
Sows and Boars	1	1	1
Great Britain			
Steers	73	68	75
Heifers	54	51	54
Young Bulls	11	9	12
Cows and Adult Bulls	54	45	45
Calves	7	8	15
Clean Sheep	1060	929	1023
Ewes and Rams	127	121	121
Clean Pigs	778	751	738
Sows and Boars	19	18	18
Northern Ireland			
Steers	15	14	13
Heifers	13	11	11
Young Bulls	3	3	3
Cows and Adult Bulls	10	9	9
Calves	1	1	0
Clean Sheep	33	24	25
Ewes and Rams	2	2	2
Clean Pigs	151	132	136
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 have been revisions to data from February 2018.