

Industry Link

July 1 cattle inventory down 2%

USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) Agricultural Statistics Board released its July 1 Cattle Inventory report July 20 (see Table 1). According to the report, all cattle and calves in the United States totaled 97.8 million head, 2% below the 100.0 million inventoried July 1, 2011. The 2012 inventory is the lowest inventory of all cattle and calves for July 1 since the series began in 1973.

All cows and heifers that have calved, at 39.7 million, were down 2% from July 1, 2011. Beef cows, at 30.5 million, were down 3% from the previous year. Milk cows, at 9.2 million, were unchanged.

Other class estimates on July 1, 2012, and the changes from July 1, 2011, are as follows:

- All heifers ≥500 pounds (lb.), 15.7 million, down 2%.
- Beef replacement heifers, 4.2 million, unchanged.
- Milk replacement heifers, 4.1 million, down 2%.
- Other heifers, 7.4 million, down 3%.
- Steers, weighing ≥500 lb., 14.0 million, down 1%.
- Bulls, weighing ≥500 lb., 1.9 million, down 5%.
- Calves <500 pounds, 26.5 million, down 3%.
- All cattle and calves on feed for slaughter, 12.3 million, up 1%.

The 2012 calf crop is expected to be 34.5 million, down 2% from 2011. Calves born during the first half of the year are estimated at 25.1 million, down 2% from 2011.

U.S. cattle on feed up 3%

The Agricultural Statistics Board also released its July 1 Cattle on Feed report July 20 (see Table 2). According to the report, cattle and calves on feed for slaughter market in the United States at feedlots with capacity of 1,000 or more head totaled 10.7 million head July 1.

The inventory was 3% above July 1, 2011.

The report included 6.74 million steers and steer calves, up 4% from the previous year. This group accounted for 63% of the total inventory. Heifers and heifer calves accounted for 3.92 million head, up 1% from 2011.

Placements in feedlots during June totaled 1.66 million, 2% below 2011. Net placements were 1.60 million head. During June, placements of cattle and calves weighing less than 600 lb. were 460,000, 600-699 lb. were 320,000, 700-799 lb. were 390,000, and ≥800 lb. were 494,000.

Marketings of fed cattle during June totaled 1.97 million, 6% below 2011. This is the lowest fed-cattle marketings for the month of June since the series began in 1996.

Other disappearance totaled 66,000 during June, 8% below 2011.

Cattle on feed July 1, 2012, from all feedlots in the United States, totaled 12.3 million, up 1% from the 12.2 million on July 1, 2011. Cattle on feed in feedlots with 1,000 or more head accounted for 87% of the total cattle on feed on July 1, 2012, up from 86% last year.

Ruminal acidosis rethought

Rumen acidosis can have more far-reaching implications for cattle health than is commonly thought. That was the message shared by University of Saskatchewan animal scientist Greg Penner during the International Symposium on Beef Cattle Welfare (ISBCW), hosted in Saskatoon, Sask., June 5-7.

Penner explained that acidosis is a digestive disorder that occurs when the rumen pH declines from the normal range of 6.5-7 to below 5.8. Acute acidosis typically results from an abrupt increase in an animal's intake of feedstuffs that can be rapidly fermented by rumen microbes. This increases acid production and accumulation in the

rumen. The low pH environment favors an increase in acid-producing rumen microbes. The result is an imbalance between acid production and the digestive tract's ability to remove acid.

According to Penner, the severity of ruminal acidosis varies from acute to subacute. Animals with acute acidosis typically exhibit symptoms including refusal of feed, diarrhea, anorexia and even death. Contrary to popular assumption, Penner believes the more common industry problem is subacute acidosis, which may prompt no outwardly visible symptoms.

Penner refuted the myth that acidosis occurs primarily among animals receiving a diet that is high in grain relative to forage.

"It's highly fermentable diets — not necessarily high-grain — that induce the risk," stated Penner, citing research showing acidosis occurs among cattle grazing pasture with minimal supplementation. "It even happens under natural grazing conditions on very lush pasture with highly soluble carbohydrate content," he added.

Penner noted other causes, including a rapid change of diet or a return to feeding after a short period of feed restriction. Not necessarily a consequence of management, the feed restriction could be the result of animals going "off feed" following calving, weaning stress or disease-induced fever. According to Penner, studies also show there is variation among individual animals with some being more or less tolerant of highly fermentable diets.

Penner explained that subacute acidosis has negative health implications resulting from sloughing of epithelial cells from the rumen wall. This decreases its function as a barrier to toxins and pathogens. Absorption of nutrients — primarily energy — may also be impaired.

"Prolonged low rumen pH contributes to a systemic inflammatory response, and affected animals may become more susceptible to secondary infections," stated Penner.

To read other summaries from this conference, visit <http://bit.ly/MsqCPv> in the API Virtual Library. The conference website is www.beefwelfare2012.ca/index.php/program.

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Retail prices for meats, dairy and eggs decline slightly

Retail food prices at the supermarket declined slightly during the second quarter of 2012 with protein staples — meats, cheese, milk and eggs — showing the greatest drops in price, according to the latest American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) Marketbasket Survey.

The informal survey shows the total cost of 16 food items that can be used to prepare one or more meals was \$50.91, down \$1.56 or about 3% compared to the first quarter of 2012. Of the 16 items surveyed, 12 decreased and four increased in average price compared to the prior quarter. The cost for the overall basket of foods fell about one-half of 1% compared to one year ago.

Most of the quarter-to-quarter decrease in the marketbasket of foods was due to lower retail prices for sliced meats and dairy products.

For more information and the full release from the AFBF, see the newsroom at www.fb.org.

Farmers reminded of hay, forage hotline

Farmers with hay or other forage for sale or those in need of forage resources can access a free Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA) database that works to connect buyers and sellers.

Agriculture Director Greg Ibach said the NDA Hay and Forage Hotline is available for sellers to call and list available hay, pasture or other forages. Those wishing to sell can call 1-800-422-6692 to request their information be added to the listing. Those wishing to purchase hay or other forage can access the list online at www.agr.ne.gov or may request a copy by calling NDA. The list is free and is updated regularly.

Ibach said all types of forage can be listed on the site, including the availability of cornstalks for grazing. You do not need to be from Nebraska to list available forage resources with NDA, and the listing is free.

Table 1: Cattle inventory (1,000 head) by class and calf crop, United States: July 1, 2011 and 2012

Class	2011	2012	% of previous year
Cattle and calves	100,000.0	97,800.0	98
Cows and heifers that have calved	40,600.0	39,700.0	98
Beef cows	31,400.0	30,500.0	97
Milk cows	9,200.0	9,200.0	100
Heifers 500 pounds and over	16,000.0	15,700.0	98
For beef cow replacement	4,200.0	4,200.0	100
For milk cow replacement	4,200.0	4,100.0	98
Other heifers	7,600.0	7,400.0	97
Steers ≥500 lb.	14,200.0	14,000.0	99
Bulls ≥500 lb.	2,000.0	1,900.0	95
Calves <500 lb.	27,200.0	26,500.0	97
Calf crop	35,313.2	34,500.0	98
Cattle on feed	12,200.0	12,300.0	101

Table 2: Number of cattle (1,000 head) on feed, placements, marketings and other disappearance at 1,000+ capacity feedlots in the United States, July 1, 2011 and 2012

Class	2011	2012	% of previous year
On feed June 1	10,902	11,077	102
Placed on feed during June	1,695	1,664	98
Fed cattle marketed during June	2,092	1,965	94
Other disappearance during June	72	66	92
On feed July 1	10,433	10,710	103