

Carcase classification



**Summary of results for cattle and sheep
slaughtered in Great Britain**

January - December 2022

Contents

Contents	1
Beef carcass classification	2
Sampling	2
Table 1. Steers, heifers and young bulls as a percentage of all prime beef carcasses classified in GB, 2012-2022	2
Table 2. Average carcass weights (kg) for steers, heifers, young bulls and all prime beef in GB, 2012-2022	2
Table 3. Percentage of prime beef by fat and conformation classes in GB, 2012-2022	3
Table 4. Percentage of prime beef in main sectors of the classification grid, by country, 2021 and 2022	4
Table 5. Percentage distribution of cattle carcasses in the classification grid in GB, by category, 2022	5
Table 6. Percentage distribution of cattle carcasses in the classification grid in England, by category, 2022	8
Sheep carcass classification	11
Sampling	11
Table 7. Percentage of classifications and summary of carcass weights for sheep, by country, 2022	11
Table 8. Percentage distribution of new season lambs, old season lambs and all lambs by conformation and fat class in GB, 2022	11
Table 9. Percentage distribution of new season lambs, old season lambs and all lambs by conformation and fat class in Wales, 2022	13
Table 10. Percentage of all lamb carcasses by fatness and conformation in GB, 2012-2022	15
Table 11. Percentage distribution of lambs in the classification grid sectors in Great Britain, by weight band, 2022	16
Table 12. Percentage distribution of lambs in the classification grid sectors in England, by weight band, 2022	17
Table 13. Percentage distribution of lambs in the classification grid sectors in Wales, by weight band, 2022	18

Beef carcass classification

Sampling

Sample number of carcasses analysed in 2022 = 1,686,571

Source (2012-2016): AHDB/MLCSL

Source (2017-2022): AHDB

Table 1. Steers, heifers and young bulls as a percentage of all prime beef carcasses classified in GB, 2012-2022.

	Steers	Heifers	Young bulls
2012	56	32	12
2013	55	33	12
2014	57	33	11
2015	58	33	10
2016	58	33	9
2017	58	34	7
2018	57	36	7
2019	56	37	7
2020	56	38	7
2021	55	38	7
2022	54	39	7

Table 2. Average carcass weights (kg) for steers, heifers, young bulls and all prime beef in GB, 2012-2022.

	Steers	Heifers	Young bulls	Prime beef
2012	353	311	333	337
2013	352	310	328	335
2014	359	318	335	342
2015	362	322	342	347
2016	362	323	342	347
2017	357	322	343	344
2018	356	322	346	343
2019	361	327	352	348
2020	358	326	350	345
2021	358	325	350	345
2022	357	324	348	344

Table 3. Percentage of prime beef by fat and conformation classes in GB, 2012-2022.

	Fat class					
	1&2	3	4L	4H	5L	5H
2012	12.7	32.7	41.3	12.2	0.9	0.1
2013	13.1	33.2	41.8	11.0	0.8	0.1
2014	10.7	32.2	42.8	13.3	1.0	0.1
2015	10.1	34.8	41.9	12.1	0.9	0.1
2016	10.1	37.2	39.9	11.8	0.9	0.1
2017	10.4	38.7	38.9	11.2	0.7	0.1
2018	10.8	38.7	39.4	10.4	0.6	0.1
2019	10.8	39.1	38.3	10.9	0.7	0.1
2020	11.7	40.4	37.5	9.6	0.7	0.1
2021	10.8	40.3	38.0	10.0	0.8	0.1
2022	12.8	42.3	35.1	9.0	0.8	0.1

	Conformation class						
	E	U+	-U	R	O+	-O	P
2012	0.8	3.8	14.6	41.4	22.5	14.5	2.4
2013	1.0	4.6	16.5	41.4	21.7	12.5	2.1
2014	0.9	5.0	17.7	41.1	21.3	11.8	2.2
2015	0.9	5.3	17.1	41.1	21.4	12.1	2.0
2016	0.7	4.5	15.5	44.7	21.3	11.1	2.3
2017	0.5	4.3	14.9	44.6	21.7	11.7	2.2
2018	0.5	4.0	15.1	44.6	22.7	11.0	2.1
2019	0.5	3.8	15.0	45.2	24.2	9.6	1.7
2020	0.4	3.6	14.2	46.3	24.8	8.9	1.7
2021	0.4	3.5	13.6	47.8	24.9	8.0	1.8
2022	0.4	3.5	13.0	48.3	24.4	8.3	2.1

Table 4. Percentage of prime beef in main sectors of the classification grid, by country, 2021 and 2022.

2021	Target	Too fat	Lean but poor conformation	Too fat and poor conformation
England	54.3	5.6	35.7	4.4
England & Wales	54.6	5.3	35.9	4.2
Great Britain	58.2	7.1	30.9	3.8

2022	Target	Too fat	Lean but poor conformation	Too fat and poor conformation
England	54.3	5.1	36.8	3.9
England & Wales	54.7	4.8	36.8	3.7
Great Britain	58.6	6.6	31.5	3.3

Target = E U R and 1 2 3 4L; Too fat = E U R and 4H or fatter;

Lean but poor conformation = O P and 1 2 3 4L;

Too fat and poor conformation = O P and 4H or fatter

Table 5. Percentage distribution of cattle carcasses in the classification grid in Great Britain, by category, 2022.

All prime cattle

Fat class
Increasing fatness



Conformation class Improving conformation		1	2	3	4L	4H	5L	5H	Overall	
		E	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4
		U+	0.1	1.0	1.8	0.5	0.1	0.0	0.0	3.5
		-U	0.2	1.6	5.8	4.6	0.8	0.1	0.0	13.0
		R	0.3	4.3	19.4	18.6	5.2	0.4	0.0	48.3
		O+	0.2	2.2	10.0	9.2	2.5	0.2	0.0	24.4
		-O	0.2	1.3	4.3	2.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	8.3
		P+	0.2	0.6	0.7	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7
		-P	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4
		Overall	1.4	11.4	42.3	35.1	9.0	0.8	0.1	

Steers

Fat class
Increasing fatness



Conformation class Improving conformation		1	2	3	4L	4H	5L	5H	Overall	
		E	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3
		U+	0.1	1.0	1.9	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.4
		-U	0.1	1.5	6.3	4.6	0.6	0.0	0.0	13.2
		R	0.2	4.5	21.1	17.4	3.5	0.1	0.0	46.8
		O+	0.2	2.4	11.9	8.9	1.4	0.1	0.0	24.9
		-O	0.1	1.3	5.6	2.1	0.2	0.0	0.0	9.4
		P+	0.1	0.5	0.8	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.6
		-P	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3
		Overall	1.0	11.5	47.7	33.7	5.8	0.2	0.0	

Heifers

Fat class
Increasing fatness

	1	2	3	4L	4H	5L	5H	Overall
E	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3
U+	0.1	0.4	1.2	0.6	0.1	0.0	0.0	2.5
-U	0.1	0.8	4.1	4.8	1.1	0.1	0.0	11.0
R	0.1	2.3	17.3	22.9	8.4	0.9	0.1	51.9
O+	0.1	1.3	8.1	11.0	4.6	0.5	0.0	25.6
-O	0.1	0.6	2.7	2.3	0.7	0.1	0.0	6.5
P+	0.2	0.6	0.6	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7
-P	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5
Overall	1.0	6.2	34.2	41.8	15.0	1.7	0.1	

Conformation class
Improving conformation

Young bulls

Fat class
Increasing fatness

	1	2	3	4L	4H	5L	5H	Overall
E	0.4	1.2	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.9
U+	0.8	4.1	3.7	0.5	0.1	0.0	0.0	9.2
-U	0.9	6.7	11.5	3.4	0.2	0.0	0.0	22.7
R	1.7	14.0	18.6	4.7	0.5	0.0	0.0	39.5
O+	1.1	5.6	6.1	1.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	14.0
-O	0.9	5.1	3.6	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.9
P+	0.7	1.4	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.4
-P	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4
Overall	6.7	38.3	44.2	9.9	0.9	0.0	0.0	

Conformation class
Improving conformation

Cows

Fat class
Increasing fatness



Conformation class
Improving conformation



	1	2	3	4L	4H	5L	5H	Overall
E	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
U+	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4
-U	0.1	0.3	0.7	0.7	0.2	0.1	0.0	2.0
R	0.3	1.2	3.5	3.4	1.7	0.6	0.3	11.1
O+	0.8	2.2	5.3	5.2	2.3	0.7	0.3	16.7
-O	1.5	4.4	9.8	6.7	1.4	0.3	0.0	24.2
P+	7.8	10.5	7.2	1.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	26.8
-P	14.4	3.7	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	18.9
Overall	24.9	22.3	27.5	17.1	5.8	1.7	0.6	

Mature bulls

Fat class
Increasing fatness



Conformation class
Improving conformation



	1	2	3	4L	4H	5L	5H	Overall
E	1.0	0.8	0.4	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.3
U+	2.8	2.1	0.8	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.2
-U	5.8	3.7	2.3	1.1	0.4	0.1	0.0	13.5
R	11.6	8.0	6.5	2.8	1.1	0.4	0.1	30.4
O+	11.4	7.2	4.6	1.6	0.4	0.1	0.1	25.3
-O	8.9	5.5	2.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.8
P+	3.5	1.1	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.8
-P	0.6	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8
Overall	45.6	28.4	16.7	6.5	2.0	0.6	0.2	

Table 6. Percentage distribution of cattle carcasses in the classification grid in England, by category, 2022.

All prime cattle

Fat class
Increasing fatness

Conformation class Improving conformation		1	2	3	4L	4H	5L	5H	Overall
	E	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5
	U+	0.2	1.1	1.7	0.4	0.1	0.0	0.0	3.5
	-U	0.2	1.7	5.0	2.8	0.4	0.0	0.0	10.2
	R	0.4	5.0	20.3	15.1	4.0	0.4	0.0	45.2
	O+	0.3	2.7	11.8	10.4	3.0	0.3	0.0	28.5
	-O	0.2	1.6	5.0	2.3	0.5	0.1	0.0	9.7
	P+	0.3	0.7	0.8	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0
	-P	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5
	Overall	1.8	13.3	44.7	31.2	8.1	0.8	0.1	

Steers

Fat class
Increasing fatness

Conformation class Improving conformation		1	2	3	4L	4H	5L	5H	Overall
	E	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4
	U+	0.1	1.0	1.8	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.4
	-U	0.1	1.6	5.3	2.6	0.3	0.0	0.0	10.0
	R	0.3	5.2	21.9	14.0	2.8	0.1	0.0	44.4
	O+	0.3	3.0	13.9	10.2	1.7	0.1	0.0	29.2
	-O	0.2	1.6	6.3	2.2	0.3	0.0	0.0	10.6
	P+	0.1	0.6	0.8	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7
	-P	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4
	Overall	1.3	13.3	50.5	29.6	5.1	0.2	0.0	

Heifers

Fat class
Increasing fatness



Conformation class Improving conformation 	1	2	3	4L	4H	5L	5H	Overall	
	E	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3
	U+	0.1	0.5	1.3	0.6	0.1	0.0	0.0	2.6
	-U	0.1	0.8	3.6	3.3	0.7	0.1	0.0	8.7
	R	0.2	2.6	18.3	18.9	6.5	0.9	0.1	47.4
	O+	0.1	1.5	9.7	12.4	5.4	0.7	0.1	29.9
	-O	0.1	0.8	3.4	2.8	0.9	0.1	0.0	8.2
	P+	0.3	0.8	0.8	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.0	2.2
	-P	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7
	Overall	1.3	7.3	37.3	38.4	13.7	1.9	0.2	

Young bulls

Fat class
Increasing fatness



Conformation class Improving conformation		1	2	3	4L	4H	5L	5H	Overall	
		E	0.6	1.3	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.2
		U+	1.0	4.5	2.8	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.5
		-U	1.1	7.1	8.8	1.6	0.1	0.0	0.0	18.8
		R	2.0	16.4	18.2	3.2	0.3	0.0	0.0	40.2
		O+	1.3	6.7	6.7	1.2	0.1	0.0	0.0	16.0
		-O	1.1	5.9	3.7	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.0
		P+	0.9	1.7	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.9
		-P	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5
		Overall	8.2	43.8	40.9	6.6	0.6	0.0	0.0	

Cows

Fat class
Increasing fatness



Conformation class
Improving conformation



	1	2	3	4L	4H	5L	5H	Overall
E	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
U+	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4
-U	0.1	0.3	0.6	0.5	0.1	0.0	0.0	1.6
R	0.3	1.1	2.8	2.4	1.1	0.4	0.3	8.5
O+	0.8	1.9	4.6	4.8	2.1	0.7	0.3	15.2
-O	1.6	4.3	10.1	7.2	1.5	0.3	0.1	25.0
P+	8.5	11.1	7.7	1.2	0.2	0.0	0.0	28.8
-P	15.9	3.7	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.5
Overall	27.2	22.5	26.8	16.2	5.1	1.5	0.6	

Sheep carcase classification

Sampling

Sample number of carcasses analysed in 2022 = 124,018

Source: AHDB/MLCSL

Table 7. Percentage of classifications and summary of carcase weights for sheep, by country, 2022.

	% of sample	Mean weight, kg (all lambs)	% in target sector
England	44.8	19.8	57.3
Great Britain	100.0	19.8	61.3

Target sector is defined as E, U, R for conformation and 1, 2, 3L for fatness

Table 8. Percentage distribution of new season lambs, old season lambs and all lambs by conformation and fat class in GB, 2022.

New season lambs

Fat class
Increasing fatness

Conformation class
Improving conformation

	1	2	3L	3H	4L	4H	5	Overall
E	0.0	0.6	2.2	0.7	0.1	0.0	0.0	3.7
U	0.1	2.9	12.9	5.4	0.7	0.1	0.0	22.1
R	0.5	13.3	31.0	11.2	1.6	0.1	0.0	57.8
O	0.8	6.7	6.5	1.6	0.1	0.0	0.0	15.7
P	0.4	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8
Overall	1.8	23.9	52.7	18.9	2.6	0.2	0.0	

Old season lambs

Fat class
Increasing fatness



Conformation class Improving conformation								
	1	2	3L	3H	4L	4H	5	Overall
	E	0.0	0.4	1.1	0.4	0.1	0.0	2.0
	U	0.1	2.3	10.2	6.5	1.3	0.1	20.6
	R	0.7	10.8	30.4	15.0	2.6	0.3	59.8
	O	1.1	6.4	7.9	1.7	0.2	0.0	17.3
	P	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3
	Overall	2.1	20.0	49.6	23.6	4.3	0.4	0.1

All lambs

Fat class
Increasing fatness



Conformation class Improving conformation								
	1	2	3L	3H	4L	4H	5	Overall
	E	0.0	0.5	2.0	0.6	0.1	0.0	3.2
	U	0.1	2.7	12.0	5.7	1.0	0.1	21.6
	R	0.6	12.4	30.8	12.3	2.0	0.2	58.2
	O	0.9	6.7	7.1	1.6	0.2	0.0	16.4
	P	0.3	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6
	Overall	1.9	22.5	51.9	20.2	3.2	0.3	0.0

Table 9. Percentage distribution of new season lambs, old season lambs and all lambs by conformation and fat class in Wales, 2022.

New season lambs

Fat class
Increasing fatness

Conformation class Improving conformation								
	1	2	3L	3H	4L	4H	5	Overall
	E	0.0	1.1	2.4	0.6	0.1	0.0	4.2
	U	0.1	4.2	13.4	3.8	0.7	0.1	22.3
	R	0.8	14.7	31.7	8.9	1.8	0.1	58.0
	O	0.8	6.3	7.1	1.1	0.1	0.0	15.4
	P	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
	Overall	1.7	26.3	54.7	14.4	2.7	0.2	0.0

Old season lambs

Fat class
Increasing fatness

Conformation class Improving conformation								
	1	2	3L	3H	4L	4H	5	Overall
	E	0.0	0.5	1.2	0.3	0.1	0.0	2.1
	U	0.1	2.9	7.8	3.1	0.8	0.1	14.8
	R	1.4	14.6	28.2	11.3	2.8	0.3	58.8
	O	2.0	9.6	9.9	2.4	0.3	0.0	24.4
	P	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2
	Overall	3.7	27.7	47.2	17.1	3.9	0.4	0.1

All lambs

Fat class
Increasing fatness



Conformation class
Improving conformation



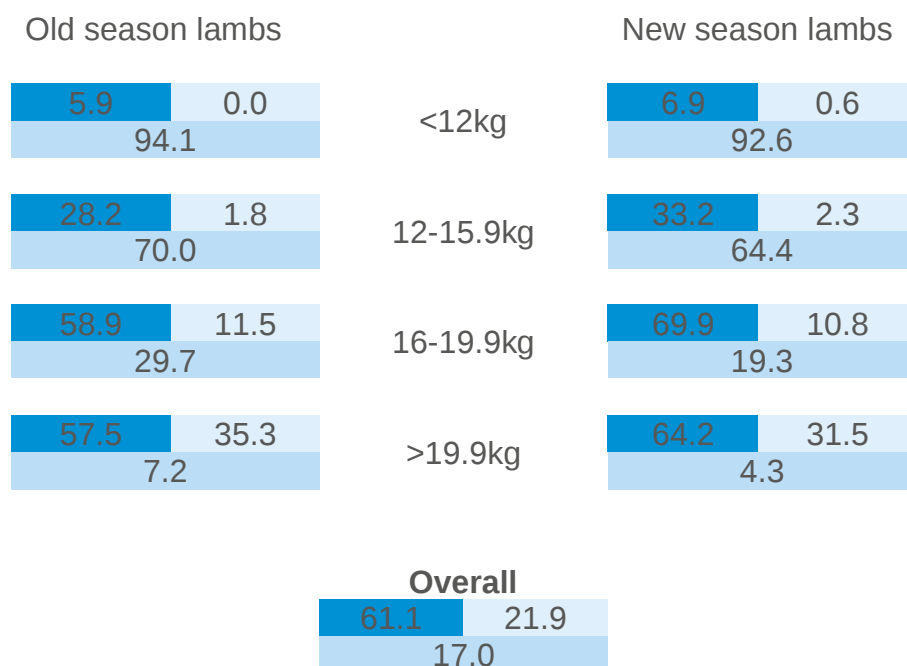
	1	2	3L	3H	4L	4H	5	Overall
E	0.0	0.8	2.0	0.5	0.1	0.0	0.0	3.5
U	0.1	3.9	11.5	3.5	0.7	0.1	0.0	19.8
R	0.9	14.5	30.3	9.8	2.1	0.2	0.0	58.0
O	1.2	7.3	8.2	1.6	0.2	0.0	0.0	18.6
P	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
Overall	2.4	26.5	52.1	15.5	3.2	0.3	0.0	

Table 10. Percentage of all lamb carcasses by fatness and conformation in GB, 2012-2022.

Year	Conformation class				
	E	U	R	O	P
2012	3.6	19.2	58.1	18.6	0.5
2013	4.3	19.8	56.9	18.3	0.7
2014	5.5	22.5	56.6	15.0	0.4
2015	6.0	22.5	55.2	15.9	0.4
2016	6.0	22.9	55.5	15.3	0.3
2017	5.9	23.3	56.2	14.3	0.2
2018	6.6	26.2	53.4	13.5	0.2
2019	5.6	26.9	54.8	12.5	0.2
2020	4.3	25.9	57.3	12.3	0.1
2021	3.3	25.7	58.7	12.0	0.2
2022	3.2	21.6	58.2	16.4	0.6

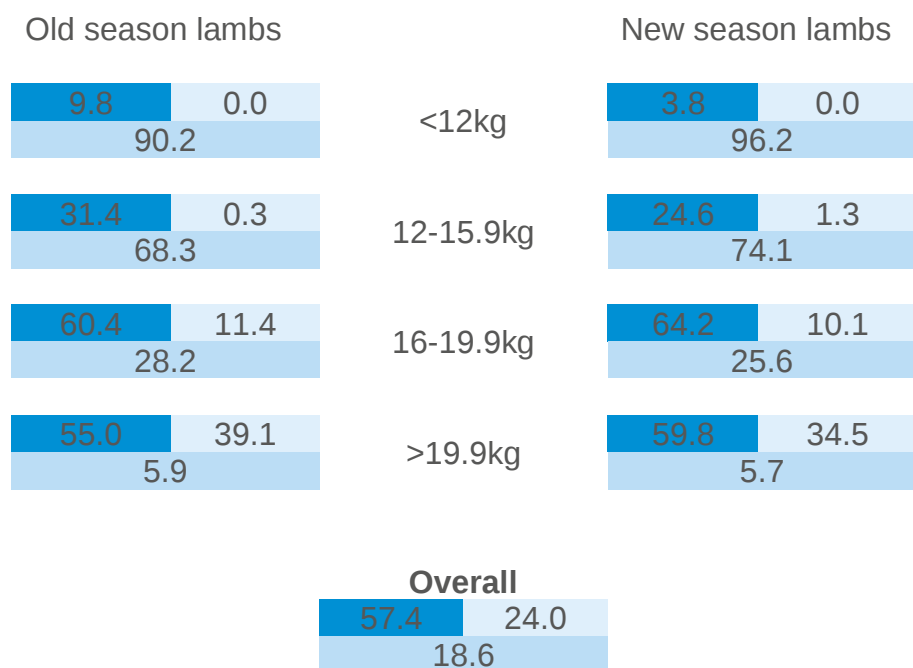
Year	Fat class						
	1	2	3L	3H	4L	4H	5
2012	1.7	20.9	51.2	20.5	4.6	0.9	0.3
2013	2.0	21.0	50.8	20.7	4.6	0.7	0.2
2014	1.1	17.2	52.9	22.3	5.3	1.0	0.3
2015	0.8	16.8	52.0	23.5	5.7	1.0	0.2
2016	1.0	17.9	53.5	21.8	4.9	0.7	0.1
2017	0.9	16.0	51.8	25.0	5.1	0.9	0.2
2018	1.2	15.8	52.9	24.3	5.0	0.8	0.2
2019	0.7	14.8	49.6	27.9	6.0	0.8	0.2
2020	0.8	16.8	50.0	26.8	5.0	0.5	0.1
2021	1.0	19.5	52.7	22.6	3.9	0.3	0.0
2022	1.9	22.5	51.9	20.2	3.2	0.3	0.0

Table 11. Percentage distribution of lambs in GB in the classification grid sectors, by weight band, 2022.



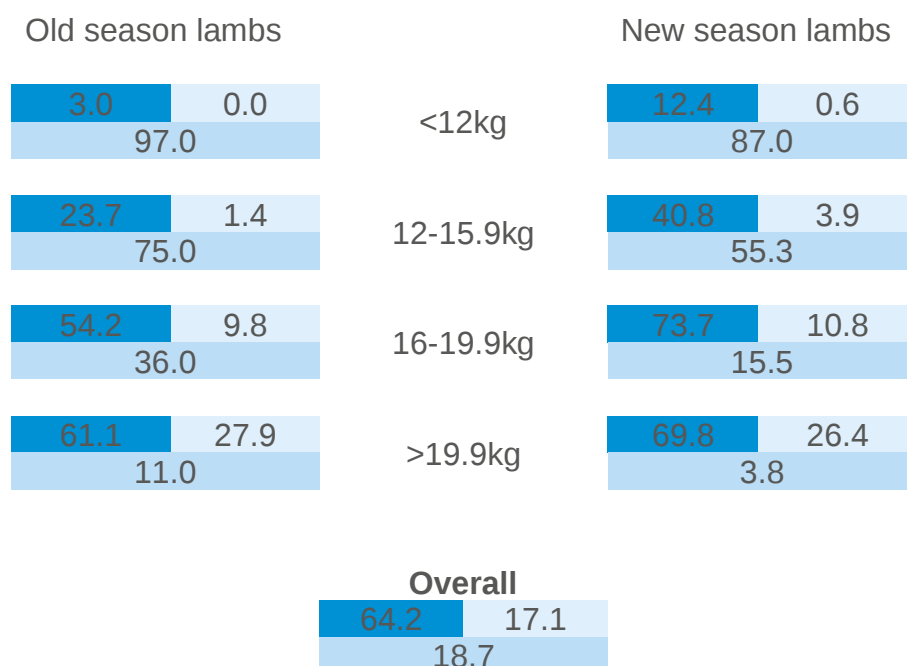
Target sector	E, U, or R conformation. 1, 2 or 3L fatness	
Too fat	3H or fatter but of adequate conformation	
Poor conformation	O conformation or worse	

Table 12. Percentage distribution of lambs in England in the classification grid sectors, by weight band, 2022.



Target sector	E, U, or R conformation. 1, 2 or 3L fatness	
Too fat	3H or fatter but of adequate conformation	
Poor conformation	O conformation or worse	

Table 13. Percentage distribution of lambs in Wales in the classification grid sectors by weight band, 2022.



Target sector	E, U, or R conformation. 1, 2 or 3L fatness	
Too fat	3H or fatter but of adequate conformation	
Poor conformation	O conformation or worse	

While AHDB seeks to ensure that the information contained within this document is accurate at the time of printing, no warranty is given in respect of the information and data provided. You are responsible for how you use the information. To the maximum extent permitted by law, AHDB accepts no liability for loss, damage or injury howsoever caused or suffered (including that caused by negligence) directly or indirectly in relation to the information or data provided in this publication.

All intellectual property rights in the information and data in this document belong to or are licensed by AHDB. You are authorised to use such information for your internal business purposes only and you must not provide this information to any other third parties, including further publication of the information, or for commercial gain in any way whatsoever without the prior written permission of AHDB for each third party disclosure, publication or commercial arrangement. For more information, please see our Terms of Use and Privacy Notice or contact the Director of Corporate Affairs at info@ahdb.org.uk