



## EGGS

### Production

February table egg production totaled 591 million dozen, unchanged from February 2017. On March 1, the number of birds in the table egg flock was 324 million, up 2 percent compared to a year earlier. Egg-type hatching egg production was 73.7 million eggs, unchanged from a year ago. There were 972 million broiler-type hatching eggs produced in February, up 2 percent from last year. The broiler-type laying flock on March 1 was 57.8 million hens, 4 percent above March 2017. Shell eggs broken totaled 178 million dozen during February, down 4 percent from February a year ago down 9 percent from the 194 million broken in January. Pullets for all egg-types added to flocks in February were down 3 percent year-over-year.

### Price

Egg prices usually rise in the weeks before Easter, but this year's increases were far greater than normal. The price of one dozen Large Grade A white eggs in the New York wholesale market, which began rising in mid-February, rose to 281 cents/dozen, surpassing the previous high set during the HPAI outbreak in 2015. Prices slipped the last week of the month, but began April at 267 cents/dozen, 46 percent above their March 1 value. Breaking stock prices also rose steeply, gaining 49 percent over the course of the month and closed at 133 cents/dozen.

### International Trade

U.S. exports of shell eggs in February totaled 12.9 million dozen with a value of \$32.9 million. This was drop of 14 percent in volume and 6 percent in value compared with January and was 9 percent lower than last February in volume but 6 percent higher in value. Year-to-date exports of shell eggs were up 4 percent in volume and 6 percent in value compared with 2017. The United States exported \$14.8 million of egg products in February, a 22 percent increase compared with January. Compared with February 2017, exports of egg products were up 39 percent. For the first two months of the year, exports were up 33 percent compared with the same period last year. In February, our five largest export destinations for shell eggs and egg products were Mexico, Canada, Japan, Hong Kong, and Jamaica.

## TURKEY

### Production

The U.S. produced 457 million pounds of turkey on a ready-to-cook basis in February. Average daily production was down 1 percent compared with January and unchanged compared with last February. The monthly drop was due to lower average dressed weights as dressed average daily slaughter was unchanged both month-over-month and year-over-year. Looking ahead, production is likely to be significantly lower in the coming months compared to 2017. Poultts placed in February were 3 percent below last February and eggs in incubators on March 1 were down 5 percent. Total inventories of turkey in cold storage on February 28 continued to exceed year-earlier amounts by double-digit percentages. Total stocks were 13 percent above 2017 levels and whole frozen birds were 20 percent higher, driven mainly by whole toms, which were up 34 percent. White meat stocks were up 16 percent year-over-year, while only dark meat holdings were down, by 29 percent.

### Price

Whole turkey prices struggled in March. Frozen whole tom prices remained unchanged for the month at 80 cents/lb., while frozen whole hens fell 5 percent to 74 cents/lb. during a month that usually sees price increases for whole birds. Hen prices were at their lowest level since February 2010. Parts prices also showed little strength. Boneless/skinless (B/S) breast meat rose 4 percent to 161 cents/lb. B/S breast meat has traded at a discount to 4-8 pound Grade A bone-in breasts since November 2016. B/S thigh meat was also up modestly, rising 1 percent to 127 cents/lb. Tom drumsticks fell 3 percent during March to 61 cents/lb.

### International Trade

The United States exported 21.8 thousand metric tons of turkey valued at \$48.1 million in February. Compared with January, exports were down 2 percent in both volume and value. Compared with February 2017, exports were up 10 percent in volume and 17 percent in value. Through February, 2018 exports were up 12 percent in volume and 15 percent in value compared with 2017. Mexico, Japan, Hong Kong, Canada, and Costa Rica were the five largest importers of U.S. turkey products in February.

### Production

Chicken production in February totaled 3.26 billion pounds on a ready-to-cook basis. February average daily production was down 2 percent from January but up 3 percent from last February. The year-over-year increase was driven by a 1 percent increase in average dressed weights and a 2 percent increase in the number of birds slaughtered. Production increases in the coming weeks should be modest. For the four weeks ending March 31, chicks placed were 1 percent above the same period last year and eggs set were up 2 percent.

Total holdings of chicken in cold storage as of February 28 were up 3 percent from the end of January and up 15 percent from last February. Whole broiler stocks were up 11 percent on the month, but down 12 percent on the year. Breast meat inventories were up, 2 percent month-over-month and 7 percent year-over-year. Overall dark meat holdings were down 1 percent compared with January and 13 percent compared with February 2017. Leg quarter stocks were down 4 percent on the month and 25 percent on the year. Drumstick inventories were up 3 percent from January and up 46 percent from last February. Wing holdings were 8 percent above January but 2 percent below February a year ago.

### Price

Chicken prices increased in March. The national composite for whole young chicken rose 19 percent to 109 cents/lb. by month's end. Breast meat was also up sharply, with boneless/skinless (B/S) breast prices rising 34 percent to 141 cents/lb., after many weeks trading at a discount to B/S thigh meat. Dark meat prices rose more modestly in March. Leg quarter prices rose 6 percent to 35 cents/lb., the highest level since last August. B/S thigh meat 3 percent to 114 cents/lb., while drumsticks rose 6 percent to 44 cents/lb. wing prices spent most of March at 153 cents/lb. but fell the last week of the month to 149 cents/lb., about 3 percent above the value at the end of February.

### International Trade

Chicken exports in February totaled 250 thousand metric tons valued at \$251 million. This was an increase of 1 percent in both volume and value compared with January and an increase of 1 percent in volume and 13 percent in value compared with February 2017. For the first two months of 2018, exports were unchanged in volume and up 11 percent in value compared with the same period in 2017. The top five destinations for chicken exports in February were Mexico, Canada, Taiwan, Angola, and Cuba.

### Production

February 2018 beef production was 3 percent above 2017 and 13 percent below the January level at 1.98 billion pounds. Cattle slaughter was up 2 percent yearly, at 2.42 million head, but down 12 percent monthly. The average live weight was up 8 pounds from last year, to 1,368 pounds. January to February 2018 commercial beef production was up 5 percent year-over-year. Veal production totaled 5.8 million pounds, 3 percent above February 2017, and 12 percent lower than January. At 41,100 head, calf slaughter was up 2 percent from the year before and down 16 percent monthly. The average live weight was up 1 pound from last year, at 242 pounds. Accumulated veal production was up 4 percent annually.

Total stocks of beef in freezers at the end of February were down 8 percent from both January 2018 and February 2017. Boneless beef storage was 9 percent lower than the month before and was 10 percent lower than last year. Inventories of beef cuts were up 1 percent monthly and up 12 from year earlier levels. Veal stocks in cold storage were up 6 percent on a month-to-month basis and up 25 percent year-over-year.

### Price

Live cattle prices (FOB, steers and heifers) lost ground in the second half of March, down \$6 for the month to \$121 per cwt, 5 percent below last year. The beef cutout value remained slightly higher than the February close, and ended March up \$1 to \$222 per cwt, 2 percent above 2017. Through March, the 90 percent lean boneless beef price was mostly flat around \$218 per cwt, and down slightly from last year. The 50 percent lean trim price slowly added \$2 through March, ending at \$85 per cwt, 17 percent lower than a year ago. Packer-owned veal carcasses lost \$3 to \$313 per cwt, while non-packer owned veal carcasses were down by \$6, ending at \$309 per cwt, respectively 5 and 1 percent higher than in 2017. The veal cutout average remained at \$420 per cwt through March, 3 percent below last year's value.

### International Trade

Compared to February 2017, beef and veal exports (including variety meats) increased 11 percent to 101 thousand MT, and the export value rose 18 percent to \$600 million. The export volume and value were up 5 and 4 percent, respectively, from January. Cumulative beef exports were higher in volume by 10 relative to 2017, and value was 20 percent higher. Japan, South Korea and Hong Kong were our largest export markets in February. Year-over-year beef import volumes were up 9 percent to 78 thousand MT, and up 25 percent in value to \$423 million. Compared to January, beef imports were 14 percent higher and value was up 15 percent. Year-to-date beef and veal imports and import values were up 9 and 24 percent, respectively from last year. Canada, New Zealand and Mexico were the largest sources of imported beef to the U.S.

## Production

Pork production for February 2018 totaled 2.06 billion pounds, up 4 percent from 2017, and down 10 percent from January. Hog slaughter totaled 9.64 million head, up 3 percent yearly and down 10 percent monthly. The average live weight rose 2 pounds from 2017, to 286 pounds. Year-to-date pork production was up 5 percent from last year and was a record high for the month of February.

Pork supplies in cold storage were 6 percent higher than January, and up 8 percent from last February. Bone-in picnics were 23 percent higher than ending inventory levels for the month prior, and up 3 percent from last year. Total hams in cold storage were 4 percent higher monthly but were 2 percent lower on a yearly basis. Pork trimmings were 22 percent higher than at the end of January and up 59 percent from last year. Loins were down 4 percent monthly and up 2 percent yearly. Inventories of ribs were 12 percent higher than last month and 8 percent below 2017. Pork butts in freezers were 10 percent below levels in January, but up 4 percent from the year before. Pork belly stocks were 6 percent higher than last month but up 188 percent from last year.

## Price

The negotiated carcass price for barrows and gilts fell sharply in March, losing \$12 to close at \$50 per cwt, 21 percent below 2017. The pork cutout value lost \$9 through the month, ending at \$70 per cwt, 8 percent lower than last year. Trimmed, bone-in hams, 23-27 pounds were down more than the usual seasonal drop, by \$13 to \$52 per cwt, 8 percent below the prior year's prices. Picnic meat combos, cushion out prices lost \$8 to close at \$66 per cwt, 5 percent lower than 2017, while Pork trim, 72 percent lean lost \$3 to \$59 per cwt, 13 percent lower yearly. Pork belly primals continued to fall, losing \$24 and ending at \$101 per cwt, off 22 percent on a yearly basis.

## International Trade

Pork exports in February (including variety meats) were up 4 percent from 2017 to 201 thousand MT, and the value was up 11 percent to \$520 million. Pork export volume and value were both 1 percent lower than in January. For 2018 so far, pork exports are up from 2017 by 2 percent in volume and 8 percent in value. The largest overseas markets for U.S. pork were Japan, Mexico and South Korea. Compared to 2017, February pork import volumes and values were both up 11 percent at 41 thousand MT and \$145 million. The volume of pork imports rose 3 percent from January, but the value lost 2 percent. Year-to-date pork imports are higher than 2017 by 10 and 11 percent, respectively. The countries of Canada, Poland and Italy imported the largest volumes of pork to the U.S.

## Production

February lamb and mutton production, at 11.8 million pounds, was up 5 percent from 2017, and down 9 percent from this January. Sheep slaughter was 164,800 head, 3 percent above last year and 6 percent below last month. The average live weight was 143 pounds, up 3 pounds from February a year ago. Total 2018 commercial lamb and mutton production was 4 percent higher than 2017. Lamb and mutton in cold storage was 6 percent higher than at the end of January, and 10 percent higher than year earlier levels.

## Price

Negotiated live slaughter lamb prices were mixed in March but ended up \$8 to \$146 per cwt, 6 percent below 2017. The lamb cutout value was also mixed, but closed the month up \$8 to \$370 cwt, 7 percent over last year. Leg of lamb, trotter-off prices added \$4 on seasonal demand, closing at \$364 per cwt, and up 9 percent from prior year prices. Boneless square-cut lamb shoulders added \$5, ending the month at \$567 per cwt.

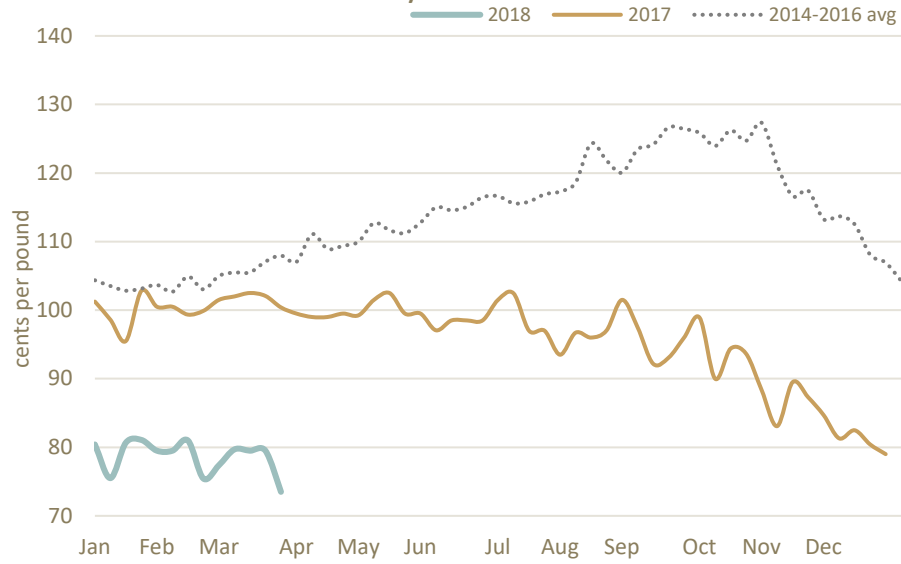
## International Trade

February lamb exports were up 70 percent from 2017 to 208 MT, and up 31 percent in value to \$1.2 million. Compared to January, export volume was down 38 percent and the value was down 33 percent. Year-to-date exports of lamb increased 6 percent in volume and 4 percent in value compared to 2017. Mexico, Japan and The Bahamas were the largest export markets for lamb and mutton. U.S. lamb imports in February were up 15 percent from 2017 to 10 thousand MT, and the value increased 18 percent to \$70 million. February import volume was up slightly from January while value rose 1 percent. 2018 total lamb imports were up 11 percent in volume and 15 percent in value from last year. Australia, New Zealand and Canada were the largest sources of imports.

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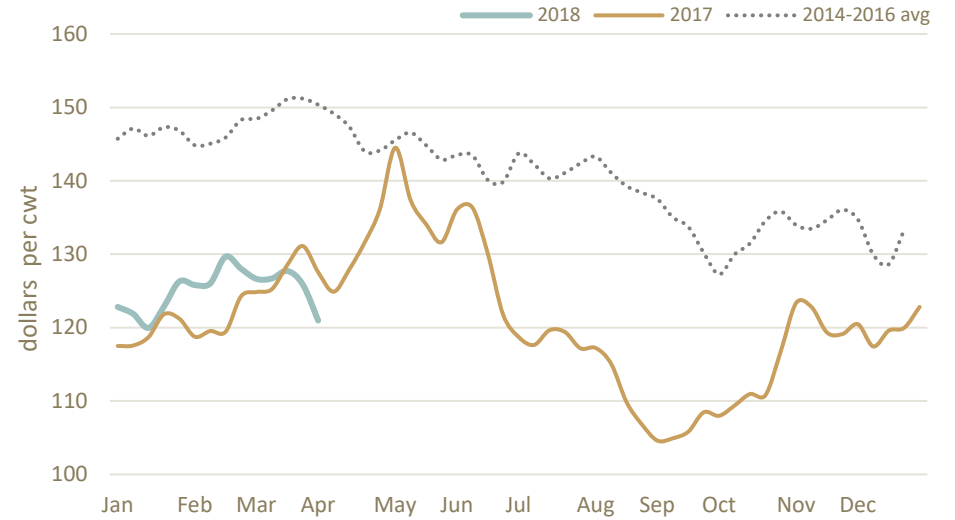
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### National Frozen Hen Turkeys

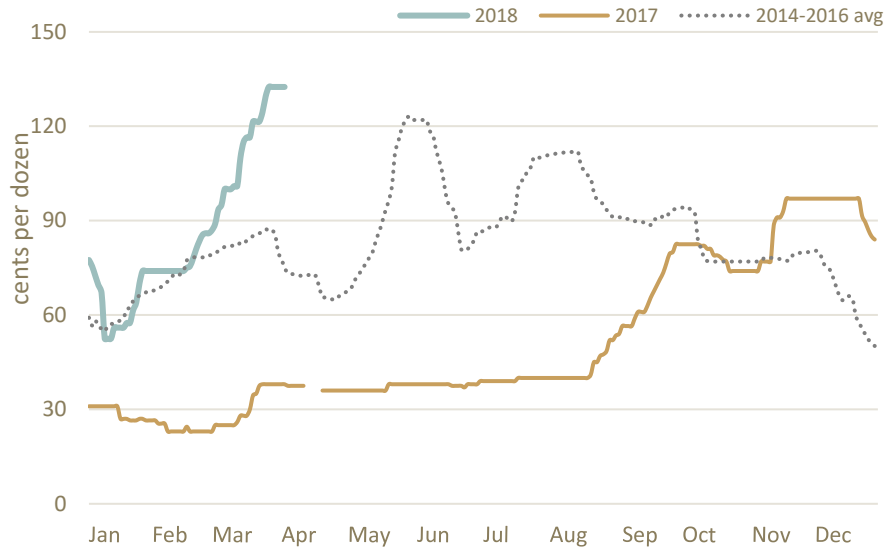


### Weekly Negotiated Slaughter Cattle Prices

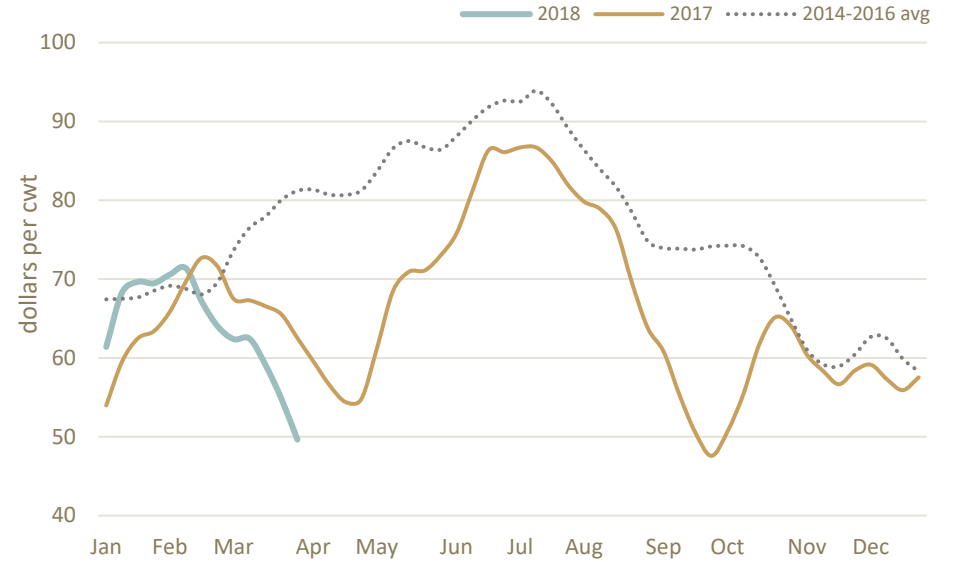
Live, FOB, All Beef Type Cattle, Steers and Heifers



### Central States Breaking Stock Eggs



### Weekly National Negotiated Barrow & Gilt Prices








# Rabbit Hash





 In 2017, the U.S. produced an estimated 4.5 million pounds of rabbit meat, exported 123,000 pounds (primarily to Ireland), and imported 2.5 million pounds (83% from China) for a net gain of 6.9 million pounds of rabbit meat.


 An Average rabbit carcass weighs 3 pounds. At Easter 2018, rabbits could be found in stores on sale for \$3.79 per pound.


 Hispania (Spain), was the name Phoenician sailors gave the Iberian Peninsula meaning, "the land of rabbits". Coney Island got its name from the early Dutch settlers who called it, "'Conyne Eylandt" or "Rabbit Island" for the large number of rabbits they found there.


 Rabbit Hash is a dish made of boiled rabbit meat and diced potatoes. It is also the name of an unincorporated community in Boone County, KY, on the Ohio River.


 In 2017, the USDA Quality Assessment Division graded 170,000 pounds of rabbit.

 An Average doe can produce 25-50 offspring per year, about 75-150 pounds of meat.

 In 2017, per capita consumption of rabbit meat in the U.S. was .02 pounds.

 According to the 2012 Census of Ag, Missouri led the nation in sales of rabbits with 18% of total sales. Arkansas was next with 10%.

 Besides meat, rabbits are also raised for their fur and as pets.

 "Ideas are like rabbits. You get a couple and learn how to handle them, and pretty soon you have a dozen." – John Steinbeck

