



16th May 2019

United Kingdom Slaughter Statistics – April 2019

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Key points

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

- **Cattle:** UK prime cattle (steers, heifers and young bulls) slaughterings in April 2019 were down 0.9% on April 2018 at 162,000 head. Beef and veal production was 73,000 tonnes, 2.1% lower than in April 2018.
- **Sheep:** UK clean sheep slaughterings were up 33% on April 2018 at 1064,000 head. Mutton and lamb production was 26,000 tonnes, 39% higher than in April 2018.
- **Pigs:** UK clean pig slaughterings were 1.2% higher than in April 2018 at 889,000 head. Pigmeat production was 78,000 tonnes, 2.1% higher than in April 2018.

Response rates for April were 98% for England and Wales.

This notice will be updated at 09:30 on 13th June 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				
	April 2018 30 days	February 2019 28 days	March 2019 31 days	April 2019 30 days	yr on yr % change
Steers	85	83	86	82	-3.4%
Heifers	63	67	67	65	2.8%
Young Bulls	16	12	13	15	-2.5%
Cows and Adult Bulls	53	54	55	46	-13%
Calves(1)	8	12	17	11	35%
Clean Sheep	800	907	992	1064	33%
Ewes and Rams	117	136	140	133	13%
Clean Pigs	878	834	859	889	1.2%
Sows and Boars	22	19	21	19	-13%

(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 2018	February 2019	March 2019	April 2019
Steers	370.2	375.6	375.8	375.0
Heifers	331.2	338.5	336.9	336.2
Young Bulls	328.3	328.8	327.4	332.7
Cows and Adult Bulls	311.8	324.8	320.4	317.3
Calves(1)	71.0	52.7	43.1	59.6
Clean Sheep	19.9	20.4	20.7	21.0
Ewes and Rams	24.4	26.0	31.0	28.3
Clean Pigs	83.5	85.1	85.2	84.7
Sows and Boars	141.8	145.7	146.4	146.0

(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 2018 30 days	February 2019 28 days	March 2019 31 days	April 2019 30 days	yr on yr % change
Beef	75	76	78	73	-2.1%
Mutton and Lamb	19	22	25	26	39%
Pigmeat	76	74	76	78	2.1%

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												
	2018						2019						
	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
Steers	20	20	19	18	18	19	22	22	18	20	21	19	19
Heifers	15	15	14	13	14	14	16	17	14	16	17	15	15
Young Bulls	4	4	5	5	5	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	4
Cows and Adult Bulls	12	11	11	14	12	14	16	16	13	14	14	13	11
Calves	2	2	1	2	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	4	3
Clean Sheep	187	199	204	233	285	259	288	288	270	233	227	224	248
Ewes and Rams	27	28	28	30	37	30	35	32	32	32	34	32	31
Clean Pigs	205	203	194	199	213	198	218	222	189	212	209	194	207
Sows and Boars	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	6	5	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

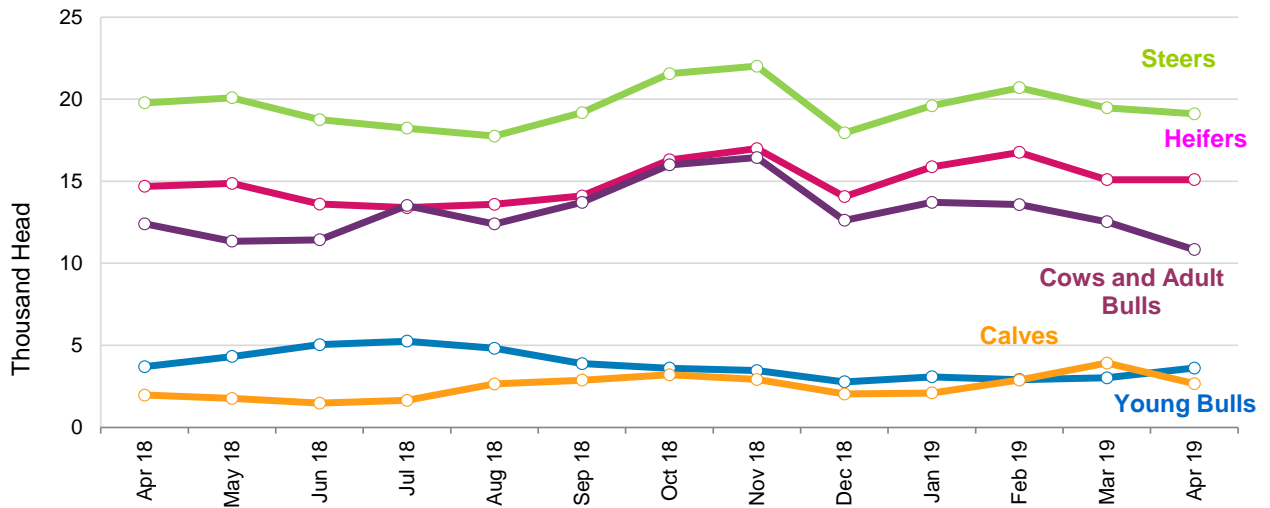


Figure 4:2 United Kingdom average weekly numbers of sheep slaughtered

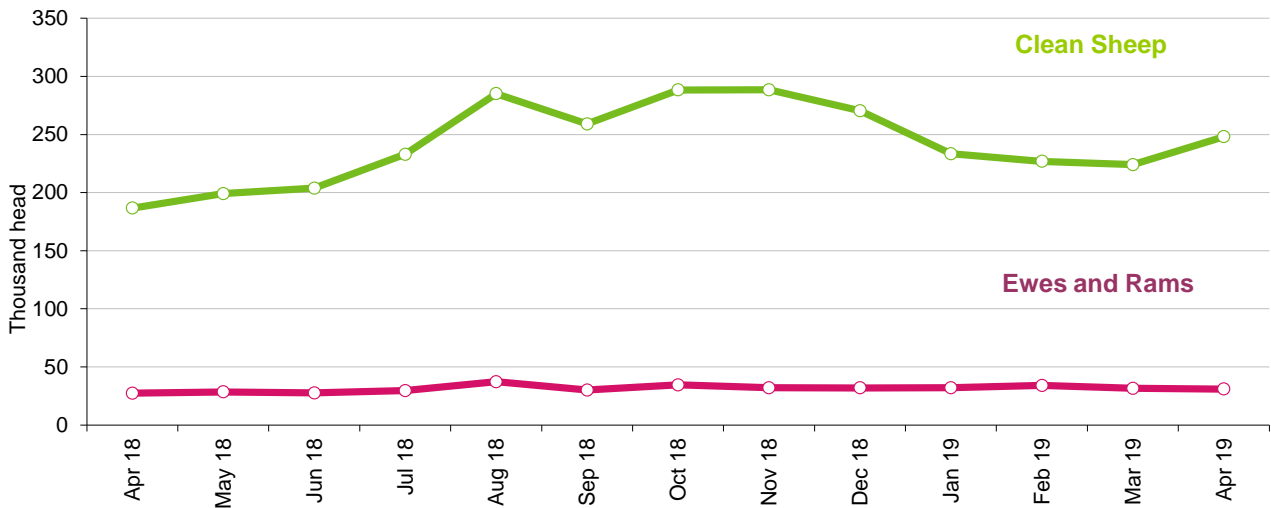
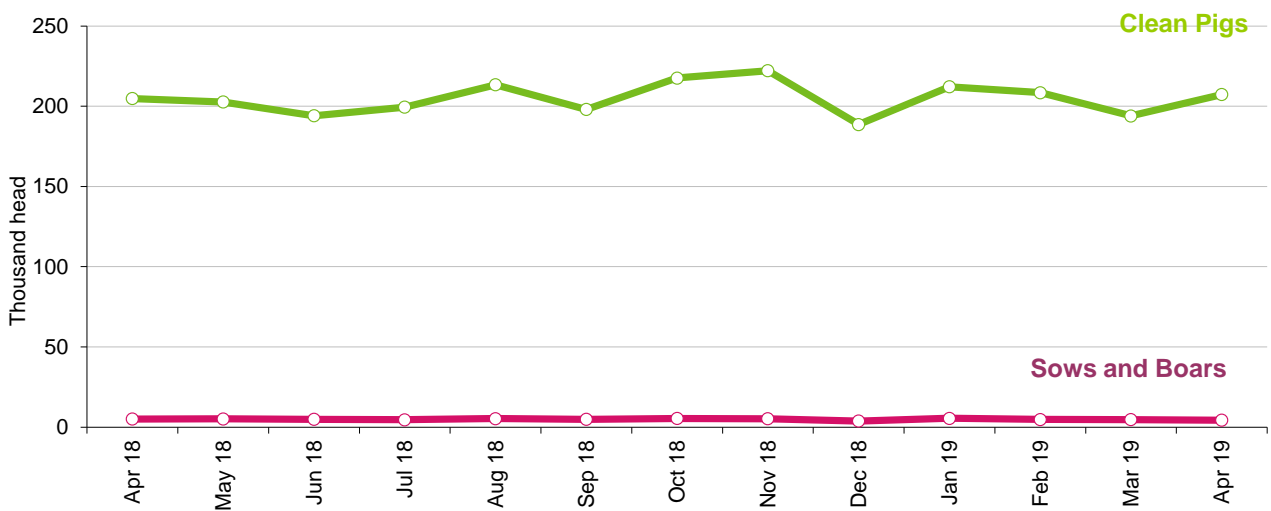


Figure 4:3 United Kingdom average weekly numbers of pigs slaughtered



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		
	February 2019	March 2019	April 2019
	28 days	31 days	30 days
England & Wales			
Steers	53	53	53
Heifers	42	41	40
Young Bulls	7	9	10
Cows and Adult Bulls	42	42	36
Calves	11	17	11
Clean Sheep	794	860	941
Ewes and Rams	133	136	129
Clean Pigs	668	683	722
Sows and Boars	18	20	18
Scotland			
Steers	17	19	16
Heifers	13	13	13
Young Bulls	1	1	2
Cows and Adult Bulls	5	6	4
Calves	0	0	0
Clean Sheep	96	112	100
Ewes and Rams	1	2	2
Clean Pigs	26	28	28
Sows and Boars	1	1	1
Great Britain			
Steers	70	72	69
Heifers	55	54	53
Young Bulls	9	10	12
Cows and Adult Bulls	47	48	40
Calves	11	17	11
Clean Sheep	890	971	1041
Ewes and Rams	134	138	130
Clean Pigs	694	711	750
Sows and Boars	19	21	19
Northern Ireland			
Steers	13	14	13
Heifers	12	12	12
Young Bulls	3	3	4
Cows and Adult Bulls	7	8	6
Calves	1	1	0
Clean Sheep	17	21	23
Ewes and Rams	2	2	2
Clean Pigs	141	148	139
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.