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EGGS

Production

April table egg production totaled 593 million dozen, down 1 percent from April 2014. On May 1, the number of birds in the table egg flock was 296 million, down 3 percent compared to a year earlier. Egg-type hatching egg production was 87 million eggs, up 9 percent from a year ago. There were 1.0 billion broiler-type hatching eggs produced in April, up 5 percent from last year. The broiler-type laying flock on May 1 was 55.1 million hens, up 3 percent from 2014. Shell eggs broken totaled 182 million dozen during April 2014, down 2 percent from April a year ago, and 1 percent above the 181 million broken in March.

Price

Table egg prices more than doubled in May as the effects of flock losses from Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) outbreak hit home. The price of one dozen Grade A large eggs in the New York wholesale market climbed 111 percent and were 249 cents/dozen at the end of May. The price of breaking stock, hit hardest by HPAI, more than tripled, rising 228 percent during May and closed the month at 236 cents/dozen, which is double the previous all-time high price for breaking stock.

International Trade

The U.S. exported 16.5 million dozen shell eggs with a value of $19.7 million in April. This was up 1 percent in volume but down 7 percent in value compared to March, and up 20 percent in volume and 26 percent in value compared to April 2014. Exports of egg products in April totaled $14 million, 13 percent lower than in March and 3 percent lower than last April. For the first four months of the year, shell egg exports were up 29 percent in volume and 36 percent in value compared to 2014, and egg product exports were down 3 percent. In April, the five largest export markets for eggs and egg products were Mexico, Canada, Japan, Hong Kong, and Indonesia.

LAMB

Production

Lamb and mutton production, at 13.6 million pounds, fell 5 percent from March and 10 percent from April 2014. Sheep slaughter totaled 198,200 head, 6 percent below last month and 11 percent below last year. The average live weight was 138 pounds, up 1 pound from last April. Accumulated lamb and mutton production for the year so far was down 2 percent. Total lamb inventories as of April 30 were up 7 percent for the month and 38 percent above April 2014.

Price

Negotiated live slaughter lamb prices jumped $12 in May, but softened to $148 per cwt, 2 percent above the 2014 price but 5 percent below the 2011-2013 average. The lamb cutout increased $5 at the start of the month but lost $5 gaining only $1 for the month at $356 per cwt, 1 percent below 2014's level but 4 percent above the historical average. Leg of lamb, trotter off prices gained back $10 of the previous month's losses, ending at $346 per cwt, 5 percent below 2014 and 10 percent below the 2011-2013 average. Boneless lamb shoulder prices increased less than $1, closing the month at $551 per cwt, 11 percent above the 2014 price, and 27 percent above the historical average.

International Trade

Lamb exports fell 63 percent from 2014 levels to 90 metric tons, and were down 51 percent in value to $679,000. On a monthly basis, volume was down 47 percent and the export value was 44 percent lower. Canada, the Leeward Islands and Mexico were the largest export markets of lamb and mutton in April. U.S. imports of lamb fell 54 percent from last year to 8.5 thousand MT, with Easter coming earlier in the year. The value of imports dropped 44 percent to $61 million. The volume and value of lamb imports declined by 14 and 24 percent, respectively, from March levels. Australia, New Zealand and Chile were the largest importers.

CHICKEN

Production

Total U.S. broiler production In April totaled 3.3 billion pounds. Average daily production was 1 percent below March production, but 4 percent above April 2014 levels. The year-over-year increase was split about evenly between more birds processed and increases in average weight. Broiler production will likely continue well above last year's levels; eggs set for the four weeks ending May 30 were up 2 percent compared to the same period last year and chicks placed were up 3 percent.

Total chicken products in cold storage on April 30 were 2 percent above the end of March and 31 percent above the end of April 2014. Broiler products overall were up a little less than 1 percent compared to March and 38 percent above last April. Whole broiler inventories rose 16 percent month-over-month and 104 year-over-year. White meat holdings fell 1 percent during April, but were 38 percent above last year. Dark meat holdings were unchanged for the month and were 57 percent above year-prior amounts. Leg quarter inventories fell 4 percent during April, but were 80 percent above April 2014 levels.

Price

Most broiler prices ended May at or below their levels at the end of April. The National composite price for whole broilers was 107-108 cents/lb. for most of May, but fell to 105 cents/lb. the last week of the month. Weekly boneless/skinless (B/S) breast prices began and ended the month at 159 cents/lb., but rose as high as 167 cents/lb. during May. Leg quarter prices dropped 9 percent through May, ending at 24 cents/lb., their lowest value since December 2006. B/S thigh meat traded steadily at 110 cents/lb. all month. Wings rose a nickel during May, and were 178 cents/lb. at month's end.

International Trade

April chicken exports totaled 260 thousand metric tons, valued at $282 million. April exports were even with April 2014 quantities, but 13 percent lower in value, and, compared to March, down 5 percent in volume and 7 percent in value. For the first four months of 2015, exports were down 8 percent in volume and 13 percent in value compared to 2014. The five largest destinations for U.S. chicken exports in April were Mexico, Canada, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Cuba.

BEEF/VEAL

Production

Beef production in April was down slightly from March, at 1.93 billion pounds, and was 6 percent below the previous year. Cattle slaughter fell marginally from the month before, to 2.38 million head, down 8 percent from April 2014. The average live weight was up 32 pounds from April 2014, at 1,338 pounds. Veal production was down 4 percent from last month and 21 percent below last year, at 6.6 million pounds. The number of calves slaughtered was 35,400 head, down 12 percent on a monthly basis and 27 percent yearly. The average live weight was 24 pounds above last year, at 318 pounds. Beef production for the year to date was down 4 percent from last year and veal was down 23 percent.

Total holdings of beef in cold storage on April 30 fell 1 percent from March 31, but were 18 percent higher than April 2014. The year-over-year increase was driven by inventories of boneless beef, which were up 21 percent; boneless holdings fell 1 percent compared to the end of March. Inventories of beef cuts fell 3 percent month-over-month and 6 percent year-over-year. Veal holdings were down 18 percent compared to March, but up 109 percent compared to April 2014.

Price

FOB Live cattle prices remained mostly flat through the month, returning to $159 per cwt, 17 percent above the 2014 price and 24 percent above the 2011-2013 average. The cutout value saw a gain up to $263 per cwt in the latter part of May, but ended back down at $259, 11 percent higher than last year and 33 percent above the historical average. 90 percent lean boneless beef prices also remained flat through the month around $297 per cwt, 22 and 43 percent above the 2014 and the 2011-2013 average, respectively. However, beef trim, 50 percent lean slid downward from $104 to $94 per cwt, 25 percent lower than in 2014 and 9 percent higher than the 2011-2013 average. Packer-owned veal carcasses remained relatively steady at $457 per cwt while non-packer owned veal carcasses increased $4 to $453 per cwt. The veal cutout was unchanged at $590 per cwt, 17 percent above last year and 36 percent over the 2011-2013 average.

International Trade

Compared to 2014, April 2015 beef/veal exports fell 7 percent to 92,000 MT while the export value increased 3 percent to $555 million. This volume is up 6 percent and the value is up 5 percent from March. Japan, Hong Kong and South Korea were our largest export markets in April. Year-over-year beef import volumes were 27 percent higher at 120,000 MT, and were up 45 percent in value to $706 million. Compared to March, beef imports were up 7 percent in volume and 3 percent in value.

PORK

Production

While pork production was down 2 percent from March, it was up 8 percent from last year to 2.07 billion pounds. Hog slaughter was also 2 percent lower than in March, but was up 9 percent from April 2014 at 9.68 million head. Average live hog weight was down 3 pounds from last year to 284 pounds. Accumulated pork production for the year to date was 7 percent higher than in 2014. Total pork in cold storage at the end of April rose 4 percent from March and was 20 percent above April 2014 levels. Ham inventories climbed sharply; supplies were 38 percent above March and 66 percent above year-prior levels. Rib holdings were relatively unchanged and were 1 percent lower than March and 2 percent lower than 2014. Belly inventories rose 3 percent month-over-month, but were 16 percent below 2014 levels.

Price

The negotiated carcass price for barrows and gilts gained through the month, up $10 to $80 per cwt, but ended the month down slightly at $78 per cwt, 27 percent lower than 2014 and 11 percent below the 2011-2013 average. After bottoming out for the year in early April, the pork cutout continued to gain, up $14 to $86 per cwt, though still 25 percent below 2014 and 2 percent lower than the 2011-2013 average. Trimmed, bone-in hams, 23-27 pounds, rose $11 in May to $68 per cwt, 37 percent below the 2014 value but 1 percent above the historical average. Picnic meat combos, cushion out, increased $16 to $89 per cwt, 35 percent below the 2014 price, but 5 percent above the 2011-2013 average. Pork trim, 72 percent lean, continued its previous gains through mid-May to $71 per cwt, but weakened to $67 per cwt by the end of the month, 43 percent below the 2014 price and 4 percent below the 2011-2013 average. Pork belly primals began their seasonal increase, up $20 to $87 per cwt, though still 39 percent lower than in 2014 and 31 percent below the 2011-2013 average.

International Trade

April 2015 pork exports (including variety meats) rose 4 percent over last year to 196 thousand MT while the value fell 15 percent to $498 million. Pork export volume and value were up 5 and 4 percent, respectively, from March. The largest overseas markets for U.S. pork were Japan, Mexico and Canada. Compared to 2014, pork imports in April were 13 percent higher in volume to 40 thousand MT, but were down 23 percent in value to $121 million. Pork imports fell on a monthly basis by 13 percent in volume and 14 percent in value. Canada, Denmark and Poland were the largest importers.

TURKEY

Production

Turkey production in the U.S. for April totaled 494 million pounds. Average daily production was 1 percent below March but 5 percent above April 2014. The month-over-month decline may be attributable to flock losses due to Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), but the HPAI outbreaks only started in earnest the last third of April. Average live weight dropped 1.5 pounds between March and April, which may indicate that processors are slaughtering birds earlier to avoid the risk of losing nearly finished birds to HPAI. Production cuts in the future are likely. Poults placed during April were down 2 percent compared to 2014 and eggs in incubators on May 1 were down 7 percent compared to last May, perhaps reflecting the loss of some breeding flocks. Total holdings of turkey items in cold storage on April 30 were 5 percent above April 2014. Whole toms were 11 percent above year-prior levels while whole hens were up 13 percent. White meat inventories were 2 percent above 2014 levels, while dark meat inventories were up 81 percent.

Price

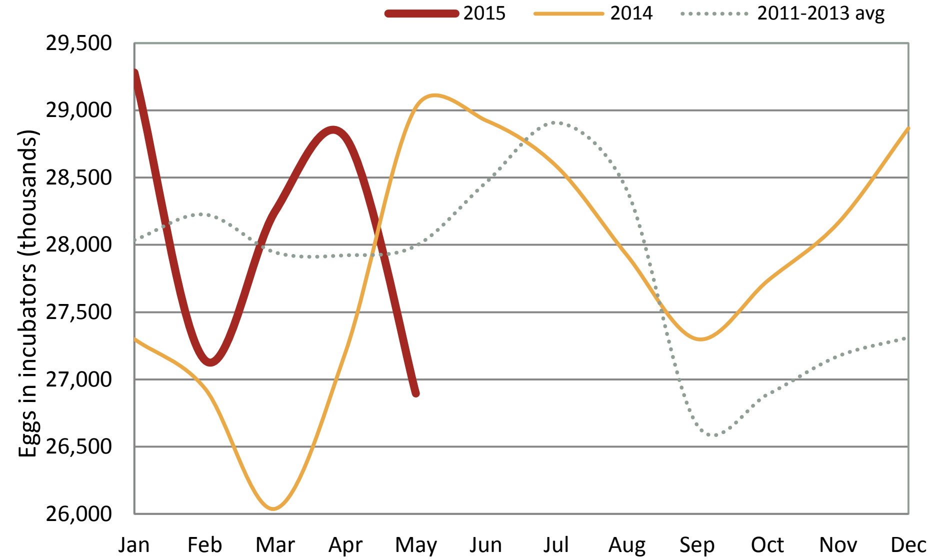
With HPAI in the picture, turkey price trends diverged, depending on the cut. Whole turkey prices rose, with the frozen whole hen price rising 6 percent during May compared to an average 2011 – 2013 increase for May of 2 percent, and ended the month at 112 cents/lb.. Boneless/skinless (B/S) breast meat rose 22 percent during May to 401 cents/lb. as processors struggled to find breast meat to fill deli orders. On the other hand, dark meat prices were flat as many of our export markets, which buy primarily turkey meat, implemented partial or total bans of U.S. turkey products. B/S thigh meat was unchanged at 137 cents/lb. and tom drumsticks were up less than a penny at 61 cents/lb.

International Trade

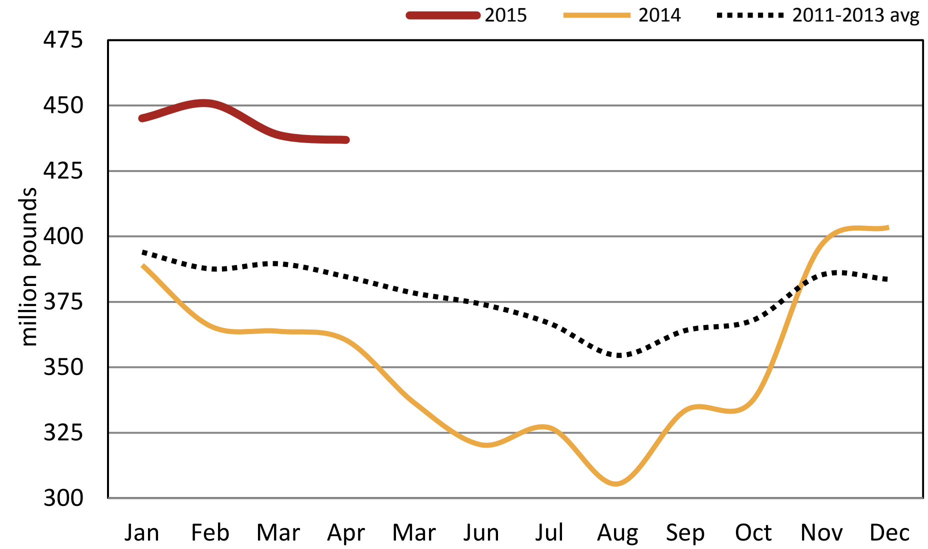
Turkey exports fell sharply in April. With a volume of 19 thousand metric tons valued at $48 million, exports were down 22 percent in volume and 7 percent in value compared to March and down 27 percent in volume and 14 percent in value compared to April 2014. For the first four months of the year, exports were down 11 percent in volume and 8 percent in value compared to 2014. The five top destinations for turkey exports were Mexico, Canada, Japan, Hong Kong, and South Korea.

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

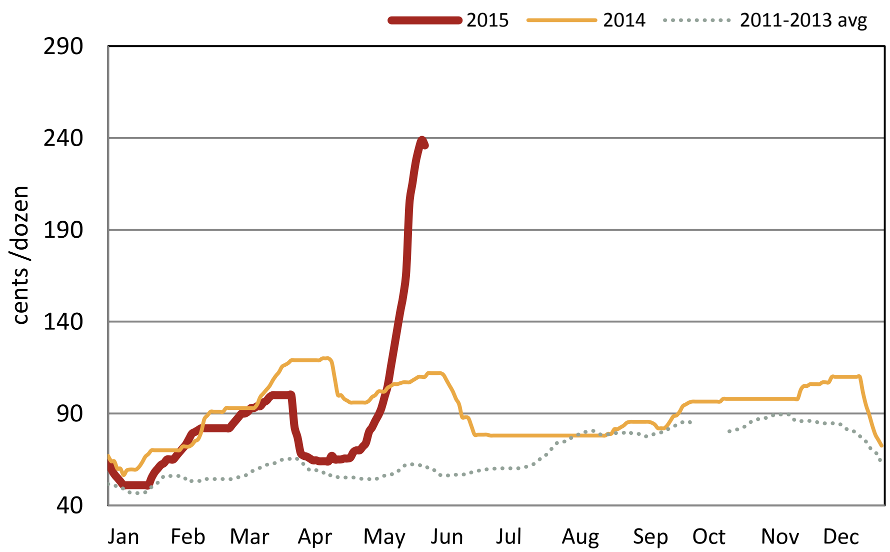
Turkey Eggs in Incubators



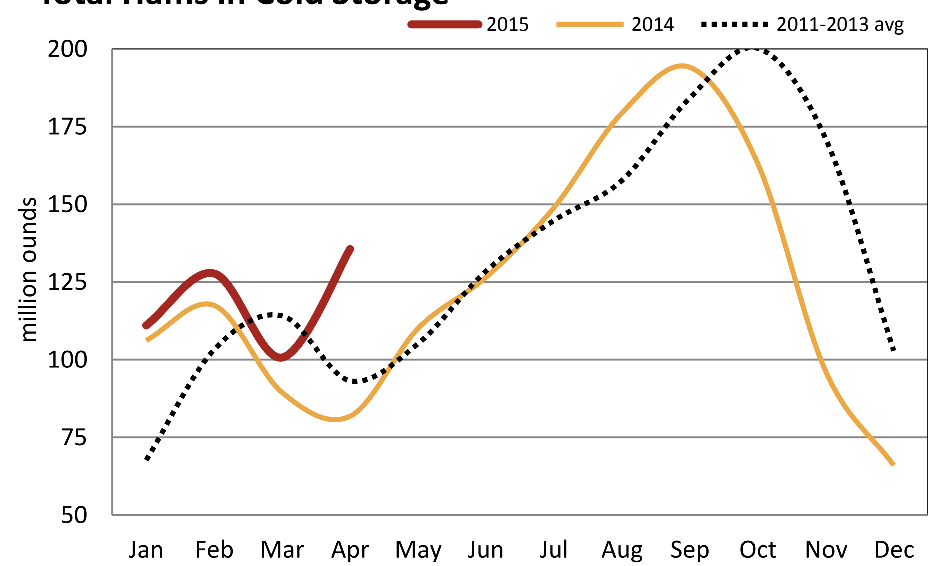
Boneless Beef in Cold Storage



Central States Breaking Stock



Total Hams in Cold Storage



JuneTeenth

Pork Spareribs

In 2014, the Juneteenth weekend was the fifth most active marketing period for spareribs,

47,300,000

pounds were marketed.

Fried Catfish

Mississippi leads the nation in farm-raised catfish production with

97,900,000

catfish in 2014.

Sweet Corn

California and Florida lead the nation in the production of fresh market Sweet Corn.

50,300,000

pounds marketed in 2014 on Juneteenth

Fried Green Tomatoes

California and Florida lead the nation in the production of fresh market Tomatoes.

1,941,500,000

combined pounds in 2014

Sweet Potato Pie

NORTH CAROLINA Leads the Nation in sweet potato production with

1,584,000,000

pounds in 2014 of which 15,200,000 were marketed on Juneteenth.

Juneteenth, or June 19, 1865, marks the date when many of the slaves of Galveston, TX, first learned that they had been freed in 1863. As word spread, so did celebrations with dancing, singing, and eating. Since the start, traditional foods, usually served outdoors in an all-day meal, have been a central focus of Juneteenth celebrations that continues today.

While often overshadowed by the season's other big grilling holidays (Memorial, Father's, and Independence Days), Juneteenth stands out as it blends elements of each into a uniquely African American celebration.

These are some celebration favorites!

"As the "4th of July", 1776, American Independence Day, comes around again, let us not forget that the ancestors of Americans of African descent were trapped in the tyranny of slavery. Juneteenth, the "19th of June", 1865, African-American Independence Day, America's 2nd Independence Day, recognizing the end of enslavement, did not occur until over 88 years after the first "4th of July".

- Frederick Douglass, July 5, 1852

Source: USDA AMS Agricultural Analytics Division and AMS Civil Rights Program