



11th April 2019

United Kingdom Slaughter Statistics – March 2019

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Key points

The key results for **March 2019 compared to March 2018** are:

- **Cattle:** UK prime cattle (steers, heifers and young bulls) slaughterings in March 2019 were down 1.9% on March 2018 at 165,000 head. Beef and veal production was 77,000 tonnes, 0.2% higher than in March 2018.
- **Sheep:** UK clean sheep slaughterings were down 6.9% on March 2018 at 990,000 head. Mutton and lamb production was 25,000 tonnes, 3.1% higher than in March 2018.
- **Pigs:** UK clean pig slaughterings were 0.9% lower than in March 2018 at 855,000 head. Pigmeat production was 76,000 tonnes, 1.0% higher than in March 2018.

Response rates for March were 96% for England and Wales.

This notice will be updated at 09:30 on 16th May 2019. 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 2018 31 days	January 2019 31 days	February 2019 28 days	March 2019 31 days	yr on yr % change
Steers	88	87	83	86	-2.5%
Heifers	66	70	67	66	0.6%
Young Bulls	15	14	12	13	-9.0%
Cows and Adult Bulls	54	61	54	55	1.5%
Calves(1)	15	9	12	17	12%
Clean Sheep	1062	1034	907	990	-6.9%
Ewes and Rams	125	142	136	139	12%
Clean Pigs	862	940	834	855	-0.9%
Sows and Boars	22	25	19	21	-3.9%

(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			
	March 2018	January 2019	February 2019	March 2019
Steers	372.1	373.3	375.6	376.0
Heifers	332.6	335.2	338.5	337.1
Young Bulls	320.9	325.7	328.8	326.8
Cows and Adult Bulls	312.9	319.1	324.8	320.5
Calves(1)	55.8	68.3	52.7	43.0
Clean Sheep	19.6	19.8	20.4	20.6
Ewes and Rams	25.3	26.0	26.0	31.0
Clean Pigs	83.5	84.2	85.1	85.1
Sows and Boars	143.3	144.8	145.7	146.4

(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 2018 31 days	January 2019 31 days	February 2019 28 days	March 2019 31 days	yr on yr % change
Beef	77	80	76	77	0.2%
Mutton and Lamb	24	24	22	25	3.1%
Pigmeat	75	83	74	76	1.0%

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													
	2018										2019		
	Mar	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Steers	20	20	20	19	18	18	19	22	22	18	20	21	19
Heifers	15	15	15	14	13	14	14	16	17	14	16	17	15
Young Bulls	3	4	4	5	5	5	4	4	3	3	3	3	3
Cows and Adult Bulls	12	12	11	11	14	12	14	16	16	13	14	14	12
Calves	3	2	2	1	2	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	4
Clean Sheep	240	187	199	204	233	285	259	288	288	270	233	227	223
Ewes and Rams	28	27	28	28	30	37	30	35	32	32	32	34	31
Clean Pigs	195	205	203	194	199	213	198	218	222	189	212	209	193
Sows and Boars	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	6	5	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

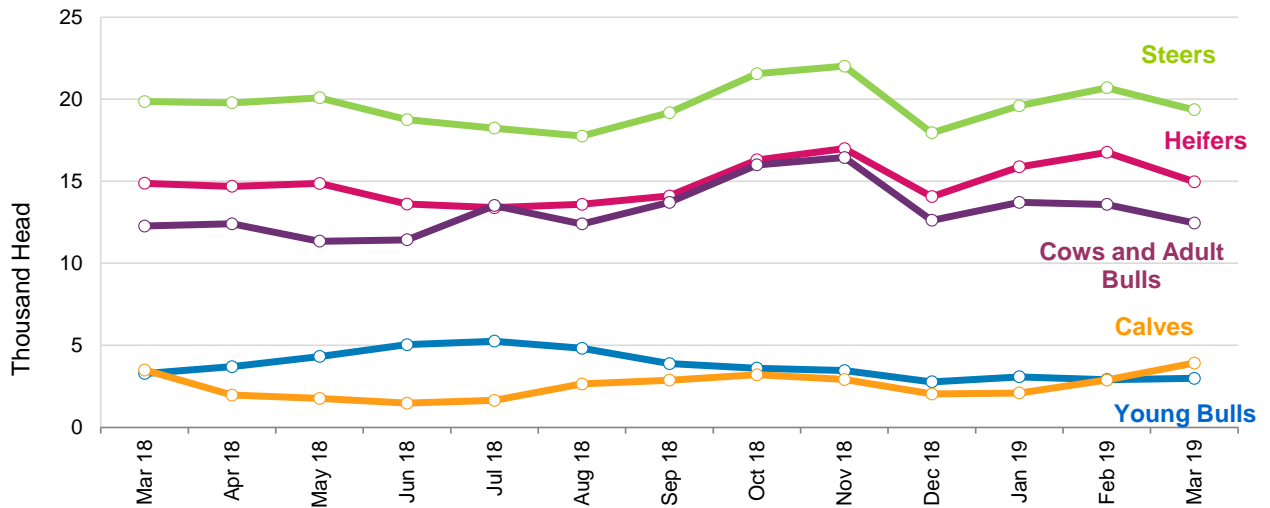


Figure 4:2 United Kingdom average weekly numbers of sheep slaughtered

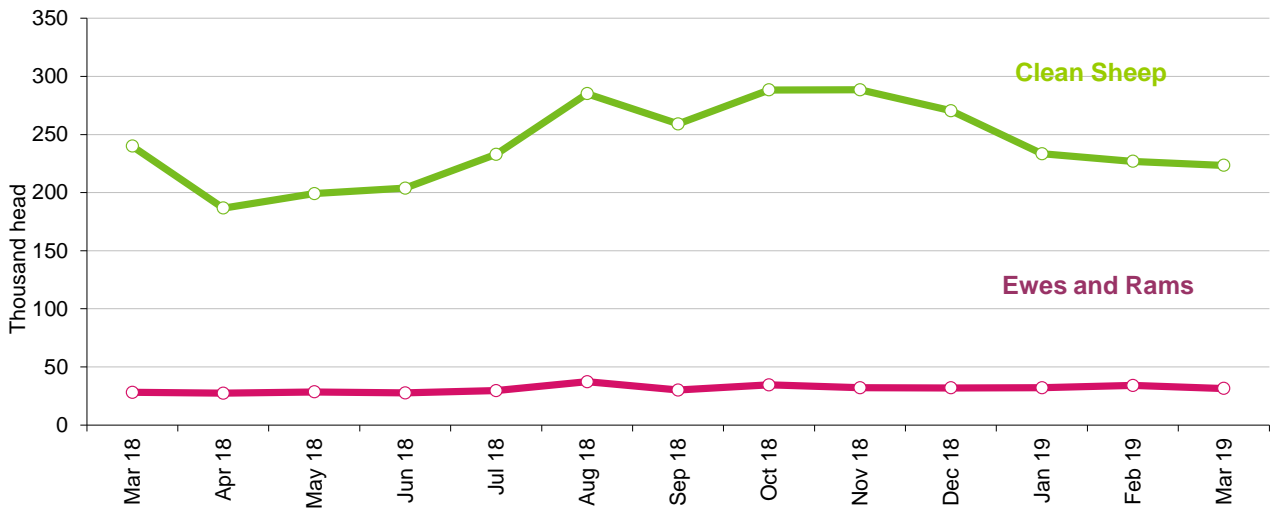
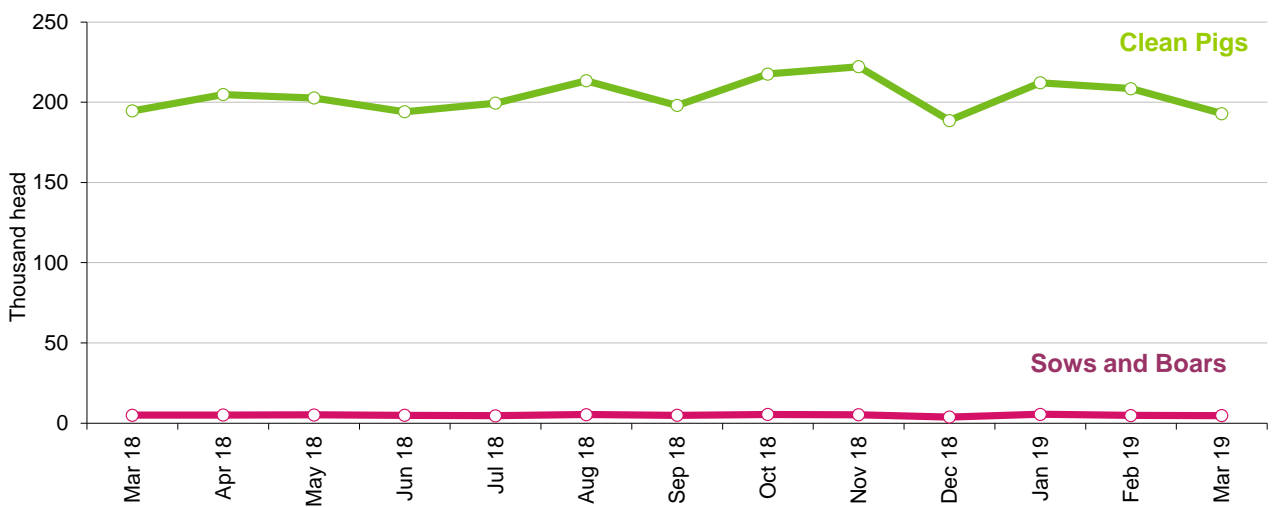


Figure 4:3 United Kingdom average weekly numbers of pigs slaughtered



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 2019	February 2019	March 2019
	31 days	28 days	31 days
England & Wales			
Steers	56	53	53
Heifers	44	42	41
Young Bulls	9	7	9
Cows and Adult Bulls	47	42	42
Calves	9	11	17
Clean Sheep	897	794	859
Ewes and Rams	138	133	136
Clean Pigs	756	668	683
Sows and Boars	23	18	20
Scotland			
Steers	17	17	19
Heifers	14	13	13
Young Bulls	1	1	1
Cows and Adult Bulls	5	5	6
Calves	0	0	0
Clean Sheep	109	96	110
Ewes and Rams	1	1	1
Clean Pigs	28	26	28
Sows and Boars	1	1	1
Great Britain			
Steers	73	70	72
Heifers	58	55	54
Young Bulls	10	9	10
Cows and Adult Bulls	52	47	47
Calves	9	11	17
Clean Sheep	1006	890	970
Ewes and Rams	139	134	137
Clean Pigs	784	694	711
Sows and Boars	25	19	21
Northern Ireland			
Steers	14	13	14
Heifers	13	12	12
Young Bulls	3	3	3
Cows and Adult Bulls	9	7	8
Calves	0	1	1
Clean Sheep	27	17	20
Ewes and Rams	3	2	2
Clean Pigs	156	141	143
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.