



13th December 2019

United Kingdom Slaughter Statistics – November 2019

Contents

Section 1	Monthly numbers of home killed livestock slaughtered	page 2
Section 2	Average dressed carcase weights	page 2
Section 3	Monthly volumes of home killed meat production	page 3
Section 4	Average weekly numbers of livestock slaughtered	page 3
Section 5	Monthly numbers of livestock slaughtered by country	page 5
Section 6	Methodology, notes and revisions policy	page 6

Key points

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

- **Cattle:** UK prime cattle (steers, heifers and young bulls) slaughterings in November 2019 were down 2.1% on November 2018 at 178,000 head. Beef and veal production was 83,000 tonnes, 0.6% lower than in November 2018.
- **Sheep:** UK clean sheep slaughterings were up 0.2% on November 2018 at 1238,000 head. Mutton and lamb production was 28,000 tonnes, 1.9% higher than in November 2018.
- **Pigs:** UK clean pig slaughterings were 0.9% higher than in November 2018 at 961,000 head. Pigmeat production was 85,000 tonnes, 2.6% higher than in November 2018.

Response rates for November were 91% for England and Wales.

This notice will be updated at 09:30 on Thursday 16th January 2020. 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				
	November 2018 30 days	September 2019 30 days	October 2019 31 days	November 2019 30 days	yr on yr % change
Steers	94	89	97	93	-1.4%
Heifers	73	68	74	72	-1.7%
Young Bulls	15	16	15	14	-8.2%
Cows and Adult Bulls	70	59	73	69	-1.8%
Calves(1)	13	14	15	10	-20%
Clean Sheep	1236	1192	1300	1238	0.2%
Ewes and Rams	138	142	157	136	-1.1%
Clean Pigs	952	900	1002	961	0.9%
Sows and Boars	22	20	22	22	-0.2%

(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 (2)

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 (2)

	kilogramme			
	November 2018	September 2019	October 2019	November 2019
Steers	355.4	360.9	358.8	358.9
Heifers	319.3	316.8	316.1	324.1
Young Bulls	327.8	342.2	333.9	330.1
Cows and Adult Bulls	297.7	306.0	304.5	305.2
Calves(1)	53.2	56.5	54.5	61.6
Clean Sheep	19.2	19.5	19.5	19.6
Ewes and Rams	25.4	25.7	25.5	25.6
Clean Pigs	84.0	84.6	85.6	85.5
Sows and Boars	144.3	145.8	143.6	146.1

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

(2) Revised methodology for calculating cattle DCW has been applied from January 2018 onwards. 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				
	November 2018 30 days	September 2019 30 days	October 2019 31 days	November 2019 30 days	yr on yr % change
Beef	83	79	86	83	-0.6%
Mutton and Lamb	27	27	29	28	1.9%
Pigmeat	83	79	89	85	2.6%

(1) Revised methodology for calculating cattle DCW has been applied from January 2018 onwards. This change will impact production volume data. Please see methodology for full details.

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 Nov	2018 Dec	2019 Jan	2019 Feb	2019 Mar	2019 Apr	2019 May	2019 Jun	2019 Jul	2019 Aug	2019 Sep	2019 Oct	2019 Nov
Steers	22	18	20	21	19	19	20	18	18	18	21	22	22
Heifers	17	14	16	17	15	15	15	14	14	14	16	17	17
Young Bulls	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	5	5	4	4	3	3
Cows and Adult Bulls	16	13	14	14	13	11	12	12	12	12	14	17	16
Calves	3	2	2	3	4	3	2	2	2	2	3	3	2
Clean Sheep	288	270	233	227	224	248	223	212	246	283	278	294	289
Ewes and Rams	32	32	32	34	31	31	31	26	34	39	33	35	32
Clean Pigs	222	189	212	209	194	207	206	189	205	212	210	226	224
Sows and Boars	5	4	6	5	5	4	5	4	4	4	5	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

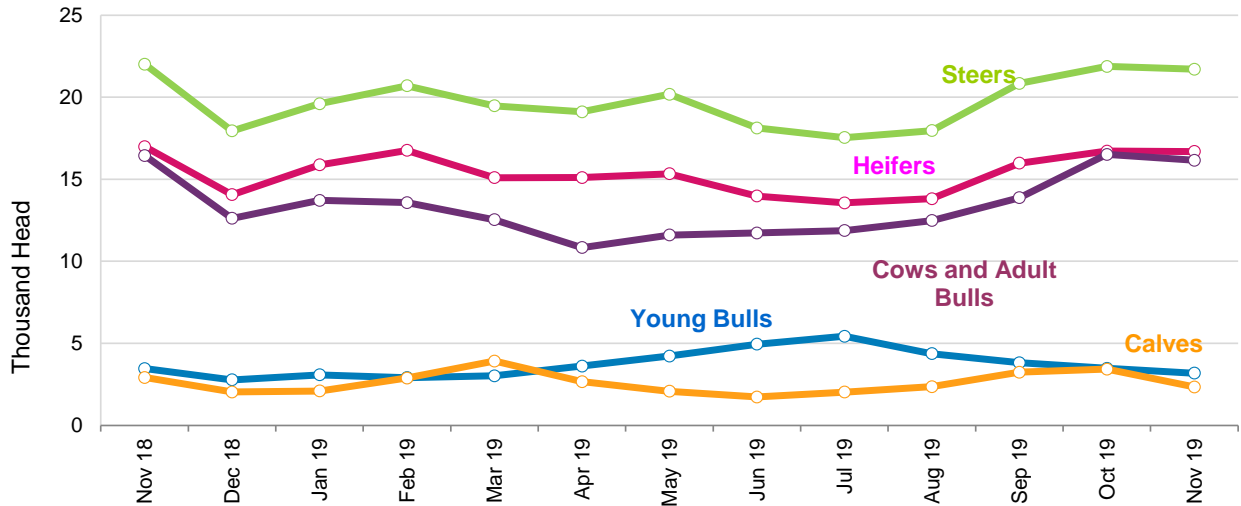


Figure 4:2 United Kingdom average weekly numbers of sheep slaughtered

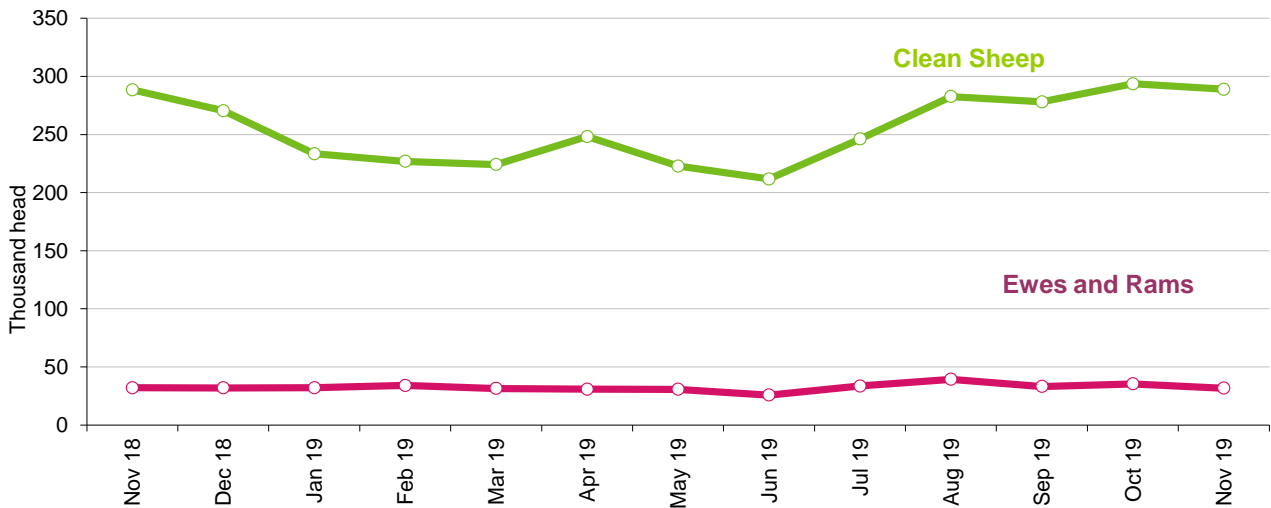
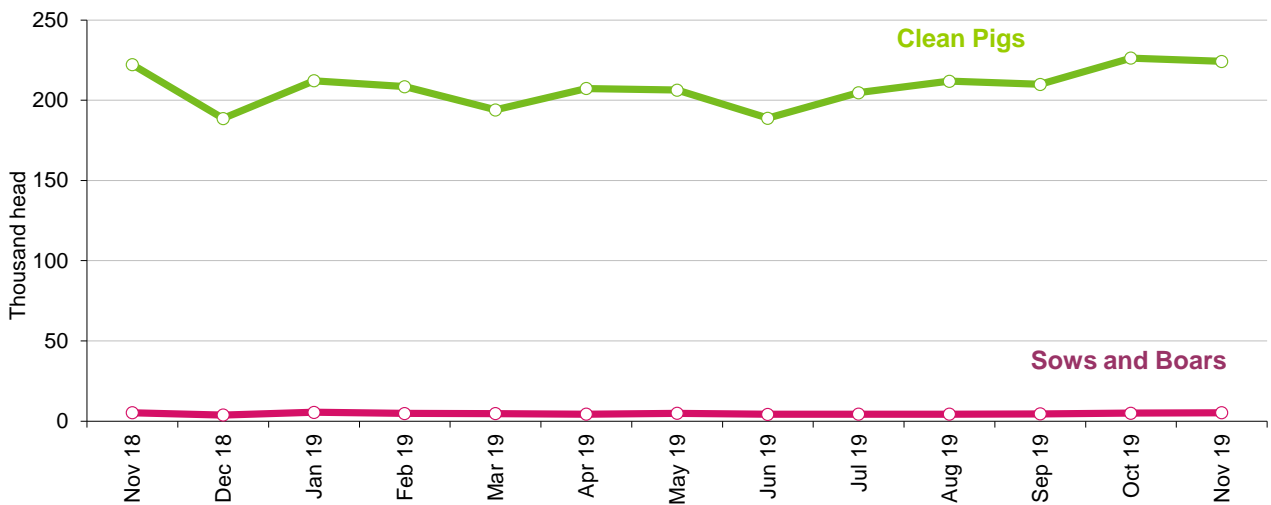


Figure 4:3 United Kingdom average weekly numbers of pigs slaughtered



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		
	September 2019	October 2019	November 2019
	30 days	31 days	30 days
England & Wales			
Steers	55	60	60
Heifers	44	48	45
Young Bulls	10	10	9
Cows and Adult Bulls	44	55	53
Calves	13	15	9
Clean Sheep	1027	1127	1073
Ewes and Rams	137	152	132
Clean Pigs	714	809	769
Sows and Boars	18	20	21
Scotland			
Steers	18	19	19
Heifers	13	14	14
Young Bulls	2	2	2
Cows and Adult Bulls	5	6	6
Calves	0	0	0
Clean Sheep	124	135	127
Ewes and Rams	2	2	2
Clean Pigs	28	30	30
Sows and Boars	1	2	2
Great Britain			
Steers	73	79	78
Heifers	57	62	59
Young Bulls	12	12	11
Cows and Adult Bulls	49	61	59
Calves	13	15	9
Clean Sheep	1152	1262	1200
Ewes and Rams	139	154	134
Clean Pigs	743	838	800
Sows and Boars	20	22	22
Northern Ireland			
Steers	16	18	15
Heifers	12	12	12
Young Bulls	4	3	3
Cows and Adult Bulls	10	12	11
Calves	1	1	1
Clean Sheep	40	38	38
Ewes and Rams	3	3	3
Clean Pigs	157	164	162
Sows and Boars	0	0	0

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

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 85) 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 carcase 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 carcase weights are recorded.
7. The volume of meat production is estimated from the number of all livestock slaughtered and average dressed carcase 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.
11. We have carried out a review of the methodology for calculating the dressed carcase weights in order to align with UK specifications. Some slaughterhouses provide Cattle Dressed Carcase Weights (DCW) including Kidney Knob and Channel Fat (KKCF); some slaughterhouses provide pig weights at EC specification. From September 2019 cattle DCWs are calculated to UK specification which excludes KKCF; Pigs are dressed to UK specification.
12. To calculate the DCW of animals by category:
 - a. If the slaughterhouse includes KKCF in the total weight, a deduction of 3.9% occurs. This aligns to the UK DCW specification.
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-beef-carcase-classification-scheme-classify-carcases>
 - b. If pigs are dressed to EC specification then an increase of 1.6% to the DCW occurs to align with UK specification.
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-pig-carcase-grading-scheme-dress-and-grade-carcases>
13. Some slaughterhouses specialise for niche markets. These slaughterhouses are treated separately so their DCW are not used to raise the data for those slaughterhouses who do not provide DCW data.
14. Data have been revised to January 2018 using the new methodology. If you have any questions or comments we are happy to discuss. Please contact us at DEFRA.FISU@defra.gov.uk

Definitions

15. 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

16. 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.

National Statistics status

17. National Statistics status means that our statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value, and it is our responsibility to maintain compliance with these standards.

18. The statistics last underwent a full assessment [[Assessment Report 271 Statistics on Agriculture](#)] against the [Code of Practice for Statistics in 2014](#).

19. Since the latest review by the Office for Statistics Regulation, we have continued to comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics and have enhanced data quality by reviewing methodologies and data sources.