

Greater Transparency with dead-weight lamb marketing

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The background

Problems with marketing lambs:

- Killing Out % are very variable and returns are frequently below expectations
- Classification standards are very variable and in many cases unbelievable
- Currently there is no standard mandatory dressing specification for sheep
- Unlike beef and pork there is no independent supervision of standards at all

Killing Out % is affected by:

- The dressing specification
- Breed/age/sex/condition/finish
- Fleece weight/contamination/wet or dry
- Gut content/food consumed/time of year
- Travelling distance / time to slaughter
- Last food/water intake pre slaughter
- Weighed empty or full on farm

How KO% affect returns :

For a 46 kg live-weight lamb selling for 423.9 p/kg deadweight (2011 average)

| K O % | Weight | After H/C rebate | Returns |
|--------------|---------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| 58 | 26.6kg | 25.6kg | £108.52 |
| 52.5 | 24.1kg | 23.6kg | £100.09 |
| 50 | 23.0kg | 22.5kg | £97.50 |
| 47 | 21.6kg | 21.1kg | £89.44 |
| 42 | 19.3kg | 18.8kg | £79.69 |
| 38 | 17.4kg | 16.9kg | £71.64 |

Currently used dressing specifications:

- MLC Standard Dressing Specification
- MLC Modified Dressing Specification
- Numerous company dressing specifications

Present Dressing Specifications:

| | Weight | Kg Loss | Value | £ Loss/per 100 lambs |
|-----------------------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------------------|
| MLC standard | 20.0kg | - | - | - |
| MLC standard no tail | 19.8kg | 0.2kg | £0.84 | £84.79/1 lamb |
| Company Spec A | 19.3kg | 0.7kg | £2.96 | £296.73/3.5 lambs |
| Company Spec B | 18.9kg | 1.1kg | £4.66 | £466.29/5.5 lambs |
| Company spec C | 18.0kg | 2.0kg | £8.47 | £847.80/10 lambs |

Enforcement of the specification

- The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) have a team of Technical Inspectors who currently police and enforce the dressing specifications for beef and pigs
- They already inspect 46 of the 59 major sheep slaughterhouses in England & Wales under other schemes
- RPA estimated in 2010 that it would cost an additional £ 8000 to inspect all 59
- They would be the appropriate body to inspect sheep slaughterhouses killing more than 15,000 lambs per year

Rounding Down: Example of 210 lambs in September 2011

Reduction of actual weight to nearest half kg:

- 40 lambs between 0.0 & 0.5 = no loss
- 51 lambs between 0.1 & 0.6 = - 5.1kg
- 40 lambs between 0.2 & 0.7 = - 8.0kg
- 36 lambs between 0.3 & 0.8 = - 10.8kg
- 43 lambs between 0.4 & 0.9 = - 17.2kg

210 lambs lost a total of 41.2kg = £174.65

This is equal to 83p per lamb sold

Further Considerations:

- Hot/Cold Rebate
- Carcass Splitting
- EID
- Feed back to producers
- Genetic Improvements
- Carbon Footprint
- Weighing at markets
- Penning at slaughterhouses
- Carcass classification

Conclusions:

- The aim is to have a transparent marketing system for prime lambs
- It must be independently monitored and inspected
- Legislation is essential
- Farmers will be paid for what they produce
- Retailers will have a more secure supply
- In 2011 12.2 million lambs were killed in GB (6.4m via marts)
- HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE OUR AIMS ???