



12<sup>th</sup> September 2019

## United Kingdom Slaughter Statistics – August 2019

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### Key points

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

- **Cattle:** UK prime cattle (steers, heifers and young bulls) slaughterings in August 2019 were down 0.1% on August 2018 at 160,000 head. Beef and veal production was 75,000 tonnes, 2.7% higher than in August 2018.
- **Sheep:** UK clean sheep slaughterings were down 1.0% on August 2018 at 1250,000 head. Mutton and lamb production was 29,000 tonnes, 1.1% higher than in August 2018.
- **Pigs:** UK clean pig slaughterings were 0.7% lower than in August 2018 at 938,000 head. Pigmeat production was 82,000 tonnes, 0.2% higher than in August 2018.

Response rates for August were 99% for England and Wales.

This notice will be updated at 09:30 on 10<sup>th</sup> October 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          |                      |                      |                        |                      |
|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
|                      | August 2018<br>31 days | June 2019<br>30 days | July 2019<br>31 days | August 2019<br>31 days | yr on yr<br>% change |
| Steers               | 79                     | 78                   | 78                   | 80                     | 1.2%                 |
| Heifers              | 60                     | 60                   | 60                   | 61                     | 1.5%                 |
| Young Bulls          | 21                     | 21                   | 24                   | 19                     | -9.3%                |
| Cows and Adult Bulls | 55                     | 50                   | 53                   | 55                     | 0.7%                 |
| Calves(1)            | 12                     | 7                    | 9                    | 10                     | -11%                 |
| Clean Sheep          | 1263                   | 907                  | 1090                 | 1250                   | -1.0%                |
| Ewes and Rams        | 165                    | 111                  | 148                  | 174                    | 5.4%                 |
| Clean Pigs           | 945                    | 809                  | 907                  | 938                    | -0.7%                |
| Sows and Boars       | 24                     | 18                   | 19                   | 19                     | -19%                 |

(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  |           |           |             |
|----------------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
|                      | August 2018 | June 2019 | July 2019 | August 2019 |
| Steers               | 365.3       | 376.3     | 373.2     | 372.4       |
| Heifers              | 329.0       | 337.2     | 337.5     | 335.0       |
| Young Bulls          | 343.5       | 354.8     | 354.3     | 353.1       |
| Cows and Adult Bulls | 302.0       | 324.1     | 322.9     | 317.8       |
| Calves(1)            | 72.1        | 86.5      | 85.8      | 72.0        |
| Clean Sheep          | 19.1        | 19.9      | 19.5      | 19.3        |
| Ewes and Rams        | 26.7        | 28.5      | 26.4      | 26.8        |
| Clean Pigs           | 82.8        | 84.1      | 83.9      | 84.2        |
| Sows and Boars       | 142.7       | 147.8     | 148.1     | 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        |                      |                      |                        |                   |
|-----------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
|                 | August 2018<br>31 days | June 2019<br>30 days | July 2019<br>31 days | August 2019<br>31 days | yr on yr % change |
| Beef            | 73                     | 74                   | 76                   | 75                     | 2.7%              |
| Mutton and Lamb | 29                     | 21                   | 25                   | 29                     | 1.1%              |
| Pigmeat         | 82                     | 71                   | 79                   | 82                     | 0.2%              |

### 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.

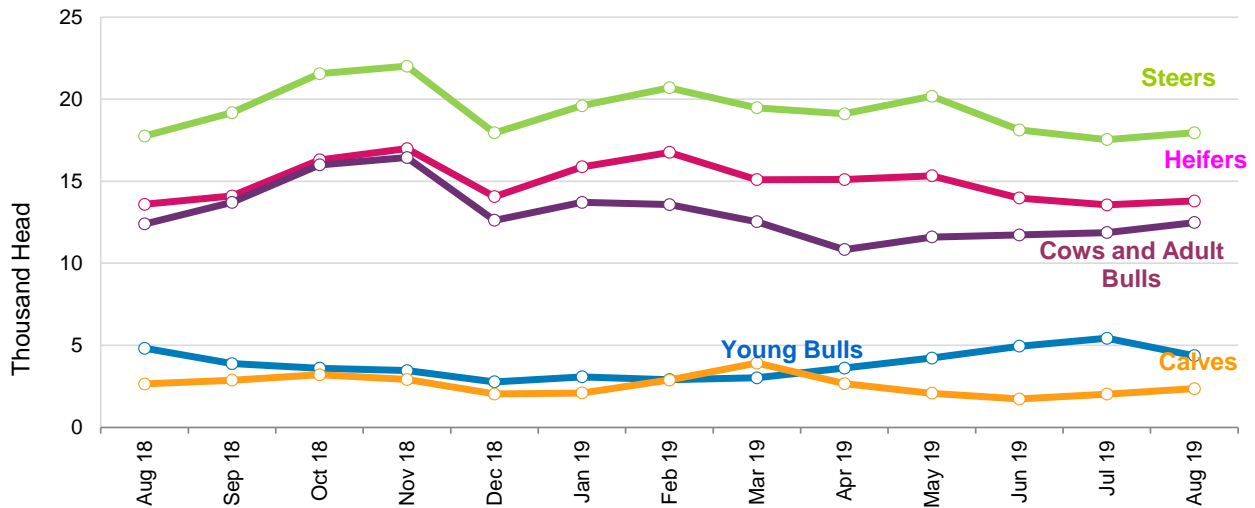
Longer term trends can be seen in Figures 4:1, 4:2 and 4:3, following this table.

**Table 4: United Kingdom average weekly numbers of livestock slaughtered**

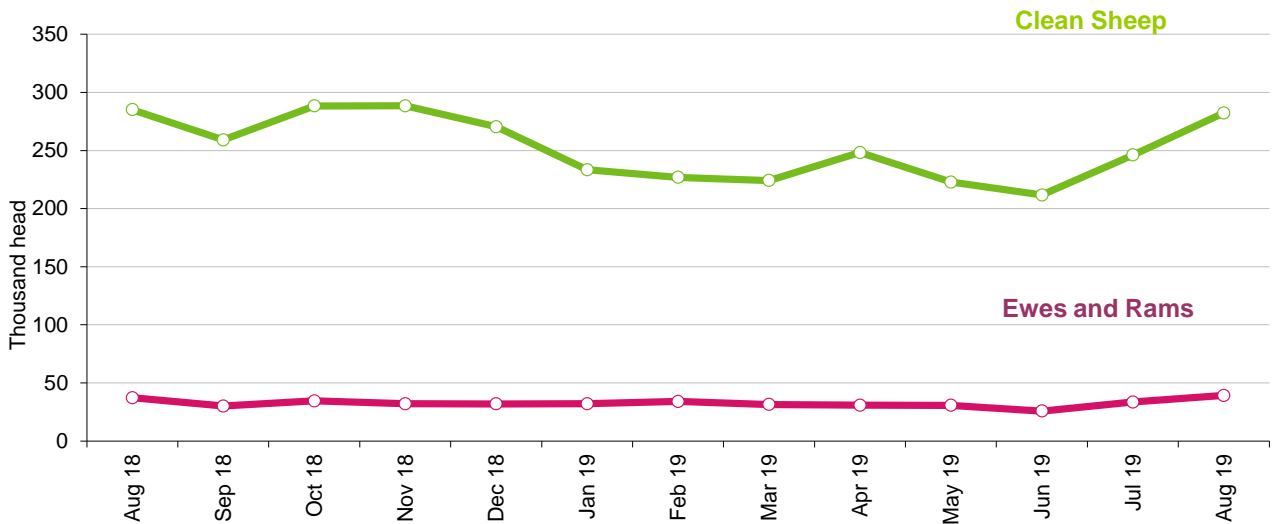
|                      | thousand head |     |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |      |     |     |
|----------------------|---------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|
|                      | 2018          |     |     |     |     | 2019 |     |     |     |     |      |     |     |
|                      | Aug           | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan  | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | June | Jul | Aug |
| Steers               | 18            | 19  | 22  | 22  | 18  | 20   | 21  | 19  | 19  | 20  | 18   | 18  | 18  |
| Heifers              | 14            | 14  | 16  | 17  | 14  | 16   | 17  | 15  | 15  | 15  | 14   | 14  | 14  |
| Young Bulls          | 5             | 4   | 4   | 3   | 3   | 3    | 3   | 3   | 4   | 4   | 5    | 5   | 4   |
| Cows and Adult Bulls | 12            | 14  | 16  | 16  | 13  | 14   | 14  | 13  | 11  | 12  | 12   | 12  | 12  |
| Calves               | 3             | 3   | 3   | 3   | 2   | 2    | 3   | 4   | 3   | 2   | 2    | 2   | 2   |
| Clean Sheep          | 285           | 259 | 288 | 288 | 270 | 233  | 227 | 224 | 248 | 223 | 212  | 246 | 282 |
| Ewes and Rams        | 37            | 30  | 35  | 32  | 32  | 32   | 34  | 31  | 31  | 31  | 26   | 34  | 39  |
| Clean Pigs           | 213           | 198 | 218 | 222 | 189 | 212  | 209 | 194 | 207 | 206 | 189  | 205 | 212 |
| Sows and Boars       | 5             | 5   | 5   | 5   | 4   | 6    | 5   | 5   | 4   | 5   | 4    | 4   | 4   |

(1)The definition of calves from May 2014 is "Bovines less than 1 year". Please see methodology for full details.

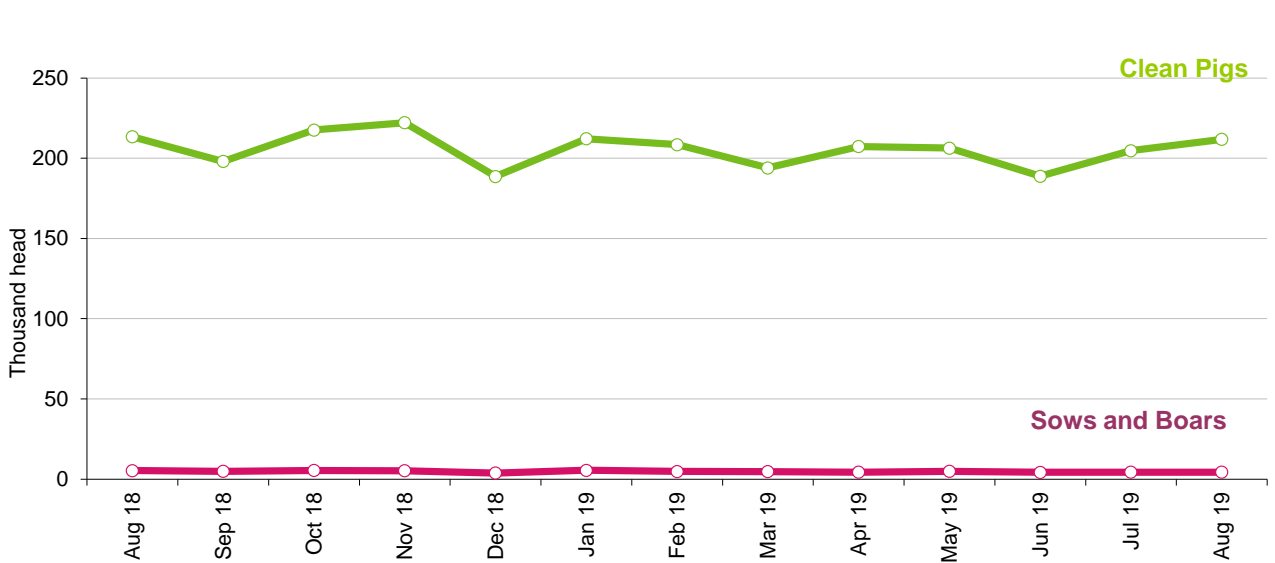
**Figure 4:1 United Kingdom average weekly numbers of cattle slaughtered**



**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 |           |             |
|----------------------------|---------------|-----------|-------------|
|                            | June 2019     | July 2019 | August 2019 |
|                            | 30 days       | 31 days   | 31 days     |
| <b>England &amp; Wales</b> |               |           |             |
| Steers                     | 49            | 53        | 51          |
| Heifers                    | 38            | 41        | 40          |
| Young Bulls                | 12            | 13        | 11          |
| Cows and Adult Bulls       | 37            | 40        | 41          |
| Calves                     | 7             | 9         | 10          |
| Clean Sheep                | 806           | 958       | 1090        |
| Ewes and Rams              | 107           | 145       | 169         |
| Clean Pigs                 | 644           | 733       | 747         |
| Sows and Boars             | 17            | 18        | 18          |
| <b>Scotland</b>            |               |           |             |
| Steers                     | 16            | 15        | 16          |
| Heifers                    | 12            | 10        | 12          |
| Young Bulls                | 4             | 5         | 4           |
| Cows and Adult Bulls       | 5             | 4         | 5           |
| Calves                     | 0             | 0         | 0           |
| Clean Sheep                | 63            | 92        | 113         |
| Ewes and Rams              | 2             | 2         | 2           |
| Clean Pigs                 | 28            | 30        | 30          |
| Sows and Boars             | 1             | 1         | 1           |
| <b>Great Britain</b>       |               |           |             |
| Steers                     | 66            | 68        | 67          |
| Heifers                    | 50            | 51        | 52          |
| Young Bulls                | 16            | 19        | 15          |
| Cows and Adult Bulls       | 42            | 45        | 46          |
| Calves                     | 7             | 9         | 10          |
| Clean Sheep                | 869           | 1050      | 1203        |
| Ewes and Rams              | 109           | 146       | 171         |
| Clean Pigs                 | 672           | 763       | 777         |
| Sows and Boars             | 18            | 19        | 19          |
| <b>Northern Ireland</b>    |               |           |             |
| Steers                     | 12            | 10        | 12          |
| Heifers                    | 10            | 9         | 10          |
| Young Bulls                | 5             | 6         | 4           |
| Cows and Adult Bulls       | 8             | 8         | 9           |
| Calves                     | 0             | 0         | 1           |
| Clean Sheep                | 38            | 40        | 48          |
| Ewes and Rams              | 2             | 2         | 3           |
| Clean Pigs                 | 137           | 144       | 161         |
| Sows and Boars             | 0             | 0         | 0           |

14 is "Bovines less than 1 year".

## 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](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 1<sup>st</sup> February 2016 onwards the statistics are based on calendar months.
11. We are currently reviewing the methodology for calculating the dressed carcass weights and to align with UK specifications. If you have any questions or comments we are happy to discuss. Please contact us at [DEFRA.FISU@defra.gov.uk](mailto:DEFRA.FISU@defra.gov.uk)

## Definitions

12. 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

13. 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.