

National Sheep Committee

Achievements and Work Done

Lamb Price and Market

2011 was a very positive year for lamb prices with prices up 9% on top of a 17% price increase in 2010. Average lamb price was €5.03/kg up 46c/kg or about €9 per lamb.

Prices in the UK increased by 10%, while prices in our main export market in France only increased by 1%. New Zealand prices, our main competitor in France, increased by 43% to close the gap with Irish and UK prices.

Irish exports reached 36,000t valued at over €167m. 18,000t were exported to France and 9,200t to UK. Strong export growth to Sweden, Germany, Belgium and Switzerland.

At EU level prices continued to rise. The key market factors were lower production reduced imports (-11%) particularly from New Zealand and a very significant increase in exports (+80%). The value of the fifth quarter increased significantly in 2011 with lamb skins making up to €10/lamb and a major increase in offal values.

IFA campaigned strongly all year on lamb prices through a combination of meetings and media communications in order to maximise returns to producer.

IFA launched a new mobile app on lamb prices and continued a weekly text service.

Supplies

Throughput at the meat factories increased to 2.11m head with an average carcase weight of 20.32kgs. Live imports increased to over 400,000 lambs. Live exports proved important at the various Muslim festivals.

Retail

IFA worked closely with the main retailers to maximise consumption and returns to producers.

Promotions

IFA worked closely with Bord Bia on strong promotion campaigns throughout the year, which greatly assisted the maintenance of lamb consumption in Ireland.

Sheep Grassland Payment

IFA maintained the sheep grassland payment at just less than €10/ewe with payment scheduled for January 18th 2012.

Sheep Fencing and Handling Facilities

IFA secured Government agreement to re-open the Capital Grant Aid programme for sheep fencing and handling facilities in the December budget. IFA secured €800,000 in Grant Aid for the 800 farmers in the first tranche of aid.

EID and Sheep Identification

IFA negotiated with the DAFF, factories and marts to ensure that implementation of tagging and EID had minimum impact on the sheep sector and producers.

IFA successfully secured significant derogation for producers with no EID requirement for lambs sold directly to factories and the existing ewe flock. IFA continues to negotiate on securing adequate tolerances and concessions for producers selling to marts and farm-to-farm.

Wool

Wool prices continued to increase ranging in price from €1.20 to €1.50/kg.

Hill Sheep

The Sheep Committee worked closely with the Hill Committee on the review of the Commonage Framework plans and the re-growth of the hill sector.

Store lamb prices and breeding stock from the hill areas increased very strongly in 2011.

Breeding

IFA continued its work with Sheep Ireland developing a National Breeding Programme for the sheep sector.

Food Harvest 2020

IFA in conjunction with the other major stakeholders, made a detailed presentation on the growth potential for sheep to the Food Harvest 2020 Implementation Committee chaired by Minister Coveney.

CAP 2013

As part of the IFA CAP 2013 campaign, the National Sheep Committee kept the sheep sector to the fore including the policy option for a coupled ewe premium payment.

Producer Groups

IFA worked with producer groups in 2011 to maximise returns and bonuses including quality assurance.

Teagasc

IFA pursued a strong sheep programme with Teagasc in 2011 including an increase in the number of Better farms, a new research farm in Athenry and key new researchers.

Priorities for 2012

Strong Lamb Prices

Maintaining strong lamb prices and viable incomes.

Direct Payments

Prompt payment of the Sheep Grassland Scheme and other direct payments including REPS/AEOS, DAs and SFP.

Food Harvest 2020

Working with the main stakeholders such as Teagasc Bord Bia, Sheep Ireland, IFA will continue to pursue a strong growth path for the sheep sector.

E.I.D.

IFA will continue to pursue a minimalist programme on sheep tagging and EID.

CAP 2013

Ensuring that sheep farmers are fully protected in the CAP 2013 negotiations will be a priority for IFA.

James Murphy
Chairman

Kevin Kinsella
Director of Livestock

14th December 2010