



13th August 2020

United Kingdom Slaughter Statistics – July 2020

Due to the increased strain Covid-19 is having on the Livestock industry, our survey response were lower than usual at 86%. To compensate we have made greater use of the Food Standards Agency throughput data to maintain coverage. This may impact on how within species numbers are split amongst their classifications; such as how sheep numbers are split amongst clean sheep and ewe & rams.

This release shows the latest monthly information on the number of slaughters in the United Kingdom for cattle, sheep and pigs. It also contains monthly average dressed carcase weight for cattle, sheep, and pigs; and monthly volumes of home killed meat production.

The key results for July 2020 compared to July 2019 are:

- **Cattle:** UK prime cattle (steers, heifers and young bulls) slaughterings in July 2020 were up 9.6% on July 2019 at 177,000 head. Beef and veal production was 80,000 tonnes, 9.0% higher than in July 2019.
- **Sheep:** UK clean sheep slaughterings were up 17% on July 2019 at 1273,000 head. Mutton and lamb production was 29,000 tonnes, 14% higher than in July 2019.
- **Pigs:** UK clean pig slaughterings were 6.3% higher than in July 2019 at 964,000 head. Pigmeat production was 86,000 tonnes, 9.2% higher than in July 2019.
- The response rate for July was 86% in England and Wales.

Section 1 – Livestock slaughtered

1.1 Monthly numbers of home killed livestock slaughtered

Table 1.1 shows monthly estimates of the number of home killed cattle, sheep and pigs, slaughtered as meat for human consumption in UK abattoirs.

Table 1.1: United Kingdom monthly numbers of livestock slaughtered

	Thousand head				
	July 2019 31 days	May 2020 31 days	June 2020 30 days	July 2020 31 days	yr on yr % change
Steers	78	75	86	87	13%
Heifers	60	65	69	69	14%
Young Bulls	24	16	21	21	-11%
Cows and Adult Bulls	53	45	60	59	12%
Calves	9	5	4	5	-42%
Clean Sheep	1090	769	988	1273	17%
Ewes and Rams	148	84	110	152	2.1%
Clean Pigs	907	797	834	964	6.3%
Sows and Boars	19	15	19	23	21%

1.2 Average weekly numbers of home killed livestock slaughtered

Table 1.2 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 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3, following this table.

Table 1.2: United Kingdom average weekly numbers of livestock slaughtered

	Thousand head												
	2019	2019	2019	2019	2019	2019	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020
	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Steers	18	18	21	22	22	18	20	20	21	18	17	20	20
Heifers	14	14	16	17	17	14	16	17	17	15	15	16	15
Young Bulls	5	4	4	3	3	2	3	3	3	4	4	5	5
Cows and Adult Bulls	12	12	14	17	16	13	14	13	13	10	10	14	13
Calves	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	2	1	1	1
Clean Sheep	246	283	278	294	289	269	235	202	209	207	174	230	288
Ewes and Rams	34	39	33	35	32	32	29	29	30	24	19	26	34
Clean Pigs	205	212	210	226	224	211	217	208	214	213	180	195	218
Sows and Boars	4	4	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	3	4	5

Figure 1.1 United Kingdom average weekly numbers of cattle slaughtered

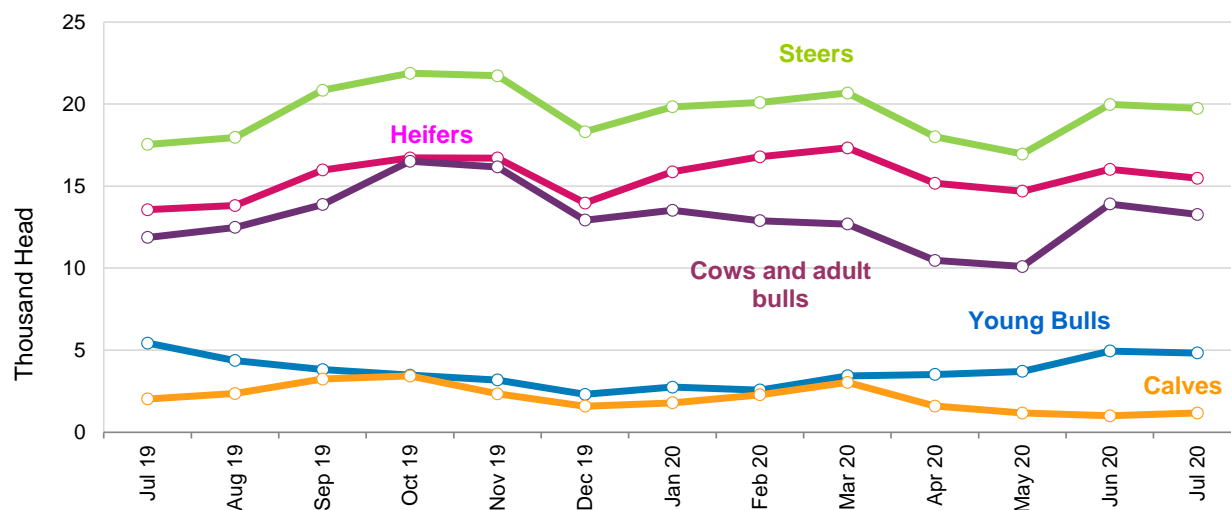


Figure 1.2 United Kingdom average weekly numbers of sheep slaughtered

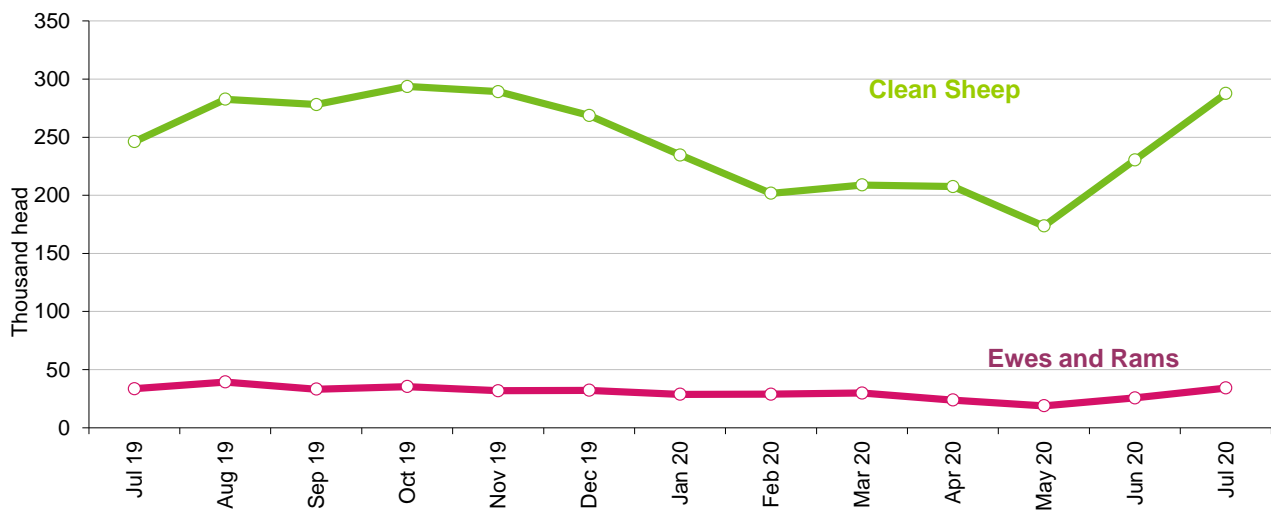
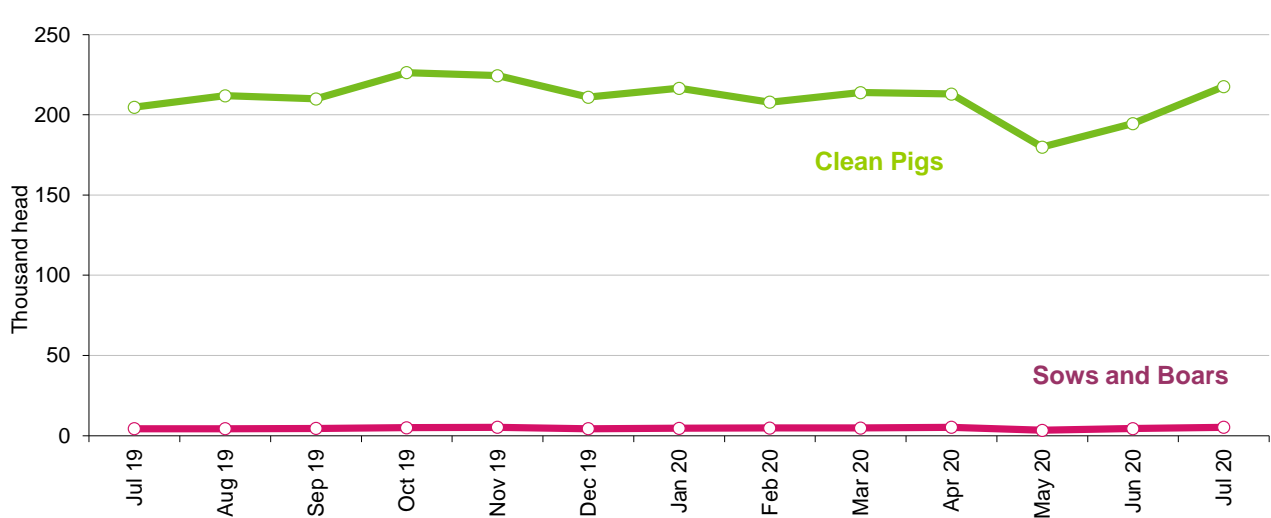


Figure 1.3 United Kingdom average weekly numbers of pigs slaughtered



1.3 Monthly numbers of home killed livestock slaughtered by country

Table 1.3 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 1.3: United Kingdom monthly numbers of livestock slaughtered by country

	Thousand head		
	May 2020	June 2020	July 2020
	31 days	30 days	31 days
England & Wales			
Steers	46	56	59
Heifers	42	46	46
Young Bulls	10	13	14
Cows and Adult Bulls	33	44	44
Calves	5	4	5
Clean Sheep	673	861	1144
Ewes and Rams	80	107	149
Clean Pigs	620	652	777
Sows and Boars	14	17	22
Scotland			
Steers	17	17	17
Heifers	13	12	12
Young Bulls	3	4	4
Cows and Adult Bulls	5	5	5
Calves	0	0	0
Clean Sheep	66	83	83
Ewes and Rams	1	1	1
Clean Pigs	28	30	30
Sows and Boars	1	2	2
Great Britain			
Steers	64	72	75
Heifers	55	58	59
Young Bulls	14	17	18
Cows and Adult Bulls	38	50	49
Calves	5	4	5
Clean Sheep	739	944	1227
Ewes and Rams	82	108	150
Clean Pigs	648	681	806
Sows and Boars	15	19	23
Northern Ireland			
Steers	11	13	12
Heifers	10	11	10
Young Bulls	3	4	3
Cows and Adult Bulls	7	10	9
Calves	1	0	0
Clean Sheep	30	44	46
Ewes and Rams	2	2	2
Clean Pigs	148	152	157
Sows and Boars	0	0	0

Section 2 – Average dressed carcase weights

2.1 Monthly average dressed carcase weights for cattle, sheep, and pigs

Table 2.1 shows the monthly average dressed carcase weight (DCW) of livestock slaughtered for meat for human consumption in the United Kingdom.

Table 2.1: United Kingdom average dressed carcase weights ⁽¹⁾

	kilogramme			
	July 2019	May 2020	June 2020	July 2020
Steers	362.5	361.5	361.8	359.0
Heifers	327.3	327.9	327.4	324.1
Young Bulls	353.6	346.7	350.3	345.5
Cows and Adult Bulls	312.8	307.3	316.1	316.4
Calves	83.0	86.7	97.4	99.8
Clean Sheep	19.5	20.3	19.8	19.2
Ewes and Rams	26.4	28.4	27.6	28.2
Clean Pigs	83.9	86.0	85.6	86.0
Sows and Boars	148.1	142.6	145.0	144.0

(1) Revised methodology for calculating cattle DCW has been applied from January 2018 onwards. Please see methodology for full details

Section 3 – Home killed meat production

3.1 Monthly volumes of home killed meat production

Table 3.1 shows the monthly volumes of meat produced in UK abattoirs

Table 3.1: United Kingdom monthly volumes of meat production

					Thousand tonnes
	July 2019 31 days	May 2020 31 days	June 2020 30 days	July 2020 31 days	yr on yr % change
Beef	73	68	80	80	9.0%
Mutton and Lamb	25	18	23	29	14.1%
Pigmeat	79	71	74	86	9%

- (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 – About these statistics

Methodology:

- 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>
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- We have carried out a review of the methodology for calculating the dressed carcass weights in order to align with UK specifications. Some slaughterhouses provide Cattle Dressed Carcass 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.

- To calculate the DCW of animals by category:
 - 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>
 - 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>
- 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.
- 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

Revisions policy:

- 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.

Data users:

- 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
- 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/>

- Contact details are available on the front page of this notice, for you to send feedback or ask questions about the information provided.

Section 5 – Definitions

- 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”.

What you need to know about this release

Contact details

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National Statistics Status

National Statistics are produced to high professional standards. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference.

The continued designation of these statistics as National Statistics was confirmed in 2014 following a compliance check by the UK Statistics Authority (now the Office for Statistics Regulation) against the Code of Practice for Statistics.

Since the last review of these statistics in 2014, we have continued to comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics, and have made improvements including:

- Providing a detailed breakdown of livestock categories following user feedback
- Improved the data quality by updating guidance for data providers and carrying out enhanced validation checks on data received

For general enquiries about National Statistics, contact the National Statistics Public Enquiry Service:

Tel: 0845 601 3034

Email: info@statistics.gov.uk.

You can find National Statistics on the internet at www.statistics.gov.uk

Future publications

This notice will be updated at 09:30 on Thursday 10th September 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>