



13th June 2019

United Kingdom Slaughter Statistics – May 2019

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Key points

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

- **Cattle:** UK prime cattle (steers, heifers and young bulls) slaughterings in May 2019 were up 0.3% on May 2018 at 174,000 head. Beef and veal production was 79,000 tonnes, 2.1% higher than in May 2018.
- **Sheep:** UK clean sheep slaughterings were up 8.4% on May 2018 at 955,000 head. Mutton and lamb production was 24,000 tonnes, 15% higher than in May 2018.
- **Pigs:** UK clean pig slaughterings were 1.8% higher than in May 2018 at 914,000 head. Pigmeat production was 80,000 tonnes, 3.7% higher than in May 2018.

Response rates for May were 95% for England and Wales.

This notice will be updated at 09:30 on 11th July 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				
	May 2018 31 days	March 2019 31 days	April 2019 30 days	May 2019 31 days	yr on yr % change
Steers	89	86	82	89	-0.5%
Heifers	66	67	65	67	2.3%
Young Bulls	19	13	15	19	-3.1%
Cows and Adult Bulls	50	55	46	51	1.4%
Calves(1)	8	17	11	9	18%
Clean Sheep	882	992	1064	955	8.4%
Ewes and Rams	126	140	132	136	7.4%
Clean Pigs	898	859	889	914	1.8%
Sows and Boars	23	21	19	22	-5.1%

(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			
	May 2018	March 2019	April 2019	May 2019
Steers	369.5	375.8	375.1	375.5
Heifers	331.3	336.9	336.2	336.5
Young Bulls	337.8	327.4	332.7	342.9
Cows and Adult Bulls	315.5	320.4	317.3	321.8
Calves(1)	84.7	43.1	59.6	70.8
Clean Sheep	19.7	20.7	21.0	20.6
Ewes and Rams	25.2	31.0	28.3	28.5
Clean Pigs	82.4	85.2	84.7	84.2
Sows and Boars	144.1	146.4	146.0	147.0

(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					
	May 2018 31 days	March 2019 31 days	April 2019 30 days	May 2019 31 days	yr on yr % change
Beef	78	78	73	79	2.1%
Mutton and Lamb	21	25	26	24	15%
Pigmeat	77	76	78	80	3.7%

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				
	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
Steers	20	19	18	18	19	22	22	18	20	21	19	19	20
Heifers	15	14	13	14	14	16	17	14	16	17	15	15	15
Young Bulls	4	5	5	5	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	4	4
Cows and Adult Bulls	11	11	14	12	14	16	16	13	14	14	13	11	11
Calves	2	1	2	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	4	3	2
Clean Sheep	199	204	233	285	259	288	288	270	233	227	224	248	216
Ewes and Rams	28	28	30	37	30	35	32	32	32	34	32	31	31
Clean Pigs	203	194	199	213	198	218	222	189	212	209	194	207	206
Sows and Boars	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	6	5	5	4	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

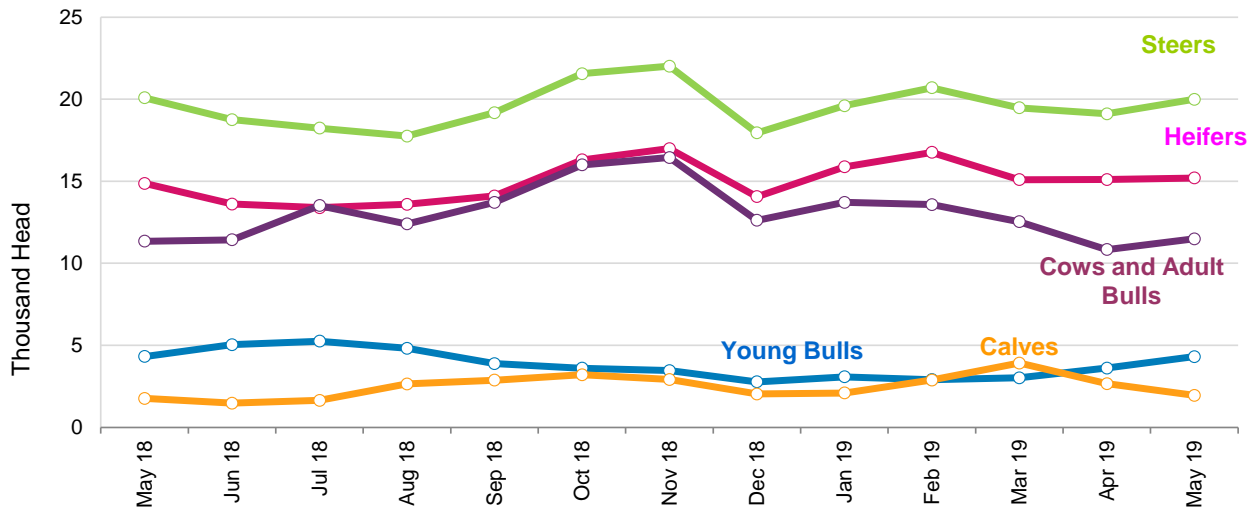


Figure 4:2 United Kingdom average weekly numbers of sheep slaughtered

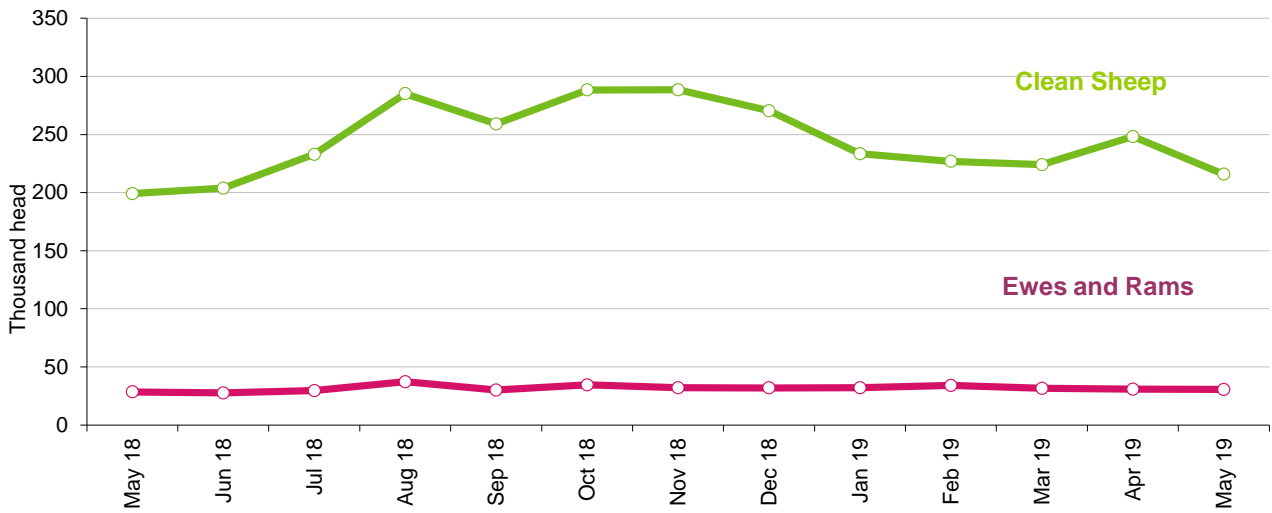
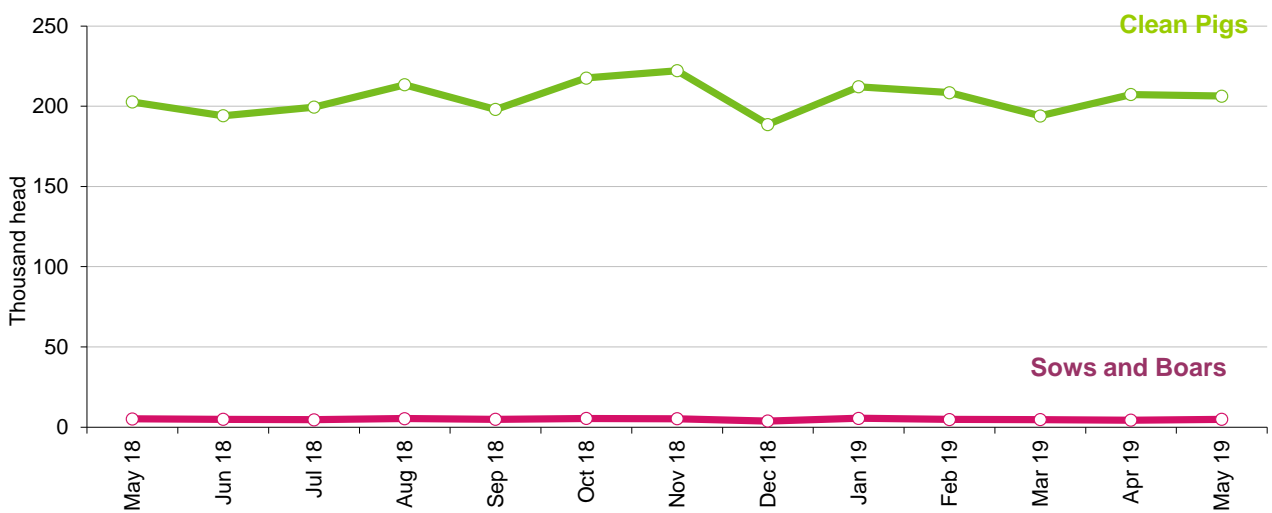


Figure 4:3 United Kingdom average weekly numbers of pigs slaughtered



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		
	March 2019	April 2019	May 2019
	31 days	30 days	31 days
England & Wales			
Steers	53	53	57
Heifers	41	40	43
Young Bulls	9	10	11
Cows and Adult Bulls	42	36	39
Calves	17	11	9
Clean Sheep	860	941	860
Ewes and Rams	136	128	132
Clean Pigs	683	722	746
Sows and Boars	20	18	20
Scotland			
Steers	19	16	18
Heifers	13	13	12
Young Bulls	1	2	3
Cows and Adult Bulls	6	4	5
Calves	0	0	0
Clean Sheep	112	100	69
Ewes and Rams	2	2	2
Clean Pigs	28	28	29
Sows and Boars	1	1	1
Great Britain			
Steers	72	69	75
Heifers	54	53	55
Young Bulls	10	12	14
Cows and Adult Bulls	48	40	44
Calves	17	11	9
Clean Sheep	971	1041	929
Ewes and Rams	138	130	133
Clean Pigs	711	750	775
Sows and Boars	21	19	22
Northern Ireland			
Steers	14	13	14
Heifers	12	12	12
Young Bulls	3	4	4
Cows and Adult Bulls	8	6	7
Calves	1	0	0
Clean Sheep	21	23	26
Ewes and Rams	2	2	2
Clean Pigs	148	139	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.