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**BSE slaughters  
British beef**

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# Beef crisis: Factory cattle kill down by 80%

By John Shirley

**THE prospects of a second emergency intervention beef tender next week with a higher weight limit than 380 kgs were emerging as we went to press yesterday afternoon (Wednesday).**

This follows this week's tiny tender right across the EU. The BSE inspired beef crisis is biting harder with an

estimated 50,000 head of finished beef cattle already stacking up on Irish farms. This week also sees the 8% beef price drop feeding back into store cattle prices in the marts.

Little Irish beef is yet back onto the shelves of Continental EU and while the news from Third Country markets is positive, the major outlets of Libya and Iran, were still closed as the Journal went to press. However there was news that the Egyptian cabinet had lifted the ban on imports for the whole of the EU except Britain and that technical negotiations on resuming trade are underway. UK supermarkets are buying Irish beef, but the quantities are small, and demand is very selective.

In spite of the stocks build up, the Irish beef plant Intervention tender for Friday's EU Beef Management Committee meeting will cover less than 3,000 steers at the very disappointing price of 92.0p a lb. (including VAT)

Last week's factory kill at 5,379 head was only 15 per cent of the same week in 1995. This followed a week where the kill was down 50 per cent and this week's kill will be only marginally better than last week.

On the live front, seven cattle boats lie idle in Irish harbours each costing from £3000 to £6000 a day in charter and demurrage fees. By the end of this week it is reckoned that there will be a stockpile of close to 50,000 beef cattle that would have been moved were it not for the worldwide beef crisis over BSE.

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## Lime spreading in Monaghan

Contractor Aidan Hand, Magoney, Inniskeen, spreading lime of three tonnes per acre for spring barley on Frank Goodman's, Drumboory, Co Monaghan. Adequate soil lime status is essential for a good fertility balance, optimum nutrient utilisation and good yields. Lime usage has been falling back in recent years and this is a worrying trend.

Photo: John Caffrey

