Brazilian meat industry revelations are damning: UFU says that revelations about corruption and fraud in the Brazilian meat industry are damning and has called for the EU Commission to remove agriculture from the Mercosur negotiations and ban Brazilian meat imports completely. The comments were made following confirmation that a major Brazilian meat processor has been fined a staggering £2.4 billion for its role in the country’s corruption scandals. The magnitude of this scandal is shocking and the UFU can see no credible way for the EU Commission to continue to include agriculture in the Mercosur trade talks. The Commission must also take action by immediately banning all Brazilian meat imports to the EU. In 1996, at the early stages of the BSE crisis, the EU Commission was swift to ban all UK beef exports in the interest of public health. Twenty years on, the Commission’s approach appears to be much more lax. The Brazilian meat scandal is a public health issue. The Commission has been slow to act and the UFU would question why they have not approached this situation with the same urgency as BSE. It is unacceptable and immediate action must be taken. The revelations from Brazil must also be a key consideration in future trade negotiations for the UK government post-Brexit. Politicians must ensure that food standards are upheld and cheap, low quality imports are not permitted to undermine the industry. Countries wishing to trade with the UK must demonstrate they can meet the high standards expected by UK consumers. It is also essential that the government treats beef and lamb as sensitive products within trade negotiations. To do otherwise would only serve to decimate these already vulnerable sectors.

RHI Audits: This week the UFU has pressed the Department for Economy to confirm when the RHI audits will get underway. It says that the delay to the renewable heat incentive (RHI) scheme audit process is becoming farcical. Recently the department published the details of RHI participants; however, the Union believes that this should not have happened until the audits were carried out. Publishing the details of the RHI scheme participants in the public interest is a red herring. It is mainly in the interest of taking the pressure off the politicians and civil servants who are responsible for this flawed scheme. The UFU has also asked DfE to clarify the responsibilities between the department and OFGEM. There have been many inconsistencies over the course of the RHI debacle, particularly around boiler accreditation. To read the story in full visit: [http://bit.ly/2riyKBL](http://bit.ly/2riyKBL)

Soil Sampling Scheme open for registrations: This week DAERA opened the soil sampling and analysis scheme, funded as part of the EU Exceptional Aid Package. A condition of this funding is that it can only be used for livestock sectors however; arable land will still be sampled as long as there are livestock in the farm business. You have until Noon on the 19th June 2017 to register. AFBI who is responsible for the running of the scheme will aim to collect and analyse up to 10,000 soil samples in the Open Scheme from land across N.I. and also up to 10,000 samples from certain sub-catchments of the Upper Bann in the area between Banbridge and Hilltown for the Catchment Scheme. This Catchment has been selected as AFBI have been working in this area and hold LiDAR information and are monitoring waterways. For those in the Catchment scheme, an Information Event is planned for 12 June in the Rathfriland YFC Hall at 8.00pm where more details will be available including maps for the Catchment Scheme area. The Catchment Scheme will allow AFBI to learn more about soil nutrients and their link to waterways and is acting as a pilot for the Sustainable Agricultural Land Management Strategy (SALMS). Here is a link to help you identify if you have fields within the EU EAA Targeted Catchments Upper Bann catchment area [http://arcg.is/y80P1](http://arcg.is/y80P1) Note if you set the basemap to imagery you will be able to see individual fields. There are no downsides for the farmer and if
this is a success then there will be a strong argument to find new funding and to roll out this pilot catchment scheme across NI to all farmers as recommended in the SALMS. For more information and to register visit: https://www.afbini.gov.uk/eu-eaa-soil-sampling-and-analysis-scheme

Avian Influenza Prevention Zone lifted: The UFU says that the lifting of the Avian Influenza Prevention Zone will be good news for poultry producers across Northern Ireland. Throughout this process the UFU have been guided by the veterinary risk assessment and are glad to see that the risk of H5N8 to our industry has now been reduced to low. The last few months have been a difficult time for the poultry sector. However, clear communication from DAERA’s veterinary officials and a proactive response from industry have helped to ensure the continued exclusion of H5N8 from the NI poultry sector. Whilst it is positive to see the risk in Northern Ireland reduce, the UFU would urge producers not to become complacent. The risk of avian influenza remains a threat to industry as demonstrated by the outbreaks in Lancashire last month. It is therefore essential that bird keepers maintain good biosecurity all year round in order to ensure the continued safety of their flocks.

UFU encourages sign up to ‘Walk the Line’ Initiative: The UFU is encouraging all cattle and sheep farmers to sign up to the ‘Walk the Line’ initiative which the UFU has developed alongside the Livestock and Meat Commission (LMC) and the Northern Ireland Meat Exporters Association (NIMEA). This initiative offers free tours of major livestock processing plants in Northern Ireland. It is an excellent opportunity for farmers to follow livestock from the lairage through the processing plant and ultimately to the retail packaging site where beef and lamb is made ready for the market place. This gives producers the chance to find out more about the value of each section of the carcase and which markets the cuts of meat are then placed to attract the best paying customers. There will also be opportunities to discuss how to get more feedback on livestock from processors to help improve performance on the farm and achieve better margins. Call LMC today on 02892633000 to sign up for the nearest ‘Walk the Line’ event near you.

HAVE YOUR SAY! UFU wants to hear your views on the discussion paper it published outlining options for a new domestic agriculture policy post-brexit. Farmers can submit their views via an on-line feedback form on the UFU website. The online form is open to submissions from individuals only. The UFU will also be meeting with other local industry and environmental stakeholders to get their views. To read the story in full visit: http://bit.ly/2rqvY1x

Brexit Meetings: UFU president Barclay Bell and Chief Executive Wesley Aston has met with Edward Adamson NSA, LMC Board, YFCU Agri Committee and Sinn Finn this week to discuss the UFU’s recently published discussion paper outlining its proposed options for a new domestic agriculture policy post – brexit.

Latest MPI is 29.70ppl (up from 28.66ppl). The very strong demand for butter continues with the last two weeks seeing DDB/ZuiveNL commodity butter price rising by a record €650/tonne from €4,720/tonne to €5,370/tonne. The recovery in Skimmed Milk Prices continues with DDB prices rising over the same period by €140/tonne from €1,830/tonne to €1,970/tonne, with the prospect that the price will continue to steer clear of Intervention levels as we approach summer months.
Beef Price Watch Latest:

![Beef Price Watch Chart]

NEXT WEEK

- NIEA Meeting
- BVD Meeting
- ANC Meeting
- Opening of the General Assembly
- Margaret Ritchie Meeting
- ID Queries Meeting
- AFBI Postgraduate Event
- Environmental Groups Brexit
- TB Stakeholder Working Group Meeting
- AFBI Annual Conference
- FoodNI Meeting
- AFBI Annual Stakeholder Conference

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