

Livestock Monitor

A Newsletter for Extension Staff

Livestock Marketing Information Center

State Extension Services in Cooperation with the USDA

Market Indicators . . .

May 9, 2025

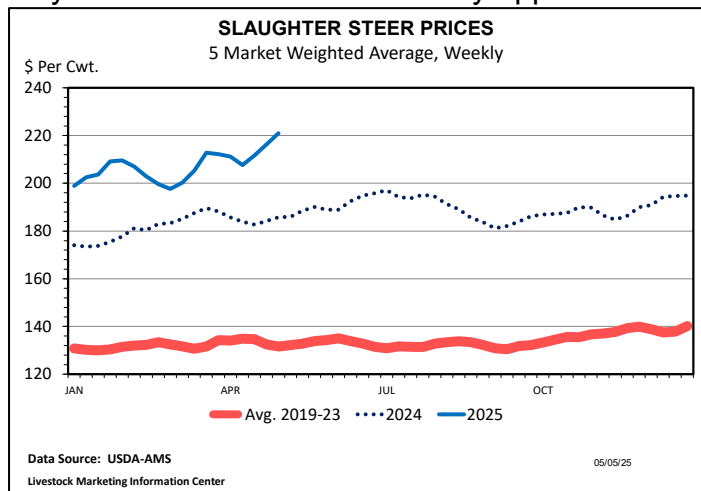
Production			Prices			
Week Ending 5/10/2025	Last	Year Ago	Weekly Average (\$/Cwt)	Last	Week Ago	Year Ago
FI Cattle Slaughter (Thou Hd)	559	616	Live Steer	224.49	220.97	185.94
FI Hog Slaughter (Thou Hd)	2437	2380	Dressed Steer	356.07	349.37	295.28
FI Sheep Slaughter (Thou Hd)	35	36	Choice Beef Cutout	345.65	344.48	296.78
Young Chicken Sltr. (Mil Hd)	166.5	166.2	USDA Hide/Offal	11.57	11.87	11.24
Slaughter Cattle Live Weight	1437	1401	OK City Fdr. Str. (6-7 Cwt.)	342.64	344.03	281.59
Slaughter Hog Live Weight	291	290	National Negotiated Hogs	93.17	92.38	92.01
Slaughter Lamb/Sheep Live Wt.	123	125	Natl. Net Hog Carcass	90.50	89.75	91.50
Beef Production (Mil Pounds)	489.3	524.7	Feeder Pigs (40 Lbs) (\$/Head)	79.28	79.29	76.17
Pork Production (Mil Pounds)	528.9	513.0	Pork Cutout	96.05	97.13	98.82
Lamb, Mutton Prod. (Mil Lbs.)	2.2	2.3	Lamb Cutout	457.78	462.04	464.31
Previous 6 Wk. Moving Avg.			Cheddar, 40 lb Block(\$/lb)	1.78	1.75	1.66
Total Beef (Mil Lbs)	496.2	520.2	Corn, Omaha (\$/Bu)	4.43	4.64	4.63
Total Pork (Mil Lbs)	531.5	522.3	Soybeans, Cntrl IL (\$/Bu)	10.57	10.54	12.12
Total Lamb, Mutton (Mil Lbs)	2.5	2.3				

Source: Various USDA-AMS reports. Data are preliminary.

Trends. . . CATTLE PRICES CONTINUE TO CLIMB

Fed cattle prices continued to move higher over the last four consecutive weeks. Last week's fed steer price (5-Area weighted average) was \$220.97 per cwt, a record at +19% (\$35.23 per cwt) above the same week a year ago. The fed steer price started the year at \$198.93 per cwt, which marks an +11% (\$22.04 per cwt) increase in just over four months. Since the start of the year, the fed steer price has been below \$200 per cwt just three times: the first week of the year (\$198.93), the last week of February (\$199.64), and the first week of March (\$197.65).

The seasonal index for fed steer prices indicates that prices typically track steady through May, followed by a gradual move lower through September, and then trend higher through the fourth quarter of the year. This year, seasonal fed steer prices are tracking slightly higher through April and into the first week of May. Seasonally, the pattern would signal the prices may move lower as Memorial Day approaches. Last year, fed steer prices peaked at \$197.09



per cwt in the first week of July. If prices follow a similar pattern to last year, the peak fed steer price for the year may still be a couple of months away.

Last week's boxed beef cutout value (choice 600-900 lbs. carcass, negotiated) reached \$344.48 per cwt, a high so far for the year and +17% (\$49.97 per cwt) above the same week last year. Seasonally, the boxed beef cutout value peaks around Memorial Day. Last year, the boxed beef cutout value peaked at \$329.96 per cwt during the first week July. If the boxed beef

cutout value follows a similar seasonal pattern to last year, the peak price may occur closer to the July 4th holiday.

FIRST QUARTER TRADE UPDATE

The USDA-Economic Research Service (ERS) reported meat trade on Wednesday, capping off the first quarter (Q1) of 2025. In the report, imports of beef shot up +24% to 1.5 billion pounds against Q1 2024. Year-over-year changes were driven predominantly by gains out of Brazil (+44%), Australia (+32%), and Uruguay (+43%) to 366, 298, and 101 million pounds, respectively; imports of Canadian beef declined -8% to 255 million pounds. Beef exports continue to decline in 2025 with year-over-year losses at -3% to 713 million pounds. In the mix, shipments to Japan, Mexico, and South Korea drove the decline, falling -4%, -10%, and -1%, respectively, to 160, 78, and 158 million pounds.

Exports and imports of pork both decreased year over year in Q1 to 1.8 billion pounds (-1%) and 280 million pounds (-6%), respectively. On the export side, decreases were driven by losses in shipments to Japan (-16%) and South Korea (-15%) to 233 and 183 million pounds, respectively, while increases from China (+30%) and Mexico (+4%) to 120 and 675 million pounds, respectively, narrowed the gap. For imports, declines were experienced with all major trade partners, the most notable being losses from Canada (-5%) to 174 million pounds.

Lamb imports increased +2% in Q1 to 73 million pounds. The climb was attributed to growth in shipments from Australia (+6%) to 56 million pounds offsetting losses out of New Zealand (-9%) to 16 million pounds. Exports of lamb increased by +29% to 225 million pounds.

In poultry, broiler imports fell by -6% to 39 million pounds due to declines out of Canada by -20% to 9 million pounds. Exports of broilers also decreased year over year in Q1 to 1.6 billion pounds (-5%). Losses were driven by declines out of Iraq (-63%), Angola (-22%), and the Caribbean (-4%) to 9, 41, and 204 million pounds, respectively.

CHICKEN MARKET UPDATE

Chicken markets during the first three months of the year experienced a +1% increase in production from a year earlier, and wholesale prices were significantly higher for some products. Wholesale breast meat prices during the first quarter were +40% higher than a year earlier, and leg quarters prices were up +16%. The exception was wings as prices were down -9%. Whole bird wholesale prices were +4% higher than a year ago. Processor margins were up sharply from a year earlier, continuing a trend that began in the last quarter of 2023. Year-over-year margin comparison will be more modest this quarter and going forward as the base of comparison from a year earlier was so favorable. Last summer's robust margins will probably not be attainable but will still be very good.

The retail chicken price calculated by USDA-ERS based on a composite of chicken parts values averaged \$2.44 per pound during the first quarter, unchanged from the last quarter of 2024 and up only +1% from the same quarter in 2024. A stable outlook for chicken feed costs and mild overall inflation in the general economy should keep grocery store chicken prices close to current values in the near term.

Placements of young hens into the hatchery supply flock were up +1% from a year ago, and placements during the last quarter of 2024 declined by -2% from a year earlier. Hurricanes last summer in key production areas also limited placements. The lack of a significant increase in pullet placements during the last year will be an important factor limiting chicken production this year. Young chicken slaughter during the first quarter of 2025 was unchanged year over year. The increase in production for the quarter was totally accounted for by heavier average bird weights at processing time. This should continue to be the story for the remainder of the year.

Consumption of young chicken meat during the first quarter increased by 120 million pounds from 12 months earlier. Year-over-year consumption gains in the last three quarters of 2024 were in the range of 250-400 million pounds. Young chicken exports during the first quarter were down -5% from a year earlier, continuing the trend from last year when exports fell -7%.

The slowing in consumption growth along with declining exports seems to have the chicken industry in a cautionary mindset. Normally, when processing margins have been as favorable as they have been during the last two years, pullet placements into the hatchery supply flock would be up +3% to +5% this year. Food sector retail sales growth was slowing during the first quarter, providing some cause for concern about consumer demand for value-added foods or away-from-home food spending in the coming months. The current economic setting, even with positive profit margins in the near term, underlies a chicken production forecast showing little change extending into 2026.