A monthly publication of the USDA AMS Livestock, Poultry, and Seed, Agricultural Analytics Division

Volume 02-16
February 2016

EGGS

Production

December table egg production totaled 576 million dozen, down 9 percent from December 2014, but slightly above the year-over-year decline in November. On January 1, the number of birds in the table egg flock was 288 million, down 7 percent compared to a year earlier, but up 1 percent from December 1. Egg-type hatching egg production was 91 million eggs, up 11 percent from a year ago. There were 1.0 billion broiler-type hatching eggs produced in December, up 3 percent from last year. The broiler-type laying flock on January 1 was 54.9 million hens, up 2 percent from 2015. Shell eggs broken totaled 174 million dozen during December 2015, down 8 percent from December a year ago, but up 8 percent compared to the 160 million broken in November.

Price

After plummeting throughout most of December, the wholesale price of a dozen large Grade A eggs in the New York market rose sharply in the middle of January, possibly in response to the blizzard conditions experienced along the east coast. The increase stopped and began to reverse the first week of February, ending that week at 163 cents/dozen. Breaking stock prices also rose during early January, but plateaued at 68 cents/dozen about mid-month, remaining at that level through the first week of February.

International Trade

Shell egg exports in December totaled 8.2 million dozen, valued at $11.5 million. This was 5 percent below November in volume and 21 percent below in value; compared with December 2014, exports were down 72 percent in volume and 29 percent in value. For all of 2015, shell egg exports were down 27 percent in volume but down only 3 percent in value.

December exports of egg products were valued at $9.6 million, 52 percent above November bur 34 percent below last December. For the year, egg products exports were down 27 percent compared to 2014. Our five largest export destinations in December were Canada, Mexico, Japan, Brazil, and Hong Kong.

TURKEY

Production

Turkey production in December totaled 458 million pounds on a ready-to-cook basis. Daily production was down 11 percent from November's Thanksgiving production, but down only 3 percent compared to December 2015. Average dressed weights were up 7 percent month-over-month as producers switched to a heavier mix of processing birds, and were up a little less than 1 percent year-over-year. Poults placed in December were down only 1 percent compared to 2014, but eggs in incubators on January 1 were down 8 percent compared with the start of 2015, the first month since August when eggs in incubators on the first of the month were less than 10 percent below year-earlier totals. The smaller decline in placements compared to eggs in incubators indicates that hen poults are a larger share of placements than is traditional because producers are still rebuilding brood stocks.

Total turkey supplies in cold storage on December 31 were up 3 percent compared to the end of 2014. Whole hen stocks were up 8 percent but whole tom stocks were down 27 percent. White meat supplies fell 10 percent compared to 2014, but dark meat supplies rose 37 percent.

Price

Whole turkey prices began 2016 at higher levels than usual, thanks to lower overall supplies, especially for toms. Whole hens closed January at 114 cents/lb., while whole toms were 124 cents/lb., a record for the month. Parts prices, however, fell across the board. Boneless/skinless (B/S) breast meat fell 35 percent from its mid-November all-time high, ending the first week of February at 380 cents/lb. B/S thigh meat was also weak, its price falling 9 percent through the month to close at 103 cents/lb., while tom drumsticks fell to 50 cents/lb.

International Trade

The U.S. exported 19.8 thousand metric tons of turkey products in December with a value of $51.3 million. This was 1 percent higher than November in volume, but down 2 percent in value. Compared to December 2014, exports were down 39 percent in volume and 22 percent in value. For the year, exports were down 34 percent in volume and 23 percent in value compared with 2014. The top 5 destinations for turkey exports in December were Mexico, Japan, Hong Kong, Canada, and the Dominican Republic.

CHICKEN

Production

December broiler production totaled 3.3 billion pounds on a ready-to-cook basis. Daily production was 3 percent lower than November and even with December 2014. Averaged dressed weights were a little less than 1 percent below November and a little less than 1 percent above 2014. There may be a slight increase in production in the coming weeks. While chicks placed for the four weeks ending January 30 were even with the same period in 2015, eggs set were up 1 percent.

Total chicken holdings in cold storage on December 31 were down slightly compared to the end of November but were up 21 percent compared to the end of 2014. Whole broiler supplies were up considerably, up 37 percent on the month and 32 percent on the year. White meat inventories were unchanged compared to November and up 8 percent compared to last December. Dark meat holdings fell in December but were still above 2014 levels. Leg quarter stocks fell 11 percent month-over-month but were up 9 percent year-over-year.

Price

Whole broiler prices rose from mid-December through mid-January, before falling the second half of the month. The National composite average reached a high of just under 90 cents/lb., before falling to 86 cents/lb. by the end of the month. Boneless/skinless (B/S) breast prices rose 10 cents through the month, ending January at 113 cents/lb., their highest level since early October. Leg quarter prices have recently shown some strength. Their price rose to 17 cents/lb. by month's end, a 36 percent increase from their mid-December lows. B/S thigh meat prices were essentially flat, rising less than 1 percent in January to close at 69 cents/lb., and drumsticks were unchanged at 28 cents/lb. As the winter sports season gets underway, wing prices have been rising in tandem. Wings increased in price 15 percent during the month, closing at 197 cents/lb.

International Trade

December U.S. exports of chicken products totaled 217 thousand metric tons valued at $198 million. December exports were 3 percent lower in volume and 8 percent lower in value compared to November and were 15 percent lower in volume and 36 percent lower in value compared to December 2014. For all of 2015, exports were down 13 percent in volume and 26 percent in value compared to 2014. Our top five export destinations in December were Mexico, Canada, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Guatemala.

BEEF/VEAL

Production

December beef production was 2.05 billion pounds, up 6 percent from November and 2 percent above last year. Cattle slaughter totaled 2.45 million head, up 7 percent from the preceding month, and up slightly from 2014. The average live weight was 25 pounds more than last year, at 1,388 pounds. Veal production was up 10 percent from November, at 7.8 million pounds, 1 percent above 2014 production. Calf slaughter was 16 percent higher on a monthly basis, totaling 45,200 head, and 5 percent higher yearly. The average live weight was down 8 pounds from last year, at 295 pounds. Total yearly commercial beef production for 2015 was 2 percent below 2014's volume, while total 2015 veal production was down 12 percent from 2014. Cold storage beef at the end of December was up 1 percent from November, and up 16 percent from December 2014. Boneless beef stocks increased 1 percent from the month before, and 17 percent from 2014. Beef cuts in freezers were higher than the previous month by 1 and were 2 percent higher than last year. Frozen veal stocks were down 5 percent month over month, and down 3 percent on a yearly basis.

Price

Live cattle prices (FOB, steers and heifers) began the year at $134 per cwt, but ended the month at $136 per cwt, 15% below January 2015. The beef cutout value saw a gain of $28 by mid-month to $235 per cwt, but lost value, and ended at $221 per cwt, 10 percent below 2015. The 90 percent lean boneless beef price rose $11 to close the month at $205 per cwt, 31 percent below the 2015 price. Starting the month at $39 per cwt, beef trim, 50 percent lean, doubled in value by mid-month to $78, but fell back to end at $53 per cwt, 63 percent below the 2015 level. Packer-owned veal carcasses fell $9 through January to $429 per cwt while non-packer owned veal carcasses lost $14 to $422 per cwt. The veal cutout average fell $12 to $563 per cwt, 3 percent below the 2015 value.

International Trade

Compared to 2014, December beef and veal exports (including variety meats) fell 6 percent to 95 thousand MT while the export value fell 21 percent to $507 million. This volume is down 1 percent and the value is down 2 percent from November export levels. Total exports and export values for the year were down by 11 and 12 percent, respectively, from 2014. Nearly 1.1 million metric tons of beef and veal were exported in 2015 at a value of $6.3 billion. Hong Kong, Japan and South Korea were our largest export markets in December. Year-over-year beef import volumes were down 34 percent at 66 thousand MT, and were down 42 percent in value to $373 million. Compared to November, beef imports were down 2 percent in volume and 6 percent in value. Total beef and veal imports for 2015 were up 14 percent over the 2014 volume at 1.2 million metric tons and up 18 percent in value at $6.9 billion.

PORK

Production

December pork production, at 2.21 billion pounds, was up 6 percent from November and up 4 percent from 2014. Hog slaughter totaled 10.36 million head, up 6 percent monthly and 5 percent higher year-over-year. The average live weight was down 1 pound from last year, at 285 pounds. Accumulated pork production for the year to date was up 8 percent from 2014. Total pork production for 2015 was 7 percent greater than in 2014.

The total inventory of frozen pork was down 3 percent from the end of November, but up 8 percent from last year. Picnic supplies were 3 percent lower than the preceding month, and 21 percent higher than in 2014. Total hams in cold storage were down 38 percent month over month, but were up 2 percent yearly. Compared to November, total loin stocks were 5 percent higher, rib stocks were 15 percent higher, and inventories of butts were 21 percent lower. On a year-over-year basis, loins and ribs were up 22 and 55 percent, respectively, while butts were down 24 percent. Pork trimmings in cold storage were up 15 percent on a monthly basis, and down 16 percent yearly. Stocks of pork bellies were up 30 percent from last month and up 13 percent from last year.

Price

The negotiated carcass price for barrows and gilts saw a fairly steady increase through January from $48 to $55 per cwt, 13 percent below the 2015 price. The pork cutout value rose $7 per cwt to $76 per cwt, 10 percent below the 2015 value. Trimmed, bone-in hams, 23-27 pounds, gained $8 by the end of January to $59 per cwt, 10 percent below the price in 2015. Picnic meat combos, cushion out, gained $8 through January to close at $65 per cwt, 5 percent below last year's price. Pork trim, 72 percent lean, increased $20 to $55 per cwt, 10 percent below 2015. Pork belly primals rose $21 to $123 per cwt, 23 percent above the 2015 level.

International Trade

December pork exports (including variety meats) were up 3 percent from 2014 at 184 thousand MT while the value was down 14 percent to $449 million. Pork export volume and value were both up 3 percent from November 2015. Total export volume for 2015 was 2 percent below the 2014 level at nearly 2.1 million metric tons, and the value was down 17 percent at $5.4 billion. The largest overseas markets for U.S. pork were Japan, Mexico and Canada. Compared to 2014, December pork imports were down 2 percent in volume to 46 thousand MT, and were down 9 percent in value to $146 million. The volume of pork imports increased 3 percent from November, and the value rose 2 percent. Total pork imports in 2015 were up 10 percent in volume at 511 thousand metric tons, but down 8 percent in value to $1.6 billion. Canada, Poland and Denmark were the largest importers in December.

LAMB

Production

Commercial lamb and mutton production in December was 13.2 million pounds, 12 percent higher than the month before (with 2 additional slaughter days), but 1 percent lower than the year before. Sheep slaughter was up 10 percent on a monthly basis, at 199,600 head, slightly higher than in 2014. The average live weight was 132 pounds, down 2 pounds from last December. Lamb and mutton production for all of 2015 was down 3 percent from the 2014 production level. Cold storage of lamb and mutton in December was down 7 percent from November and was up 22 percent from December 2014.

Price

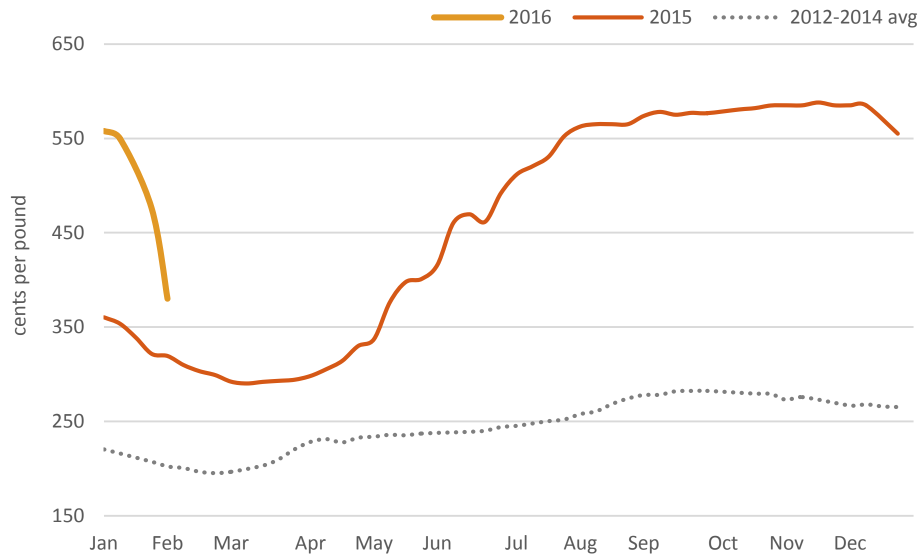
Negotiated live slaughter lamb prices closed the month of January down $5 at $139 per cwt, 6 percent below the 2015 price. The lamb cutout was somewhat variable, but ended the month down $4 to $359 per cwt, 5 percent below the 2015 price. Leg of lamb, trotter off prices lost $7 to $356 per cwt, 1 percent below the 2015 price. Boneless lamb shoulder prices continued to be variable through January, and again ended down, by $4 to $547 per cwt, 1 percent below last year's price.

International Trade

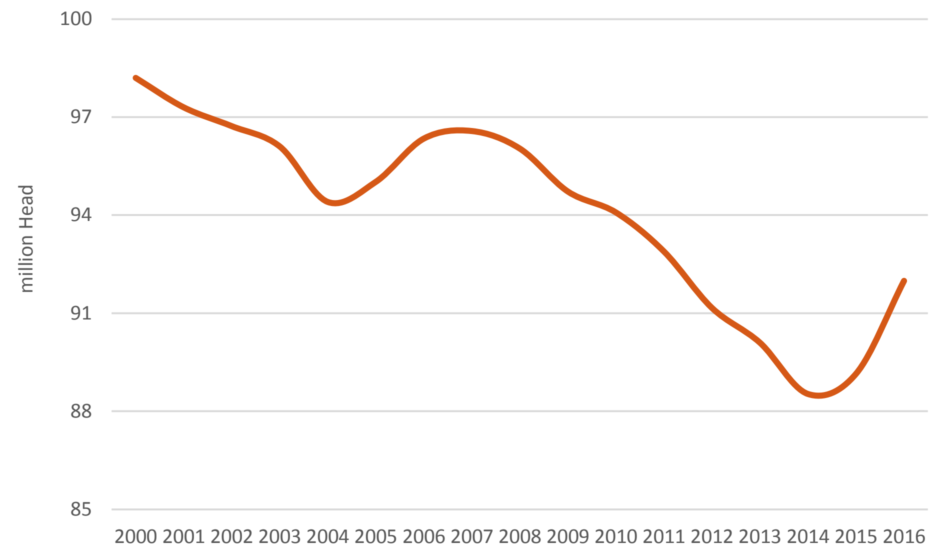
Lamb exports were down 4 percent from December 2014 levels to 130 metric tons, and were down 3 percent in value to $939,000. Compared to November, export volume was down 13 percent but the value was 14 percent higher. Compared to 2014, total yearly lamb exports were down 35 percent in volume, to 1.8 thousand metric tons, and 36 percent in value to $10.6 million. Mexico, Canada and The Leeward-Windward Islands were the largest export markets of lamb and mutton. U.S. lamb imports in December were up 10 percent over 2014 at 9,300 MT, with the value of imports down 1 percent to $70 million. On a monthly basis, the import volume was 35 percent higher and the value of lamb imports rose 32 percent. Total 2015 lamb imports were up 9 percent in volume to 89 thousand metric tons, and down 1 percent in value compared to 2014 at $677 million. Australia and New Zealand were the largest importers.

Questions, comments, or suggestions for articles? Contact Lawrence.Haller@ams.usda.gov or Sherry.Wise@ams.usda.gov.

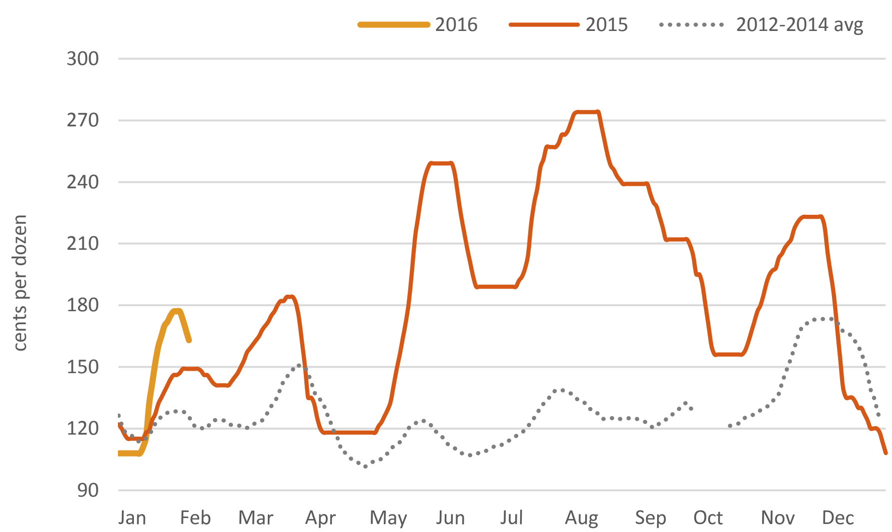
Boneless/Skinless Fresh Tom Turkey Breast



Cattle Inventory, All Cattle & Calves, January 1, 2016



New York Shell Egg Price (Grade A large - wholesale)



Cattle Inventory, Beef Cows & Calves, January 1, 2016