



17th May 2018

United Kingdom Slaughter Statistics – April 2018

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Key points

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

- **Cattle:** UK prime cattle (steers, heifers and young bulls) slaughterings in April 2018 were up 9.3% on April 2017 at 170,000 head. Beef and veal production was 78,000 tonnes, 13% higher than in April 2017.
- **Sheep:** UK clean sheep slaughterings were down 16% on April 2017 at 833,000 head. Mutton and lamb production was 19,000 tonnes, 17% lower than in April 2017.
- **Pigs:** UK clean pig slaughterings were 17% higher than in April 2017 at 908,000 head. Pigmeat production was 79,000 tonnes, 18% higher than in April 2017.

This notice will be updated at 09:30 on 14th June 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				
	April 2017 30 days	February 2018 28 days	March 2018 31 days	April 2018 30 days	yr on yr % change
Steers	82	82	87	88	6.7%
Heifers	58	62	64	66	13%
Young Bulls	16	12	14	17	7.0%
Cows and Adult Bulls	43	53	53	55	28%
Calves(1)	10	8	14	8	-18%
Clean Sheep	986	954	1029	833	-16%
Ewes and Rams	119	123	120	117	-2.3%
Clean Pigs	776	866	854	908	17%
Sows and Boars	17	18	18	18	3.7%

(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.

Table 2: United Kingdom average dressed carcass weights

	kilogramme			
	April 2017	February 2018	March 2018	April 2018
Steers	370.4	371.9	372.2	369.6
Heifers	330.7	334.7	332.7	330.5
Young Bulls	320.4	322.7	320.9	332.3
Cows and Adult Bulls	313.5	316.5	313.6	311.8
Calves(1)	58.4	77.0	57.7	74.4
Clean Sheep	20.4	19.2	19.6	19.8
Ewes and Rams	26.7	26.0	25.3	24.6
Clean Pigs	82.9	83.8	83.4	83.8
Sows and Boars	146.2	143.4	143.8	142.1

(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				
	April 2017 30 days	February 2018 28 days	March 2018 31 days	April 2018 30 days	yr on yr % change
Beef	69	72	76	78	13%
Mutton and Lamb	23	22	23	19	-17%
Pigmeat	67	75	74	79	18%

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					
	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
Steers	19	21	20	18	19	20	21	22	18	20	20	20	21
Heifers	13	14	13	13	13	14	15	16	13	15	16	15	15
Young Bulls	4	5	5	5	5	4	3	4	3	3	3	3	4
Cows and Adult Bulls	10	11	11	11	12	13	15	17	12	14	13	12	13
Calves(1)	2	1	2	2	2	2	3	3	1	2	2	3	2
Clean Sheep	230	221	244	240	277	283	283	298	283	247	238	232	194
Ewes and Rams	28	30	30	31	33	34	31	30	29	29	31	27	27
Clean Pigs	181	200	198	188	205	204	210	228	181	206	217	193	212
Sows and Boars	4	4	5	4	5	5	4	5	3	4	5	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

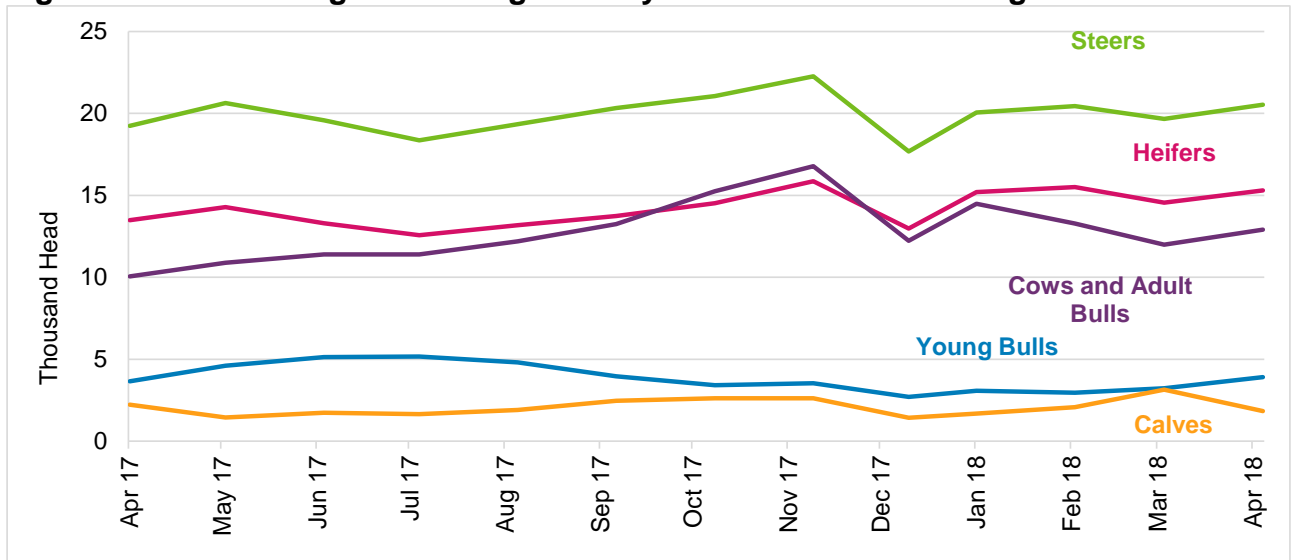


Figure 4:2 United Kingdom average weekly numbers of sheep slaughtered

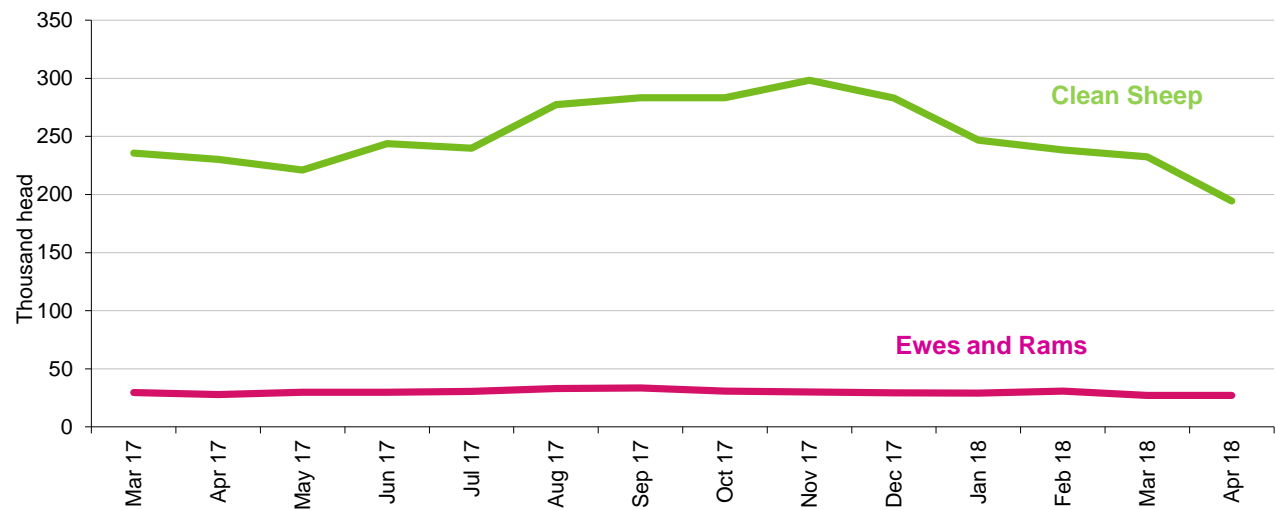
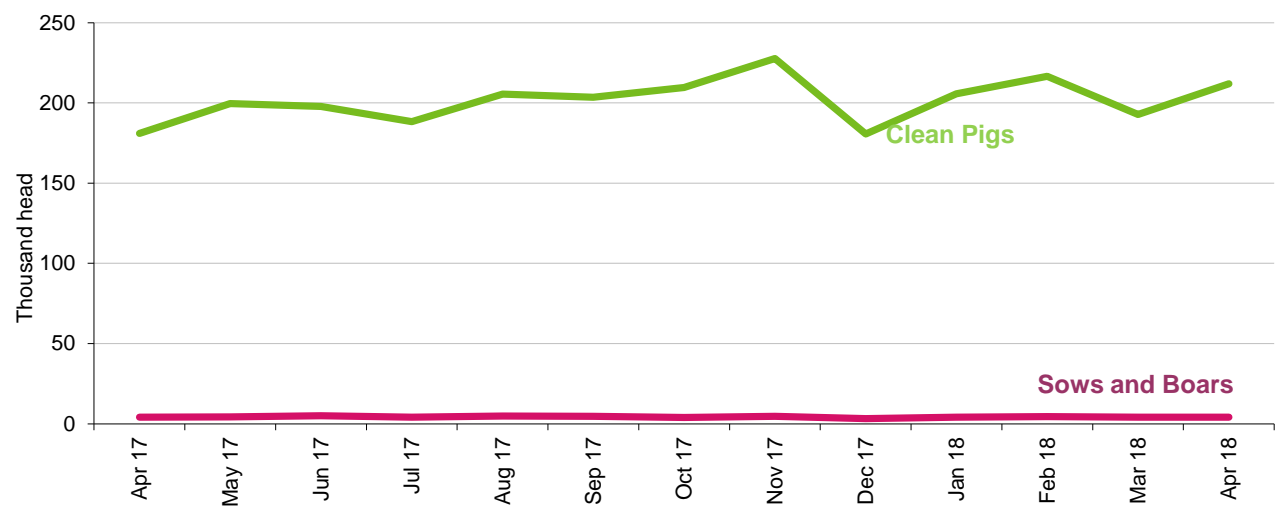


Figure 4:3 United Kingdom average weekly numbers of pigs slaughtered



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		
	February 2018	March 2018	April 2018
	28 days	31 days	30 days
England & Wales			
Steers	52	56	55
Heifers	39	40	39
Young Bulls	8	10	11
Cows and Adult Bulls	39	38	40
Calves	8	13	7
Clean Sheep	842	905	744
Ewes and Rams	119	117	113
Clean Pigs	710	689	712
Sows and Boars	17	17	17
Scotland			
Steers	16	19	17
Heifers	12	14	12
Young Bulls	1	1	2
Cows and Adult Bulls	6	6	5
Calves	0	0	0
Clean Sheep	88	99	67
Ewes and Rams	1	2	2
Clean Pigs	25	30	27
Sows and Boars	1	1	1
Great Britain			
Steers	68	74	72
Heifers	51	53	51
Young Bulls	9	11	13
Cows and Adult Bulls	45	44	45
Calves	8	13	7
Clean Sheep	930	1004	810
Ewes and Rams	121	119	115
Clean Pigs	734	718	739
Sows and Boars	18	18	18
Northern Ireland			
Steers	14	13	16
Heifers	11	11	14
Young Bulls	3	3	4
Cows and Adult Bulls	9	9	11
Calves	1	0	1
Clean Sheep	24	25	23
Ewes and Rams	2	2	2
Clean Pigs	132	136	169
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 and March 2018 due to actual data replacing estimates. There have also been revisions to pigs data between October 2017 and January 2018 due to an error within the administrative data system.