



11<sup>th</sup> September 2020

## United Kingdom Slaughter Statistics – August 2020

*Due to the increased strain Covid-19 is having on the Livestock industry, our survey response were lower than usual at 88%. 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 August 2020 compared to August 2019 are:**

- **Cattle:** UK prime cattle (steers, heifers and young bulls) slaughterings in August 2020 were up 1.7% on August 2019 at 163,000 head. Beef and veal production was 74,000 tonnes, 1.3% higher than in August 2019.
- **Sheep:** UK clean sheep slaughterings were down 1.1% on August 2019 at 1238,000 head. Mutton and lamb production was 27,000 tonnes, 5.6% lower than in August 2019.
- **Pigs:** UK clean pig slaughterings were 5.1% lower than in August 2019 at 890,000 head. Pigmeat production was 80,000 tonnes, 3.2% lower than in August 2019.
- The response rate for August was 88% 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)**

	August 2019	June 2020	July 2020	August 2020	yr on yr
	31 days	30 days	31 days	31 days	% change
Steers	80	84	88	81	1.3%
Heifers	61	66	68	64	5.3%
Young Bulls	19	21	24	18	-8%
Cows and Adult Bulls	55	58	60	57	2.2%
Calves	10	4	5	5	-49%
Clean Sheep	1252	988	1292	1238	-1.1%
Ewes and Rams	174	110	154	121	-31%
Clean Pigs	939	834	969	890	-5.1%
Sows and Boars	19	19	22	18	-4.9%

### 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	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020
	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
Steers	18	21	22	22	18	20	20	21	18	17	20	20	18
Heifers	14	16	17	17	14	16	17	17	15	15	15	15	15
Young Bulls	4	4	3	3	2	3	3	3	4	4	5	5	4
Cows and Adult Bulls	12	14	17	16	13	14	13	13	10	10	14	13	13
Calves	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	2	1	1	1	1
Clean Sheep	283	278	294	289	269	235	202	209	207	189	231	292	280
Ewes and Rams	39	33	35	32	32	29	29	30	24	21	26	35	27
Clean Pigs	212	210	226	224	211	217	208	214	213	180	195	219	201
Sows and Boars	4	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	3	4	5	4

Figure 1.1 United Kingdom average weekly numbers of cattle slaughtered

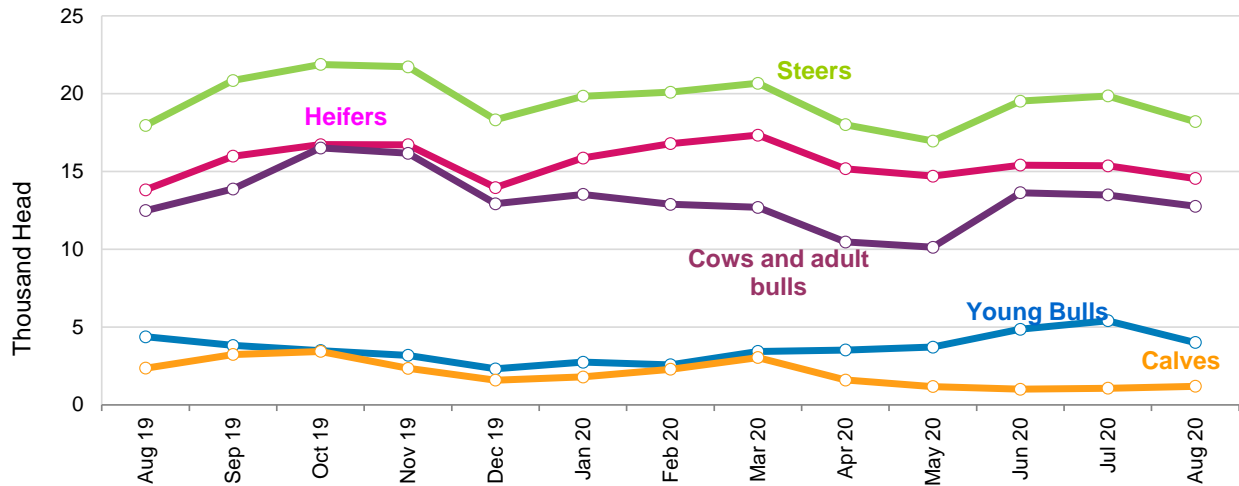


Figure 1.2 United Kingdom average weekly numbers of sheep slaughtered

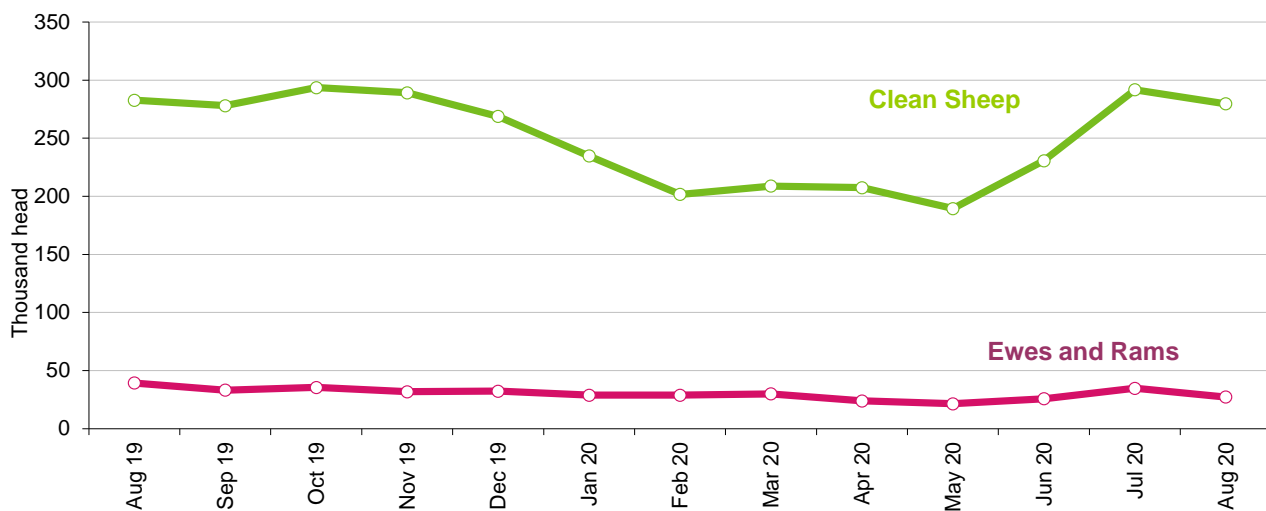
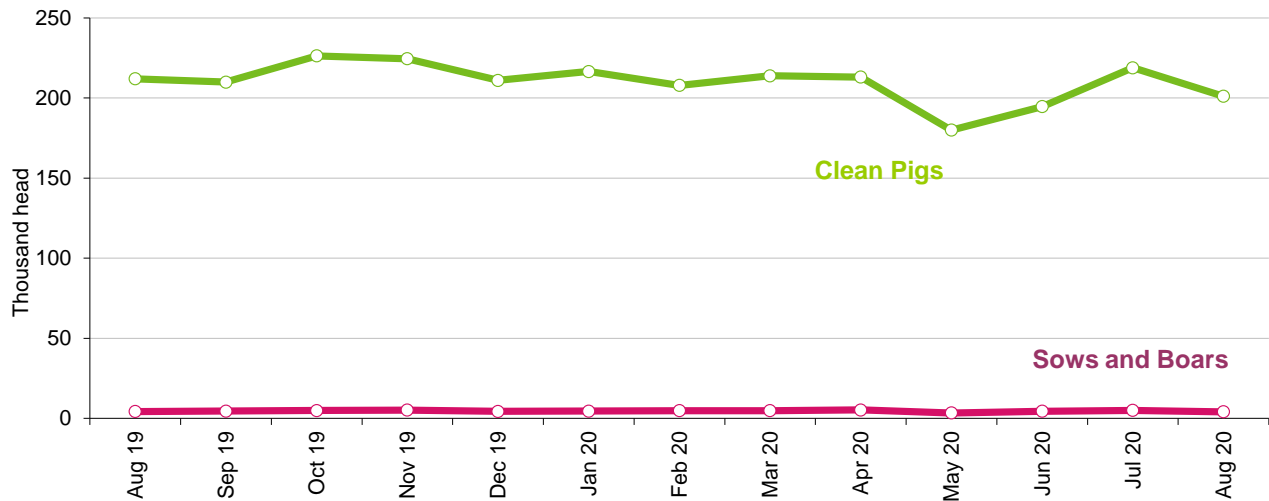


Figure 1.3 United Kingdom average weekly numbers of pigs slaughtered



### 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)**

	June 2020 30 days	July 2020 31 days	August 2020 31 days
<b>England &amp; Wales</b>			
Steers	54	58	50
Heifers	43	46	42
Young Bulls	13	15	11
Cows and Adult Bulls	43	44	41
Calves	4	4	5
Clean Sheep	861	1142	1088
Ewes and Rams	107	151	117
Clean Pigs	652	776	718
Sows and Boars	17	21	17
<b>Scotland</b>			
Steers	17	17	16
Heifers	12	12	12
Young Bulls	4	5	4
Cows and Adult Bulls	5	6	6
Calves	0	0	0
Clean Sheep	83	103	102
Ewes and Rams	1	1	2
Clean Pigs	30	31	31
Sows and Boars	2	1	1
<b>Great Britain</b>			
Steers	70	76	66
Heifers	55	58	54
Young Bulls	17	20	15
Cows and Adult Bulls	49	50	47
Calves	4	4	5
Clean Sheep	945	1244	1189
Ewes and Rams	108	152	119
Clean Pigs	682	808	749
Sows and Boars	19	22	18
<b>Northern Ireland</b>			
Steers	13	12	14
Heifers	11	10	10
Young Bulls	4	4	3
Cows and Adult Bulls	10	10	9
Calves	0	0	0
Clean Sheep	44	48	49
Ewes and Rams	2	2	2
Clean Pigs	152	162	141
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 <sup>(1)</sup> (kilogramme)**

	<b>August 2019</b>	<b>June 2020</b>	<b>July 2020</b>	<b>August 2020</b>
Steers	360.4	362.0	359.3	358.2
Heifers	325.2	327.6	324.4	324.3
Young Bulls	353.0	350.2	348.7	350.5
Cows and Adult Bulls	308.7	316.3	317.0	312.2
Calves	70.1	97.4	85.8	98.0
Clean Sheep	19.3	19.8	19.3	19.2
Ewes and Rams	26.8	27.5	28.2	28.9
Clean Pigs	84.7	85.6	86.0	86.4
Sows and Boars	146.9	145.0	143.7	147.1

(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)**

	August 2019	June 2020	July 2020	August 2020	yr on yr % change
	31 days	30 days	31 days	31 days	
Beef	73	78	81	74	1.3%
Mutton and Lamb	29	23	29	27	-5.6%
Pigmeat	82	74	87	80	-3.2%

- (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 the [Economic Report on Scottish Agriculture webpage from Scottish government](#) (Tables A5 and A6). This website also contains contact details and more information. Northern Ireland results are available at the [Northern Ireland cattle sheep slaughterings webpage](#) and [Northern Ireland pig slaughterings webpage](#)
- 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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.
  - [Link to beef carcass classification scheme webpage](#)
  - If pigs are dressed to EC specification then an increase of 1.6% to the DCW occurs to align with UK specification.
  - [Link to pig carcass grade scheme webpage](#)
- 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 [livestock.statistics@defra.gov.uk](mailto:livestock.statistics@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 the [Eurostat agriculture legislation webpage](#). European level statistics on meat products (which includes data tables showing results at EU Member State level) are available at the [Eurostat statistics on meat productions](#).
- 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 the [AHDB Beef and lamb webpage](#). The AHDB Pork site provides more in-depth analysis of pigmeat production statistics at the [AHDB pigmeat production webpage](#).

- 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

Livestock statistics team

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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](mailto:info@statistics.gov.uk).

You can find National Statistics on the internet at the [UK government statistics webpage](#)

### Future publications

This notice will be updated at 09:30 on Thursday 15th October 2020. Additional time series which include weekly slaughter averages, production and trade data can be found at the [UK government livestock statistics webpage](#).