

THAME FARMERS AUCTION MART LTD

Deadweight Report – 1st January 2025 – 31st May 2025

Prime cattle & cast cows : 5241

What a start to 2025 for beef producers! They said trade couldn't get to 600 p/kg and no sooner than it had, we maxed out at 705 p/kg for commercial R3/4Ls in April with Angus to 720 p/kg.

Demand for beef started the year extremely strongly despite media reports of reduced consumer spending power. Supermarket point of sale analysis reported that consumers who purchased beef – "beef shoppers" spend on average £40 more in store, than those that don't buy beef, hence retailers left prices unchanged despite rising from gate prices. With the fear of lifting shop prices affecting sales and market shares in the run up to busy easter season.

Prime cattle suppliers were reported shorter- however with demand so strong, healthy margins being made and no waiting lists, producers kept selling stock but demand still remained ahead of supply.

It must be noted that in the autumn after the dry summer of 2022 thousands of calves were slaughtered along with suckler cows as feed prices rocketed with the lack of forage conserved and the Russia and Ukraine war causing colossal cereal prices & milk powder prices to sky rocket. These dairy calves would be reaching 30 months through the period of January-May 25 and ones in the suckler cows being born 2023 would be 24 months this spring. This could be the reason for the shortfall of production.

Coupled with this rivalry amongst firms was fierce with orders to fulfil and finds for shorting on these orders. Processors battled for superiority and to get ahead of the pack to secure volume.

The first 4 months were a perfect storm for producers – will we ever see an increase in value at this speed ever again or was it just time for beef to catch up in value in time with inflation, which has not happened since the huge devaluations posed by food crisis of 1990's.

May has seen the brakes go on. Retailers have lifted retail prices since Easter and this has affected consumer demand.

With low feed cost, healthy margins from sold cattle, ample silage stocks from last years grassy summer and this year's dry spring producers have kept cattle in yards and kept them coming much as processors requested, this has tipped the balance of supply and demand.

Consecutive Easter and May Day bank holidays has allowed processors to fill their weeks kill easier and started the process of rolling cattle into following weeks. Coupled with more cattle available the old aged tale has rung true "the money runs out before the cattle do".

And then it dropped and at the speed it went up at the same speed it came down with 10-15 p/kg drops reported. The last week of May saw R grades to 660p/kg and we are not yet at the bottom with further drops expected throughout June.

However, we must not get despondent prices are 150p/kg above this week in comparison to last year. Trade dropped away at the end of May / June last year with rises seen in July, and this was the start of the upwards trajectory – July 24-May 25 a rise of 225 p/kg!

Of concern has our price rise opened the door for imports- Asda is stocking Uruguayan beef on its fresh counter and what will trade deals in the US and Australia deliver. However new markets are opening up for beef Ireland is sending volumes to the middle east so not coming here.

The US price is similar to ours and surely consumers will resist their production systems. Look at the consumer/media's reaction to Bovaer in dairy cow rations. Since Trumps tariffs on China, China have been buying more beef from Australia so there might not be so much from there.

Grain got to £300t in 2022 and has never been seen since. Lambs reached 900p/kg last year and certainly hasn't this year. Was 700p/kg for beef a flash in the pan? Let's wait and see.....

Barren cows and mature bulls followed a similar trend with cows topping out at 585 p/kg and bulls 420p/kg. several cows placed achieved in excess of £3000 with best to £3500. Prices finished May at 560p/kg.

Cows wanted – good, best, bad or ugly – why not give us a try! NON-UK tagged and non Fable (subject to VAN number) catered for.

Prime Hoggetts + New season Lambs - 7609

What a difference to last year! Last year every week since the start of the year hoggetts got dearer, this year every week they decreased! A flush at the end of February as farmers wanted their hoggs cleaned up before lambing – but the winter had not treated them well and a lot of lean hoggs were placed - and lots of 1 grades.

Once they were meat, they were then too heavy with processors wanting handy weight carcasses. Last year big was best!

Spring lambs are considerably less than last year and through May were 750-700p/kg. Lambs are doing well in the dry weather conditions if being creep fed. However, the number of producers doing early lambing is reducing.

If you have stock, you would like us to view or for us up to date professional advice, please call 07815495210. We would like to thank our customers for their continued support as we endeavour to achieve the best returns for you from the 9 abattoirs we supply.

- **Please book in stock by Thursday tea time so we can ensure with our best endeavours that they move the following week**
- Please order replacement ear tags allowing plenty of time for them to arrive before your stock goes.
- Please check breed & sex on passports before the day the cattle go
- **All stock must have two ear tags on leaving the farm - if they only have one and they lose one that equals none and that equals the bin**
- Please ensure stock is ready to load before lorries arrive it is not fair to have drivers waiting making them late for next collections.
- To comply with the Welfare of Animals in Transport Act any un-sound stock will require a vet certificate before loading.
- **Young bulls must be 12 months + one day of age.**
- **Producers under TB restrictions should make sure they are issued with an AMENDED TB24C LICENCE authorizing general movement of**