SCOTTISH CRAFT BUTCHERS

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



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PORKTOBER

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OCTOBER 2026



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As we head into October, I'm delighted to have the opportunity to reflect on some of the fantastic achievements across our membership and to look ahead to what promises to be another busy and important month for Scottish Craft Butchers.

First and foremost, congratulations to **Steven Cronnie** on winning the **Scottish Black Pudding Championship**. This is a wonderful achievement and a great example of the skill, knowledge and commitment that goes into producing traditional Scottish products of the highest standard. Well done, Steven — a very worthy winner!

I'd also like to extend my congratulations to **Hugh Black & Sons**, who were awarded the **Diamond Award for their Beef Burgers**, and to **Kinnaird Butchers**, who received a **Diamond Award for their Best Ready Meal**. These awards recognise the quality, innovation and craftsmanship that our members demonstrate every day. It is fantastic to see Scottish craft butchers continuing to develop new products while maintaining the standards and traditions that make our industry so special.

October also brings some excellent opportunities for members to engage with customers and drive sales. **Porktober** and **National Sausage Week** provide two great platforms to showcase the quality and versatility of the products available from our shops. I would encourage all members to get involved wherever possible — whether that means creating special offers, introducing customers to new products, sharing recipes and serving suggestions, or simply reminding people why buying from their local craft butcher makes such a difference. These campaigns give us a valuable opportunity to tell our story and put our products firmly in front of consumers.

Finally, I would encourage all members to take the opportunity to respond to the **Scottish Government consultation on food price caps**. The outcome of consultations such as this can have a significant impact on our businesses and the wider food sector, so it is important that the voice of independent and craft butchers is heard. Please consider submitting your views and experiences before the consultation closes. The more members who contribute, the stronger the picture we can provide of the realities facing our businesses.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support of Scottish Craft Butchers. It is your passion, hard work and commitment that keeps our industry moving forward. I wish everyone a successful October and, in particular, every success during Porktober and National Sausage Week.

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Make Porktober a month to celebrate

Prime Scottish Pork

October is an opportunity for Scottish Craft Butchers members to put Prime Scottish Pork centre stage. Porktober gives every shop a reason to refresh its display, share its expertise and remind customers how many delicious meals begin at the butcher's counter.

Prime Scottish Pork offers a clear story to tell. The label identifies pork from pigs born, reared and processed in Scotland, with whole-life quality assurance. That provenance matters to customers who want to know where their food comes from. Your knowledge adds the personal touch: which cut suits a quick supper, how to get the best from a shoulder joint, or how to make a roast stretch into another meal.

Start with a Porktober feature in your window or counter. Give chops, loin, belly and roasting joints a turn in the spotlight, with simple cooking suggestions beside each cut. A weekly "cut of the week" can keep the display fresh and give customers a reason to return. Offer a family meal bundle or pair pork with seasonings, vegetables or sauces you already stock, making the choice easy for busy shoppers.

Bring those ideas online. Post a short video showing how to prepare a cut, photograph a finished dish, or ask a butcher to share their favourite pork tip. A straightforward recipe card can travel from the counter into customers' kitchens and onto your social channels. Invite customers to show you their Porktober suppers and, with permission, share a few of their photographs. Keep the message consistent across your shop, website and posts: Scottish provenance, skilled butchery and practical inspiration.

Tastings or a small cooking demonstration can help customers discover a cut they might otherwise overlook. If you run a promotion, make it easy to understand and worthwhile for the customer. A prize draw for a pork dinner or a vote for a favourite pork dish can spark conversation without demanding a large budget. Ask your team what customers are cooking, then use those questions to shape the next week's display.

There is an extra moment to celebrate this year: the first Prime Scottish Pork Champion will be announced on 7 October. Use the announcement to renew interest in the brand. Congratulate the winner, highlight the skill behind quality pork, and share your own shop's commitment to helping customers choose and enjoy it.

Porktober works best when the activity feels like your business. Choose two or three ideas your team can deliver well, plan your photographs and displays now, and keep talking about pork throughout the month. Every helpful conversation can build confidence in a different cut and give customers another reason to shop with their local craft butcher this autumn.

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Are your events and publicity ready for the most important week of the year?

Are you running any shop or instore offers you want to promote?
Do you have a sausage dish recipe which you would like to share?
Organising any sausage demonstrations?

Keep us informed! Make the most of this opportunity, miss it and miss out.
#uksausageweek

Get your tickets to the main event!

Be at the UK Sausage Week awards luncheon at the prestigious **Butchers' Hall**, London on **26th October**. Limited quantity available, so hurry. Go to **uksausageweek.com/tickets** or **scan the QR code** on your smartphone.

For more info or to download the UK Sausage Week logo and poster go to www.uksausageweek.com

Scottish Craft Butchers:
make UK Sausage Week work for your shop

From **Monday 26 October to Sunday 1 November 2026**, UK Sausage Week gives Scottish Craft Butchers a ready-made reason to put one of their most versatile products in the spotlight.

A little planning can turn a national celebration into conversations at the counter, fresh reasons to visit and content to share with your local community.

Start with what makes your sausages distinctive. Perhaps your customers love a family recipe, locally sourced ingredients or a flavour inspired by your area. Tell that story on a simple shop sign and in short social posts.

A **limited-edition sausage** for the week can give regular customers something new to try and a reason to come back before it disappears.

Make it easy for people to take part. Offer a tasting where practical, suggest a midweek supper recipe, or pair sausages with complementary products for a convenient meal. Invite customers to vote for their favourite flavour or enter a prize draw for a sausage selection.

A light-hearted competition can bring energy to the shop.

Your marketing need not be elaborate. Choose a theme, take good photographs and schedule a few posts before and during the week.

Show the people who make the sausages, explain how to cook them well, and encourage customers to share their own serving ideas.

Mention the event on your website, in your window and at the counter so online interest leads to real visits. Participation also gives you a chance to tell the wider trade what Scottish craft butchers do best.

Meat Management is inviting businesses to send details of their UK Sausage Week plans for possible web and print coverage. After the week, a short account of what you did, how customers responded and what you learned can make an engaging follow-up. Include photographs you took during the event.

Keep your submission to no more than 200 words and send it to **editorial@meatmanagement.com**, or call **01908 613323** to speak to the team.

Set one achievable goal now: introduce a new flavour, start more conversations or bring new customers through the door.

Then choose a promotion you can deliver confidently this autumn and make sure your team knows how to talk about it.

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Scotland crowns new Black Pudding Champion

One of the country's smallest producers of Black Pudding has been named Scottish Champion 2026.

S. Cronnie Family Butcher in Newton Stewart produces only 20 lbs of the breakfast favourite every week. But their exclusive product has swept aside all competition in the Scottish Craft Butchers biennial Scottish Black Pudding Championship to lift this year's title.

Delighted owner Steven Cronnie (53) said it was "a dream come true" to secure the Scottish Championship in his black pudding's first competitive outing.

"I can hardly believe it," he said. "A wee country bumpkin like me beating some of the best-known butchers in Scotland - it's terrific, absolutely marvellous. For Cronnies and for Newton Stewart."

After 20 years working for butchers throughout the south of Scotland, Steven established his own business in 2020, running the Queen Street shop with his wife Shirley and teenage son Liam.

"I've made black pudding all my working life, to other people's recipes," he said. "I've learned a lot and decided to create a black pudding that would be unique to our own business."

While Steven guards the finer details of his recipe, he's happy to share what he thinks is the winning touch.

"I use pork fat instead of beef fat and mix the batch with scalding hot water so that the fat melts through the mix, keeping it moist and delicious," he explained.

"And, as with everything, I add a wee touch of magic and stir in a bit of love."

Steven's black pudding lifted the Southwest regional championship this week before going on to take the national title.

And the new Scottish Champion is bracing himself for the inevitable demands on his nation-beating product.

"We're just a small family business that has a passion for the products we create and the customers and community that enjoy them," he said.

"Our black pudding is hand-crafted in small batches, with around four or five sticks made each week. I guess I'll now have to work round the clock if others want a taste of the country's finest."

Steven's success comes hard on the heels of lifting the Scottish Traditional Steak Pie Championship last year - a triumph likened to a David and Goliath achievement.

"These two titles show that anything is possible if you have the skill, passion and commitment to succeed," reflected Steven. "I'm super-proud - and our customers will be too - to know that the best black pudding in Scotland is made in Newton Stewart.

"To bring two national championship titles to our wee town shows we're doing something right."

Judges in this year's competition were unanimous in awarding the Championship to Steven's product, describing it as: "Beautifully balanced black pudding which held its cooked shape extremely well. Great mix of spices. Crispy outside and soft in the middle."

Gordon King, Executive Manager of Scottish Craft Butchers, said Steven's success showed how a small, independent, craft butcher in a rural area could take on the toughest competition - and win - through passion and talent.

"Steven has put Cronnies on the map by consistently aiming high and producing exactly what the buying public want," he said. "It's not just about making and selling a product - it's about crafting a fantastic black pudding that wins favour with judges from all over the country. It's a terrific achievement and he should be extremely proud.
"Black pudding is now widely regarded as a 'superfood' and it has moved from its traditional place on the Scottish breakfast table to be embraced in dishes by some of the world's leading chefs and nutritionists.

"Steven has an impressive talent and we're delighted to see his skill, passion and commitment pay off with the national championship title."

Simon Hannon, commercial director with award sponsors Dalziel, added his congratulations to the Newton Stewart team.
Results: https://www.craftbutchers.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/2026-BLACK-PUDDING.pdf



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New Scottish Beefburger Champion 2026 announced



A beefburger currently enjoyed by around 3,000 people across central Scotland each week has been judged the best in Scotland.

Multi-award-winning family butchers Hugh Black & Sons, who operate 13 shops from Cambuslang to Lochgelly, have won the Scottish Craft Butchers Scottish Beefburger Championship 2026, beating off competition from some of the finest independent producers in the country.

Delighted director Hugh Black described their latest accolade as “a biggie”.
“This title has always alluded us,” he said, “and we’re absolutely thrilled to win it for all our staff and our customers.
“We know we produce a quality beefburger but to have it judged the best in Scotland - against some top tier competition - is really amazing and we’re chuffed to bits.”

Around 170 people work at the company’s 13 shops and its manufacturing and distribution centre at Bathgate. And Hugh said the award was for every one of them - from butcher to counter staff and drivers to managers.

“Every day, staff are hand-crafting these burgers to our own recipe in small batches at all our outlets and their passion, commitment and consistency mean that no matter where you shop at Hugh Black & Sons, you will be getting the same product that lifted the Championship,” he said.
“There’s no secret to our recipe other than using the very best flavoursome brisket and chuck cuts and finest seasoning,” revealed Hugh. “There’s no machine involved so the texture is perfect.”

Hugh, son of the original founder at what is now one of the country’s largest independent butchers, personally attends the local market each week to select the finest cattle on offer for their beef products - mainly locally reared Limousin heifers.

“We use quality ingredients to get quality products,” said Hugh. “I reckon that’s the secret to a good beefburger.”

The country’s best beefburger is currently enjoyed by customers of Hugh Black & Sons shops at Airdrie, Armadale, Bathgate, Cambuslang, Carluke, Coatbridge, Cowdenbeath, Lanark, Linlithgow, Lochgelly, Stirling, Whitburn and Wishaw.



Hugh explained that a national championship title would inevitably bring additional custom to their door.
“The secret’s out now so it will be all hands to the mill to make sure we produce enough beef burgers for everyone to taste the best in Scotland,” he said.

Gordon King, Executive Manager with Scottish Craft Butchers, said Scotland’s new champion beefburger was “exceptional”.
“A lot of talented butchers do simple things very well,” he said. “A beef burger is all about the quality ingredients and the handcrafting in-house which Hugh Black and his team have down to a fine art.
“Beefburgers are now a staple of our independent butchers year round - not just during barbecue season - and our judges have recognised and rewarded one of the best producers in the business. We’re delighted for Hugh and his whole team for a worthy win.”

Championship sponsors Dalesman added their congratulations to the new Champion.
"A great beefburger looks simple, but anyone in the industry knows just how much expertise goes into getting it right, said Marketing and communications Manager Sally Taylor.
“Everyone at Hugh Black & Sons should be immensely proud of their achievements, which reflect a commitment to quality, consistency and craftsmanship.
“As sponsors of this year's championship, we're delighted to recognise the talent on display and celebrate the butchers who continue to raise the bar for the industry."
Full results:



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Scottish Government food price cap consultation: an overview

The Scottish Government is consulting on whether to introduce legal maximum prices for selected essential foods sold by large supermarket chains. Its stated aim is to make basic groceries more affordable. The consultation opened on 1 September 2026 and closes on **24 November 2026**. The draft legislation is illustrative: the government is seeking evidence before deciding its final approach.

The example model would require a qualifying retailer that sells a specified product to offer at least one version at or below a set maximum price. Retailers could choose which version meets the requirement. If that version sold out, they might have to offer an available substitute at the capped price. They would not be required to stock a capped item in the first place. Alternatives under discussion include a price limit for a whole basket, a temporary freeze and a cap on retailers' profit margins.

The precise products and prices have not been fixed. Bread, milk and eggs are cited as examples, while ministers would specify any covered products through later regulations. The consultation asks how to define essential foods, account for nutrition and dietary needs, set and update prices, and monitor compliance.

The proposed duty targets large grocery retailers. The illustrative definition requires more than 50% of annual turnover from groceries, over 250 employees and annual turnover above £250 million. Independent butchers are therefore outside the current proposed duty.

The government is nevertheless asking explicitly whether specialist retailers, including butchers, should be included. Members may also wish to consider indirect effects if capped supermarket prices change customer expectations or local competition.

Another important issue is the supply chain. The consultation asks how price controls might affect farmers, processors, manufacturers and distributors, including whether pressure on margins could influence investment, availability or farmgate returns.

It invites evidence on safeguards, monitoring and possible exemptions. Responses from butchers can explain practical effects on sourcing, pricing, rural access and customer choice, even where their shops would not themselves be regulated.

> **Where to respond: On the Scottish Government Website** Complete the online consultation. Alternatively, download the response form from the consultation paper and email it to **foodprices@gov.scot**, or post it to **Price Controls on Essential Food Items Team, B1 Spur, Saughton House, Broomhouse Drive, Edinburgh EH11 3XD**. Submit by **24 November 2026**. The government says it will analyse responses and publish a report after the consultation closes.


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SCOTTISH CRAFT BUTCHERS AVERAGE RETAIL PRICES SURVEY	SEPT 2026	+/=/-	AUGUST 2026
SCOTCH BEEF			
Fillet Steak	7028	=	7028
Sirloin Steak	4284	=	4284
Ribeye Steak	4422	=	4422
Popeseye Steak	2783	=	2783
Topside	2336	=	2336
Round / Rump Steak	2379	=	2379
Stewing Steak	2068	=	2068
Rolled Brisket	1970	=	1970
Steak Mince	1662	=	1662
Boiling Beef Bone In	1246	=	1246
DOMESTIC LAMB			
Whole Leg of Lamb	2037	=	2037
Centre Cut Leg Bone In	2627	=	2627
Gigot Lamb Chops	2662	=	2662
Lamb Leg Steaks	2765	=	2765
Chump Lamb Chops	2657	=	2657
Single Loin Lamb Chops	2795	=	2795
Double Loin Lamb Chops	2868	=	2868
Rolled Shoulder Lamb	2006	=	2006
Lamb Shanks	1405	=	1405
Diced Lamb	2205	=	2205
Minced Lamb	1963	=	1963
PORK			
Pork Tenderloin (Fillet)	1874	=	1874
Pork Leg Steaks	1355	=	1355
Single Loin Pork Chops	1377	=	1377
Double Loin Pork Chops	1380	=	1380
Rolled Shoulder of Pork	1291	=	1291
Belly Pork	1275	=	1275
Pork Loin Steaks	1502	=	1502
Diced Pork	1291	=	1291
PRODUCTS			
Sliced Beef Sausage	1292	=	1292
Beef Link Sausages	1352	=	1352
Pork Link Sausages	1345	=	1345
Speciality Pork Sausages	1442	=	1442
1/4lb Beefburger	181	=	181
Sliced Black Pudding	1098	=	1098
Ball Haggis	1182	=	1182
Beef Stir fry	1868	=	1868
Pork Stir Fry	1516	=	1516
Chicken Stir Fry	1724	=	1724

SCOTTISH CRAFT BUTCHERS AVERAGE RETAIL PRICES SURVEY	SEPT 2026	+/=/-	AUGUST 2026
Smoked Back Bacon	1544	=	1544
Unsmoked Back Bacon	1498	=	1498
Streaky Bacon	1585	=	1585
Chicken			
Chicken Fillets	1415	=	1415
Bakery Products			
Scotch Pie (Plain or Onion)	186	=	186
Ind Steak Pie in Pastry Shell	334	=	334
Large Mince Round	603	=	603
1lb Ashette Steak Pie	1349	=	1349
Regular Sausage Roll	188	=	188

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Larbert butcher conjures up a taste of Tangier to win national food award



A multi-award-winning Larbert butcher has lifted another national title after introducing a touch of Tangier to their range of ready meals.

Kinnaird Butcher Shop and Deli's "Moroccan Lamb Meatballs with Yogurt Garlic Sauce" has secured the coveted Diamond Award to secure the Scottish Craft Butchers' 30-minute Ready Meal Championship.

And having the dish crowned the best in Scotland has proved testament to the talent and innovation of owner Gavin Colquhoun and his team of young butchers at the popular McIntyre Avenue shop.

"Lamb is not our biggest seller," explained a delighted Gavin (43), "so I decided to come up with different ways of presenting it to our customers.

"Ready meals are a rapidly expanding sector of the butchers business so we played around with Moroccan flavours and different combinations before hitting on the trophy winner.

"It's a success for the whole team - and our customers," he added. "We try out all our new products on our customers and if they come in asking for it again - we know we have a winner.

"People kept asking for these Moroccan Lamb Meatballs after the initial tastings so we thought we would enter them for the ready meals competition.

"We're absolutely thrilled to lift the award for the best ready meal in Scotland - it's a terrific achievement and I'm delighted for the whole team."

This latest national accolade is the fifth Scottish Craft Butchers Diamond Award to be won by the Kinnaird team since Gavin launched the business in 2022, marking them out as one of Scotland's most successful butchers.

"We never take winning for granted," said Gavin. "The feeling of being judged the best in Scotland by industry experts and members of the public is always terrific."



And the secret to their success?

“You can have all the talent and clever ideas going, but unless you use quality ingredients you will never be the best,” believes Gavin.

“Every product we put onto our counters has come from the best prime cuts from locally sourced stock,” he said. “With ready meals, they have to look fabulous, be easy to cook and then taste amazing. We vary from around 15 to 25 different ready meals available at any time and it looks like we’re going to have to up the production of Moroccan Lamb Meatballs when word gets out that they’re the best butchers ready meal in Scotland.”

Scottish Craft Butchers Executive Manager Gordon King revealed that he knew the judges had hit on something special when they tasted Gavin’s winning product.

“Every one of them said ‘wow’ when they sampled the dish,” he said. “It’s rare to get a reaction like that from so many people and the marks were sky high.”

Gordon said it was no surprise when they learned the Diamond Award was going to Gavin and his team at Kinnaird.

Results: https://www.craftbutchers.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/2026-30-Minute-Ready-Meal-Results.pdf



SCOTWEIGH

A young worker is a worker aged under 18 but over compulsory school age. In Scotland compulsory school age ends on ends on their 16th birthday. If the worker has not yet reached the age of 16, they are classed as a child for the purpose of the legislation prohibiting or regulating the employment of children or young persons. The criteria is slightly different in England and Wales (where a child continues to be of compulsory school age until the last Friday of June in the school year that they reach 16). I have however summarised some detail on the employment of children for information if needed.

Young Workers

Working Time protection (under the Working Time Regulations 1998)

- **Weekly working time.** Young workers may not generally work more than 40 hours in any week (Monday to Sunday). In contrast to adult workers, whose weekly working hours are averaged over a reference period, there are no averaging provisions for young workers. The 40-hour limit applies to each individual week.
- **Daily working time.** Young workers may not generally work more than eight hours in any day.

  For workers with more than one employer, the daily and weekly working time limits are an aggregate of work done for all employers.
- **Daily rest.** A young worker is generally entitled to not less than 12 consecutive hours' rest in each 24-hour period during which they work for their employer. This rest period may be interrupted in the case of activities involving periods of work that are split up over the day or are of short duration.
- **Weekly rest.** A young worker is generally entitled to 48 consecutive hours rest in each seven-day period during which they work for their employer. This rest period may be interrupted in the case of activities involving periods of work that are split up over the day or are of short duration. It may also be reduced where this is justified by technical or organisational reasons, but not to less than 36 consecutive hours.
- **Rest breaks.** If the young worker's daily working time is more than four and a half hours they are entitled to a rest break of at least 30 minutes, away from their workstation (if they have one). Where possible, the 30 minutes must be consecutive (in other words, not split up or interrupted by work).
- **Night work.** Employers must generally ensure that young workers do not work during the "restricted period", which is the period between 10.00 pm and 6.00 am or (where the contract requires them to work after 10.00 pm), the period between 11.00 pm and 7.00 am. This means that, in general, young workers cannot be "night workers".

  The employer must keep records to show compliance with the daily and weekly working time limits and the night work rules.

  The Working Time Regulations permit limited exceptions to working time and rest requirements for young workers in urgent and exceptional circumstances, provided adult supervision is provided, the young worker is not adversely affected, and compensatory rest is given.

Employment of Children

Children under 14 years old may not be employed. However, this rule can be and often is relaxed by local authority byelaws to allow 13-year-old children to be employed, for example, to deliver newspapers, to stack shelves. Therefore, employers wishing to employ children aged 13 should contact the local authority where the employment is to take place to find out if the local authority has issued byelaws permitting employment of children of that age
Children can only be employed to do "light work", defined as work that is unlikely to be harmful to the child's safety, health or development, to their school attendance or participation in work experience.

Under the **Children and Young Persons Act 1933**, children *cannot* be employed:

- On a school day, before the end of the school day. This rule is often relaxed by local authority byelaws to allow a child to do a newspaper round in the morning before school starts.
- Before 7 am or after 7 pm.
- For more than two hours on a day that they have to go to school or on a Sunday.
- For more than twelve hours in any school term week (a week being a period of seven consecutive days).
- If they are under 15 years old, for more than five hours on any non-school day from Monday to Saturday. If they are aged 15 or over, for more than eight hours on a non-school day from Monday to Saturday.
- In the school holidays, if they are under 15 years old, for more than 25 hours in the week, or if they are aged 15 or over, for more than 35 hours in the week. This means that if the school term ends on a Tuesday, a 15-year-old child has to wait until the following Tuesday until they can work for 35 hours.
- Without a one-hour rest break after working four hours in any day. It makes no difference to this requirement if the child has already had a shorter break within that four-hour period.

If you have any questions or queries about the above, please call Bruce McCall at the office. 01738 637472
Scottish Craft Butchers members have access to Lindsays advice hotline as part of membership. Bruce will provide the contact number should you need it.



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Livestock Prices

Data collection co-ordinated by AHDB Meat Services (Economics) on behalf of QMS, updates available at **www.qmscotland.co.uk**

Market commentary courtesy of Iain Macdonald, Senior Economics Analyst, Quality Meat Scotland

	W/E 19/09/26	Prev. week	Prev. year
Scot. abattoirs			
Prices			
Steers dwt	637.2 p/kg	629.8 p/kg	652.5 p/kg
Heifers dwt	639.8 p/kg	635.3 p/kg	654.4 p/kg
Young bull dwt	620.8 p/kg	617.5 p/kg	637.5 p/kg
Numbers			
Steers	3100	3006	2881
Heifers	1905	2058	2016
Young Bulls	503	627	325
Source: AHDB			
	W/E 23/09/26	**Previous week**	**Previous year**
Scottish auctions	Source: IAAS		
Prices			
Steers lwt	348.57 p/kg	350.79 p/kg	365.17 p/kg
Heifers lwt	359.86 p/kg	366.10 p/kg	384.37 p/kg
Young bulls lwt	332.60 p/kg	335.33 p/kg	366.93 p/kg
Numbers			
Steers	140	112	105
Heifers	137	119	134
Young bulls	15	3	27

Deadweight cattle week ending 19 September 2026 Source: AHDB

	All steers p/kg			All heifers p/kg			All Young bulls p/kg	
	3	4L	4H	3	4L	4H	3	4L
-U	636.3	635.4	638.8	642.8	643.0	642.6	629.1	631.9
R	637.8	644.9	636.3	637.1	646.8	644.2	624.1	622.9
O+	628.3	637.3	626.4	614.9	635.5	635.7	605.6	611.4
-O	606.9	597.9	620.0	578.9	623.3	592.0	575.6	n/a

SHEEP

	W/E 23/09/26	Previous week	Previous year
Sheep prices	Source: IAAS		
Scottish Auctions			
Prime Sheep SQQ lwt	329.08 p/kg	325.86 p/kg	306.84 p/kg
Ewes lwt	£122.66/hd	£119.59/hd	£97.89/hd
Sheep numbers			
Scottish Auctions			
Prime Sheep	9172	9515	10240
Ewes	10474	9341	11252
	W/E 19/09/26	**Previous week**	**Previous year**
Sheep prices			
GB Abattoir			
Prime Sheep SQQ dwt	724 p/kg	713.2 p/kg	670.2 p/kg
Source: AHDB			

Deadweight sheep week ending 19 September 2026 Source: AHDB

		2	3L	3H
	U	734.3	735.2	731.7
	R	726	725.5	725.9
	O	710.8	716.6	708

PIGS

	W/E 19/09/26	Previous week	Previous year
Pigs			
GB abattoirs			
Standard Pig Price (SPP) Source: AHDB	180.84 p/kg	180.4 p/kg	206.71p/kg

GB deadweight pigs SPP week ending 19 September 2026 Source:AHDB

	Avg price	Change		Avg price	Change
	p/kg dwt			p/kg dwt	
Up to 59.9kg	150.55	+14.92	80.0 – 89.9 kg	183.78	+1.00
60.0 - 69.9 kg	168.43	+0.56	90.0 – 99.9 kg	183.26	-0.02
70.0 - 79.9 kg	180.13	+2.34	100.0kg & over	174.04	-0.03

Price updates available at **www.qmscotland.co.uk**

Beef Market:

- Prime cattle prices continued to strengthen between late August through September, rebounding to levels last seen at the middle of April, and rising almost 8% from their year-to-date low in mid-June. In the third week of September, R4L steers averaged 644.9p/kg, down 1.5% year-on-year but still 26.6% above the five-year average and 23.2% higher than in the same week of 2024.
- After signs of a seasonal rebound in slaughter at the start of September, numbers slipped back towards summer levels in the third week of the month, supporting competition for cattle. Meanwhile, throughput has fallen back in England & Wales after an unusually strong August.
- Good weather in England may have provided demand-side support in the short-term by boosting sales of higher-end grilling cuts, while a seasonal lift in demand between summer and autumn is likely to be supporting competition for cattle to meet rising order levels.
- Prime cattle auction prices have remained relatively stable in September after falling slightly from August prices. Scottish mart prices have been averaging around 350p/kg for steers and 362p/kg for heifers in September.
- Deadweight cow prices have steadied in September after a significant reduction in August took them back to levels last seen in February 2025. A jump in cow slaughter south of the border due to a shortage of grazing may have driven this softening August, along with the end of the summer events season from the demand-side.
- Although the weekly deadweight-procured cow kill showed a delayed seasonal upturn in the third week of September in Scotland, numbers continued to run well behind 2025 levels, reflecting a move towards herd stabilisation.
- R4L cows averaged 515.6/kg dwt in the third week of September, down 9.4% year-on-year but still 21% above the five-year average. The cow trade no longer looks historically firm relative to prime cattle, with the R4L premium for steers over cows at a five-year high for the time of year.
- Store cattle prices have risen seasonally for the main autumn selling period and they have been holding close to the highs of 2025, highlighting a significant squeeze on finishing margins. Numbers have remained below 2025 levels, with year-to-date volumes down 6%, supporting competition. This is despite an increased calf crop, with beef-sired dairy calves often being managed in specific supply chains.
- Despite cattle population data pointing towards good availability on Scottish farms, prime cattle slaughter has fallen by almost 3% year-on-year in 2026-to-date. Heavier carcase weights (+2.5%) have contributed to this weaker demand for cattle, while fewer English-born cattle have been processed in Scotland and there has been a lift in the number of Scottish-born cattle killed in England. A move towards herd stabilisation has also resulted in a tightening of heifer supply.
- Following a 4% decline in GB prime cattle slaughter in 2025, Defra data shows a steadying in 2026, with numbers down just 0.1% between January and August.
- In the first seven months of 2026, beef imports to the UK were slightly ahead of a year earlier. However, non-EU suppliers accounted for almost 26% of the total in July, a slightly reduction from previous summer months but still more than 12 percentage points higher than in the first half of 2025. This reflects the shift towards cheaper imports in the foodservice sector and other price sensitive market segments since spring 2025.
- UK beef exports continued to grow, up 7% year-on-year in the January to July period, reflecting a softer volume of domestic demand in the first half of the year.
- While domestic production and imports increased slightly, export growth resulted in overall market supplies being only marginally higher in the January to July period of 2026 than in 2025.
- The reduction in farmgate prices in the first half of the year saw values move back closer in line with consumer price levels, giving retailers some scope to stimulate demand through promotional activity, although the prime cattle price rebound between summer and autumn has seen this relationship drift again.

Sheep Market

- After falling seasonally over the summer months, lamb prices have shown signs of recovery during September, averaging 329p/kg lwt at Scottish marts in the week ending 23rd September. This is 30% below the new season peak, stronger than the unusually soft seasonal downturn last year but more similar to previous years.
- Prices have remained above year earlier levels since late August, reaching 7% higher than the same week last year in the fourth week of September. While the increases have narrowed from the stronger levels seen earlier in the year, in late-September, prices still held a margin of about 29% over the five-year average, highlighting market strength.
- After a strong start of new season lambs, numbers have continued to show a slower seasonal build than in 2025. However, the gap has narrowed in recent weeks, with season-to-date numbers 2.5% below last year by late September, compared with around 6% lower in late August. Meanwhile, Defra slaughter data for GB also showed a tightening of numbers relative to 2025, down nearly 6.5% through July and August.

- Scotland's December sheep numbers were up 1.2% year-on-year, suggesting that we could have a good lamb crop this year. June census results from England signalled a 0.5% reduction in the lamb crop, with Scotland's results due out in early October.
- At store sales there was a firm start to the season with prices averaging around £115 per head. However, prices have eased as numbers rose, averaging around £105 per head through the second half of August before settling at around £101 per head in mid-September. The overall average for the four weeks to September 19th was £102.33, up 16% from 2025. Numbers have remained lower than last year so far, although the gap has narrowed a little in September.
- So far in 2026, the overall UK market for sheepmeat is slightly down in volume terms compared with last year. Domestic production has fallen slightly while imports and exports have shown small increases.
- UK sheepmeat exports have continued to trend slightly higher in 2026, with volumes up 2% year-on-year in the first seven months of the year. Export volumes reached a twelve-year high for the January to July period and 96% of the total was shipped to the EU. After a strong start, lower production constrained export volumes through the summer.
- Imports were up 2.5% year-on-year in the first seven months of 2026, with a sharp increase in average import prices highlighting the general tightness in the marketplace and strength of demand. Volumes continued to rebalance toward Australia, with imports rising by 16.5%, although growth is at a slower pace seen earlier in the year. Imports from New Zealand were 4.7% lower than a year earlier in the January to July period, nevertheless, New Zealand remained the largest supplier, at just over half of the total.
- That farmgate price levels remain elevated beyond the high levels of 2024 and 2025 in 2026 despite a fairly flat level of overall supply highlights the ongoing strength of sheepmeat demand. It is possible that some of this support has come from greater price competitiveness against beef. However, there have been some signs in the retail sales data that a pass through of higher farmgate and import prices to consumer prices has taken some heat out of the volume of demand.

Pig Market

- The GB Standard Pig Price (SPP) has shown signs of a slight 1% rebound in September having trended relatively flat at around the 180p/kg mark between May and August. Nevertheless, the average price for carcases in the SPP weighing 70-104.9kg remained almost 8% lower in the third week of September than it had closed 2025 and 12.5% lower than in the same week of 2025.
- AHDB have published updated cost of production model estimates for the second quarter of 2026 which shows margins remained negative at around £20 per head when comparing costs against the SPP. Industry data indicates that Scottish prices traded at a 10% discount to the SPP in the first third of 2026, adding to the pressure on Scotland's pig producers, and indicative of a crisis situation. Although a government support scheme has been put in place in Scotland, rising feed costs since the summer mean that farmgate prices are falling further behind the cost of production and losses continue to mount. An initial QMS estimate for Q3 has losses widening to about £36 per head.
- Elevated carcase weights had signalled a backlog of pigs on farm waiting for slaughter. However, weights fell back sharply during the second quarter in the SPP sample, indicating that the backlog had largely cleared. Weights have increased again in late August and September, with a stronger seasonal upturn than last year taking them up 1.2% year-on-year in the third week of September.
- In addition, the share of carcases in the SPP sample weighing between 70 and 104.9kg returned to a more normal level between spring and summer. In the third week of September, the share had dropped back to 89.4%, up from about 83% in the first third of 2026 but below year-earlier levels of 92%.
- The seasonal upturn in carcase weights has seen the price per carcase in the SPP sample rise by nearly 3% between mid-August and mid-September. However, at £166, carcase value still trailed year earlier levels by almost 11.5% in the third week of September.
- GB prime pig slaughter rose by 4.1% year-on-year between January and August 2026, driven by a combination of higher pig numbers and efforts to clear the backlog on farm in the spring. Overall UK pigmeat production rose 4% in the first eight months.
- Despite considerable expansion of domestic production this year, after adding imports and subtracting exports, total UK pigmeat market supply has actually fallen, with a reduction of around 2% in the first seven months of 2026. Setting this against falling market values signals demand-side challenges. Figures from Worldpanel by Numerator suggest that retail sales of fresh pork have increased by 2.8% in volume (L36 weeks ending 6th September 2026), so it appears to be other market segments which have been the issue.
- As well as the implication of sluggish demand in parts of the market, low EU pig prices have been driving down values in the domestic market. While import volumes declined by 7% in the first seven months of the year, the alternative of a cheaper import has ensured that values have remained depressed in the domestic supply chain.

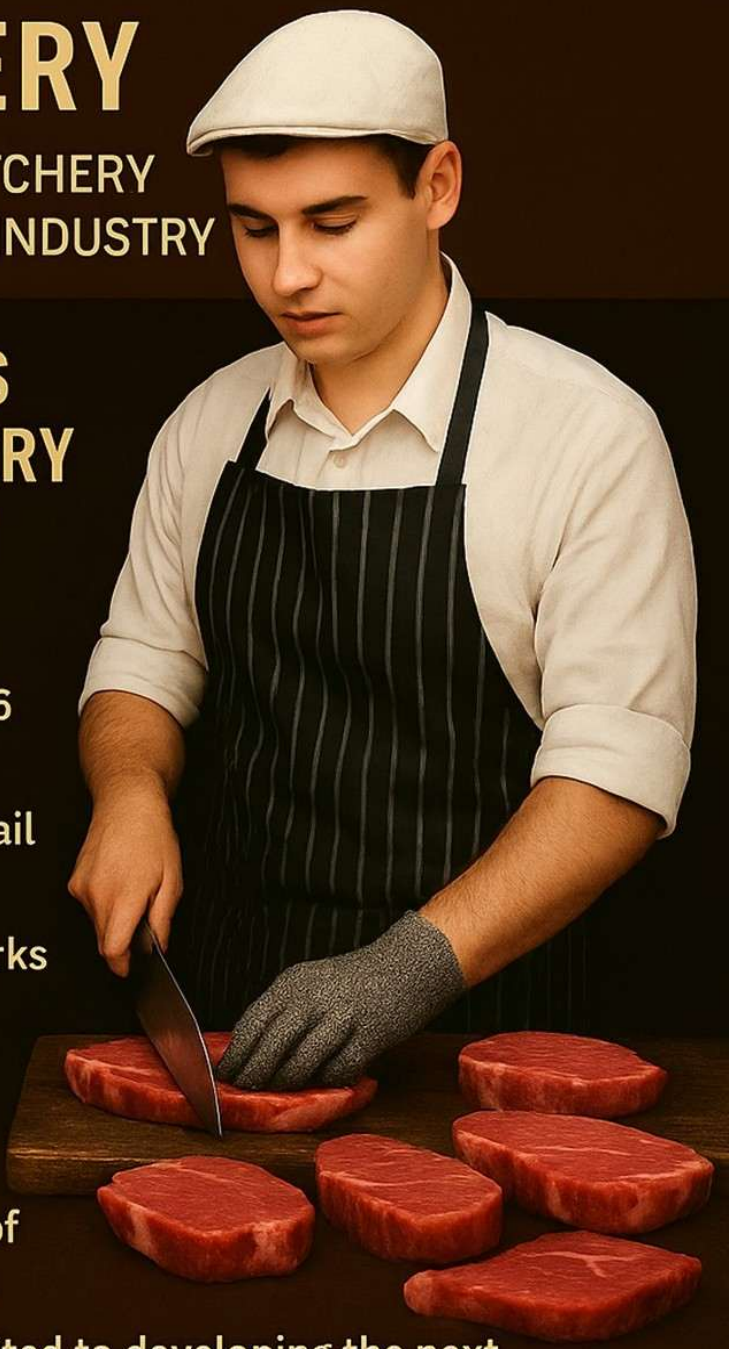
Import prices have averaged 14% lower than last year in the first seven months of 2026, accelerating to -19% in July.

- EU pig prices rebounded in August but have come under pressure again in September, leaving them close to the lows reached during the winter. The EU average for grade E carcases was equivalent to 136.7p/kg in the third week of September, giving the GB SPP a 32% premium.
- A surge in UK export volumes of 29% year-on-year in the first seven months of 2026 failed to support market prices, with the expansion of sales likely to have been a response to soft domestic demand. In addition, exports to the EU have been priced considerably cheaper than last year, for example, down about 23% for fresh boneless cuts. After holding up better early in the year, export prices achieved in non-EU trade have also fallen, reflecting a generally soft global market, where farmgate prices have fallen across the major producing nations. Adding to the challenge, UK pig offal exports have fallen in volume and price in 2026.
- In Scotland, the number of pigs leaving farms for slaughter fell by more than 3.5% in 2025, with the gap growing throughout the final third of the year. While movements to slaughter declined further at the start of 2026, throughput rebounded strongly during the spring as the backlog was cleared. Numbers have continued to run significantly higher through the summer, taking the year-to-date total up around 1.8% on 2025, even after accounting for the backlog carried into 2026 and extra sow culling.
- Highlighting the current market crisis, the sow kill at Scottish abattoirs rose by 52% year-on-year in the first eight months of 2026. The number of sows slaughtered was equivalent to around 22% of the sow herd reported in the June census in 2025.
- Looking ahead, market prospects continue to face major headwinds such as increased pig numbers and the long-term upwards trend in weights, plus the external shock from low EU pricing, with the latter likely to continue given adequate supplies. In addition, the global market is well-supplied, limiting opportunities to achieve significant price increases in trade with non-EU markets, although the Chinese market is now looking less bearish than in the spring.
- Meanwhile, surprisingly strong sow numbers in England in June, up 3.4% year-on-year, suggest that a rebalancing of the GB market could take longer than anticipated.



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