



**NATIONAL
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AG UPDATE

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Contents of This Issue

- ▶Cattle on Feed
- ▶Livestock Slaughter
- ▶Milk Production - March
- ▶Milk Production - Jan - March
 - ▶Potato Stocks
 - ▶Onions - 2006 Intentions
 - ▶Turkeys
 - ▶Cold Storage

CATTLE ON FEED APRIL 1, 2006

The number of cattle and calves on feed for the slaughter market in Colorado feedlots with a capacity of 1,000 head or larger was estimated at 1,070,000 head as of April 1, 2006. The latest inventory was down 2 percent from March 1, 2006, but up 5 percent from the 1,020,000 on feed on April 1, 2005. Cattle feeders with 1,000 head or larger capacity marketed an estimated 165,000 head of fed cattle during March 2006. This was no change from the previous month's marketings but down 6 percent from March 2005 marketings. An estimated 155,000 cattle and calves were placed on feed during March, 6 percent below a year ago but 3 percent above February 2006 placements. Of the number placed in March, 16 percent weighed less than 600 pounds, 19 percent weighed from 600 to 699 pounds, 39 percent weighed from 700 to 799 pounds, and 26 percent weighed 800 pounds and greater. Other disappearance for March, at 10,000 head, was 5,000 above the previous month but no change from March 2005.

Cattle and calves on feed for slaughter market in the United States for feedlots with capacity of 1,000 or more head totaled 11.8 million head on April 1, 2006. The inventory was 9 percent above April 1, 2005 and 10 percent above April 1, 2004. This is the highest April 1 inventory since the series began in 1996. The inventory included 7.74 million steers and steer calves, up 11 percent from the previous year. This group accounted for 66 percent of the total inventory. Heifers and heifer calves accounted for 4.0 million head, up 5 percent from 2005. Placements in feedlots during March totaled 1.84 million, 5 percent above 2005 and 1 percent above 2004. Net placements were 1.75 million. During March, placements of cattle and calves weighing less than 600 pounds were 380,000, 600-699 pounds were 342,000, 700-799 pounds were 565,000, and 800 pounds and greater were 550,000.

Marketings of fed cattle during March totaled 1.96 million, down slightly from 2005 and slightly below 2004. Other disappearance totaled 90,000 during March, 32 percent above 2005 and 34 percent above 2004.

Cattle on Feed, 1,000+ Feedlots, Colorado and United States, April 1, 2005-2006

Item	Colorado		United States	
	2005	2006	2005	2006
	1,000 head			
On Feed March 1	1,040	1,090	11,154	12,023
Placements During Mar.	165	155	1,750	1,837
< 600 pounds	15	25	299	380
600 - 699 pounds	35	30	320	342
700 - 799 pounds	65	60	609	565
800 plus pounds	50	40	522	550
Marketings During Mar.	175	165	1,963	1,958
Other Disap. During Mar.	10	10	68	90
On Feed April 1	1,020	1,070	10,873	11,812
Steers & Steer Calves	620	740	6,992	7,740
Heifers & Heifer Calves	390	320	3,803	3,997
Cows & Bulls	10	10	78	75

LIVESTOCK SLAUGHTER MARCH 2006

Commercial livestock slaughter in **Colorado** during March 2006 totaled 150.9 million pounds, 6 percent above the same month a year earlier and 9 percent above February 2006. Beef slaughter increased 4 percent from March 2005 to 173,200 head, and the average live weight of 1,301 pounds was 48 pounds heavier than a year ago. Hog slaughter was increased 11 percent to 1,000 head, but the average live weight decreased 12 pounds to 274. Accumulated red meat production for the first three months of 2006 totaled 437.7 million pounds, 8 percent below the 407.0 million pounds produced during the comparable period a year ago.

Commercial red meat production for the United States totaled 4.11 billion pounds in March, up 6 percent from the 3.88 billion pounds produced in March 2005. **Beef production**, at 2.21 billion pounds, was 8 percent above the previous year. Cattle slaughter totaled 2.85 million head, up 5 percent from March 2005. The average live weight was up 36 pounds from the previous year, at 1,273 pounds.

Veal production totaled 13.3 million pounds, slightly above March a year ago. Calf slaughter totaled 59,200 head, down 13 percent from March 2005. The average live weight was 42 pounds above last year, at 370 pounds.

Pork production totaled 1.87 billion pounds, up 4 percent from the previous year. Hog kill totaled 9.23 million head, 3 percent above March 2005. The average live weight was 1 pound above the previous year, at 272 pounds.

Lamb and mutton production, at 18.2 million pounds, was down 6 percent from March 2005. Sheep slaughter totaled 249,700 head, 11 percent below last year. The average live weight was 145 pounds, up 6 pounds from March a year ago.

January to March 2006 commercial red meat production was 11.5 billion pounds, up 5 percent from 2005. Accumulated beef production was up 6 percent from last year, veal was down 3 percent, pork was up 4 percent from last year, and lamb and mutton production was up slightly.

**Red Meat Production
Colorado and United States**

Area and Specie	Mar. 2005	Feb. 2006	Mar. 2006	January-March	
				2005	2006
	Million Pounds				
Colorado:	141.9	137.9	150.9	407.0	437.7
United States:	3,878	3,484	4,112	10,950	11,486
Beef	2,042	1,825	2,209	5,725	6,078
Veal	13.3	11.7	13.3	38.6	37.5
Pork	1,804	1,633	1,871	5,138	5,321
Lamb & Mutton .	19.5	14.7	18.2	49.0	49.1

**MILK PRODUCTION
MARCH 2006 - 23 STATES**

Colorado dairy herds produced 212 million pounds of milk during March, up 16 million pounds from the same period a year earlier. The average number of cows was 107,000, up 5 percent from the previous year. Production per cow averaged 1,980 pounds for March, 3 percent above the 1,925 produced a year ago.

Milk production in the 23 major States during March totaled 14.6 billion pounds, up 5.5 percent from March 2005. February revised production, at 13.0 billion pounds, was up 5.9 percent from February 2005. The February revision represented a decrease of 7 million pounds from last month's preliminary production estimate. **Production per cow** in the 23 major States averaged 1,773 pounds for March, 66 pounds above March 2005. **The number of milk cows** on farms in the 23 major States was 8.22 million head, 124,000 head more than March 2005, and 17,000 head more than February 2006.

Milk Cows and Milk Production, Colorado and 23 States

Item	March 2005	Feb. 2006	March 2006
Colorado			
Milk Cows (1,000 head) 1/	102	106	107
Milk Per Cow (lbs.) 2/	1,925	1,795	1,980
Production (mil. lbs.) 2/	196	172	212
23 States			
Milk Cows (1,000 head) 1/	8,099	8,206	8,223
Milk Per Cow (lbs.) 2/	1,707	1,587	1,773
Production (mil. lbs.) 2/	13,825	13,022	14,579

1/ Average number during year, excludes heifers not yet fresh.

2/ Excludes milk sucked by calves.

**MILK PRODUCTION
JANUARY - MARCH 2005 - 06**

Colorado dairy herds produced 607 million pounds of milk during the first three months of 2006, up 53 million pounds from the same period a year earlier. The average number of cows for the first quarter was 106,000, up 5 percent from the first quarter average the previous year.

Milk production in the U.S. during the January - March quarter totaled 45.5 billion pounds, up 5.0 percent from the January - March quarter last year. The average number of milk cows in the U.S. during the quarter was 9.09 million head, 91,000 head more than the same period last year.

**Milk Production
January - March, 2005-2006**

Item	Unit	2005	2006
Colorado:			
Milk Cows 1/	000 head	101	106
Production 2/	mil. lbs.	554	607
United States:			
Milk Cows 1/	000 head	9,002	9,093
Production 2/	mil. lbs.	43,350	45,521

1/ Includes dry cows. Excludes heifers not yet fresh.

2/ Excludes milk sucked by calves.

**POTATO STOCKS
APRIL 1, 2006**

Colorado growers and commercial storage facilities in the San Luis Valley had 7.8 million cwt of potatoes on hand as of April 1, 2006, down 13 percent from the 9.0 million cwt on hand one year earlier. The latest stocks represented 35

percent of the 22.29 million cwt produced in 2005. Sales of Colorado's fall potatoes for table stock accounted for 69 percent of the total production during the 2000-2004 period. The remaining 31 percent of the production is utilized for seed, processing, and home use or is lost through shrinkage.

The **13 Major Potato States** held 114 million cwt of potatoes in storage April 1, 2006, down 11 percent from last year and 9 percent below April 1, 2004, for comparable States. Potatoes in storage account for 31 percent of the 2005 fall storage States' production, down 1 percentage point from last year.

Disappearance of 259 million cwt from the start of harvest to April 1, is down 5 percent from last year for comparable States. Shrink and loss, at 21.6 million cwt, is down 20 percent from last year for comparable States.

Processors have used 133 million cwt of 2005 crop potatoes so far this season, down 2 percent from a year ago and 3 percent below 2 years ago. Idaho and Malheur County, Oregon, total processing decreased 2 percent from a year ago and Washington and the rest of Oregon total processing dropped 3 percent from last season. Dehydrating usage accounts for 27.2 million cwt of the total processing, down 9 percent from last year and 10 percent below the same date in 2004.

Western States held 85.7 million cwt of potatoes in storage on April 1, down 7 percent from last year. Idaho's potato stocks are down 18 percent from last year, Colorado's potato sheds held 13 percent less than last year, Montana's stocks dropped 11 percent from last season, and stocks in California decreased 22 percent from 2005. Washington's potato stocks are up 11 percent from last year and Oregon's stocks increased 37 percent from last season.

Central States accounted for 20.9 million cwt of potato stocks on April 1, down 27 percent from last year for comparable States. North Dakota's potato stocks decreased 53 percent from last year and Minnesota's stocks are down 31 percent from 2005. Michigan and Wisconsin potato stocks are unchanged from the same date in 2005.

Eastern States stored 7.30 million cwt of potatoes on April 1, down 6 percent from last year for comparable States. Maine's potato sheds held 9 percent less than last year, while New York's potato stocks increased 67 percent from a year ago.

ONIONS

2006 CROPS

Colorado producers intend to plant 10,500 acres of summer storage onions in 2006. If realized, this would be 500 acres above last year. Planting began behind schedule this season, but has now progressed closer to normal.

Total planted onion acreage for all seasons in 2006 is forecast at 171,100 acres, up 1 percent from last year. Spring onions will be harvested from 37,900 acres in 2006, up 7 percent from 2005. Georgia and Texas combined production is forecast at 8.09 million cwt, 18 percent above last year. Summer non-storage onion planted acreage, at 20,500 acres, is virtually unchanged from a year ago. Total summer onion acreage, at 130,900 acres, is up 1 percent from the previous year.

Spring Onions: Producers intend to harvest 37,900 acres, down 7 percent from last year. In California, planting of spring onions began in most areas by early November under good conditions. Above normal temperatures stimulated development and the crop is anticipated to be early in some areas. Other locations reported mild temperatures and good planting conditions. Onion fields show good stands in many areas in response to recent rains. In Georgia, rainfall during the winter months has been near normal. Heading into spring the State has adequate moisture levels.

Summer Non-Storage Onions: Non-storage planted area is 20,500 acres, up less than 1 percent from last year. The California summer onion crop was planted with some delays due to rain. Recent mild temperatures and timely rainfall have helped the crop to progress. Good growing conditions are reported. Planting in Nevada normally begins around mid-March, but rain and snow has halted fieldwork. Planting is expected to begin as soon as fields dry. Irrigation water supply is very good. In New Mexico, weather conditions have been favorable. In Texas, dry weather has resulted in an increase in irrigation. Disease and pest problems are minimal.

Summer Storage Onions: Storage planted acreage is 110,400 acres, up 1 percent from 2005. California acreage, which is primarily dehydrated or otherwise processed, is forecast at 29,900 acres, up 3 percent from 2005. The California storage onion crop was planted with some rain delays but no major problems are reported. Mild temperatures in addition to recent rains have helped crop development. Good growing conditions have been reported. In Colorado, above average mountain snow pack serving the northern and west slope growing areas should help meet irrigation needs this spring and summer.

Water availability in the southern growing areas is more uncertain. Planting started on schedule and progress is slightly ahead of the usual pace. In Idaho, irrigation supplies for the State are expected to be above average. In Oregon, Iris yellow spot virus caused some damage to last years crop and though growers are optimistic about this years crop, they continue to worry about damage from this virus.

Onions for Fresh Market 2004-2006 Crops

Crop	Area Planted		
	2004	2005	2006
	Acres		
Spring 1/	39,900	40,000	40,200
Summer: 1/			
Non-Storage			
CA.....	8,800	9,100	9,200
NV.....	3,400	2,400	2,400
NM.....	7,300	6,500	6,500
TX.....	2,900	1,000	1,000
WA.....	1,500	1,400	1,400
Total.....	23,900	20,400	24,500
Storage			
CA 2/.....	30,900	28,900	29,900
CO	12,500	10,000	10,500
ID	11,000	9,700	9,900
MI	3,700	3,800	3,900
NY.....	13,500	13,800	13,400
OR:			
Malheur.....	12,500	11,400	11,800
Other	7,400	7,700	7,900
UT.....	1,600	3/	3/
WA.....	20,000	19,500	19,000
WI.....	2,000	2,000	2,000
Other states 4/.....	700	2,020	2,100
Total	115,800	108,820	110,400
Total Summer.....	139,700	129,220	130,900
U.S.	179,600	169,220	171,100

1/ Primarily fresh market.

2/ Primarily dehydrated and other processing.

3/ Data not published to avoid disclosure of individual operations.

4/ 2004 MN and OH, 2005-06 OH and UT.

TURKEYS

APRIL 1, 2006

Turkey eggs in incubators on April 1, 2006, in the United States totaled 29.9 million, up 3 percent from April 1 a year ago. Eggs in incubators were down slightly from the March 1, 2006 total of 29.9 million eggs. Regional changes from the previous year were: East North Central up 2 percent, West North Central down slightly, North and South Atlantic up 12 percent, and South Central and West combined, down 6 percent.

The 24.7 million poultts placed during March 2006 in the United States were up 6 percent from the number placed during the same month a year ago. Placements were also up 6 percent from February 2006. Regional changes from the previous year were: East North Central up 9 percent, West North Central up 2 percent, North and South Atlantic up 17 percent, and South Central and West were down 12 percent.

COLD STORAGE

MARCH 31, 2005

Frozen food stocks in refrigerated warehouses on March 31, 2006 were greater than year earlier levels for chicken, butter, beef, eggs, and cheese. Butter stocks were up 14 percent from last month and up 27 percent from a year ago.

Total red meat supplies in freezers were down 3 percent from last month, but up 1 percent from last year. Frozen pork supplies were down 5 percent from last month and down 8 percent from the previous year. Stocks of pork bellies were up 5 percent from last month, but down 17 percent from last year.

Total frozen poultry supplies on March 31, 2006 were up slightly from the previous month and up 15 percent from a year ago.

Stocks in Storage, United States

Commodity	Mar. 31, 2005	Feb. 29, 2006	Mar. 31, 2006
	1,000 Pounds		
Butter	132,436	148,516	168,843
Cheese, total natural	749,228	770,990	808,766
Eggs, frozen	18,548	24,388	20,840
Poultry, total frozen	1,088,879	1,246,368	1,249,988
Chicken.....	673,470	923,913	867,479
Turkey.....	414,159	317,854	374,579
Fruits, frozen.....	748,834	872,259	753,120
Fruit Juices, frozen	1,896,430	1,363,499	1,321,389
Vegetables, total frozen	1,767,745	1,869,909	1,709,198
Potatoes, total frozen	1,093,666	1,147,080	1,159,285
Meats, total red	931,583	973,737	941,266
Beef, total frozen	372,323	428,296	422,995
Pork, total frozen	543,778	525,086	499,425

Data for this report are collected from public and private refrigerated warehouses storing commodities for 30 days or more. Food stocks are excluded for places where entire inventories are turned over more than once a month.

UPCOMING REPORTS

Colorado and U.S. data from most of the following reports will appear in subsequent issues of AG UPDATE. However, those who have an immediate need for the data may call this office after 1:15 P.M. on the day of release - toll free 1-800-392-3202. The complete USDA report is also available on the

Worldwide Web at: <http://www.usda.gov/nass/>

- Apr. 21 - Chickens and Eggs
- Apr. 26 - Floriculture Crops
- Apr. 27 - Dairy Products - Annual
- Apr. 27 - Meat Animals - Prod, Disp, Income
- Apr. 27 - Poultry Production and Value
- Apr. 28 - Agricultural Prices
- May 12 - Crop Production
- May 16 - Potato Stocks
- May 17 - Milk Production
- May 19 - Cattle on Feed
- May 19 - Livestock Slaughter

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