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EGGS

Production

Table egg production in January was 659 million dozen, 10 percent higher than last January. Broiler-type hatching egg production in January was down 1 percent compared to 2016. There were 1.04 billion broiler-type hatching eggs produced. Egg-type hatching egg production was 88 million eggs, 3 percent below last year. Shell eggs broken totaled 196 million dozen during January, up 16 percent from January a year ago, and 1 percent above the 195 million dozen broken in December. The number of table-egg layers in the national flock on February 1 was up 6 percent compared to 2016. Hatching egg layers for the table egg flock were down 2 percent compared with last year, and the broiler-type hatching egg flock was 1 percent below last year. The number of pullets added during January for all types of egg production was down 9 percent year-over-year.

Price

Table egg prices fell through most of February, but appeared to reach a floor by month's end. The wholesale price of a dozen large Grade A eggs in the New York market ended January at 90 cents/dozen but began to drop almost immediately as February began. Prices finally stabilized at 64 cents/dozen the last full week of the month, holding there through the start of March. Breaking stock prices, on the other hand, were largely steady. They began the month at 26 cents/dozen, dropped in mid-February to 23 cents/dozen, but recovered by month's end to 25 cents/dozen.

International Trade

January exports of shell eggs totaled 7.9 million dozen with a value of $7.6 million. Compared with December, exports were down 32 percent in volume and 35 percent in value and compared with January 2016, exports were down 10 percent in volume and 16 percent in value. Exports of egg products in January were valued at $9.8 million, 17 percent below December but 44 percent above January 2016. Mexico, Canada, Brazil, Japan, and Hong Kong were the five largest importers of U.S. turkey products in December.

TURKEY

Production

The U.S. produced 495 million pounds of turkey products in January on a ready-to-cook basis. Daily production was up 4 percent compared to December and unchanged compared to last January. Average dressed weights were virtually unchanged, so any changes in production were driven by changes in the number of birds slaughtered. Turkey production continues to show signs of strongly increased production in the coming months. Poults placed in January were up 5 percent year-over-year and eggs in incubators on February 1 were up 6 percent.

Cold storage holdings of turkey products on January 31 were up 17 percent compared to January of 2016. This year-over-year increase is large, but in comparison, the December 2016 inventory was 39 percent up compared to year-earlier totals. Whole bird holdings were up 18 percent, with whole toms up 25 percent and whole hens up 12 percent. White meat stocks were up 40 percent and dark meat stocks were up 10 percent.

Price

Whole turkey prices were essentially flat in February, with the prices of both whole toms and hens up 1 percent to 102 cents/lb. Parts prices were generally down. Boneless/skinless (B/S) breast meat dropped 9 percent to 150 cents/lb., and B/S thigh meat fell 2 percent to 134 cents/lb. Tom drumstick prices were up 1 percent to 48 cents/lb.

International Trade

Total turkey product exports in January totaled 19 thousand metric tons valued at $43 million. This represents a decrease of 14 percent in volume and 16 percent in value compared to December, but an increase of 26 percent in volume and 21 percent in value compared with January 2016. The top five destinations for exports in December were Mexico, Japan, Hong Kong, Canada, and Peru.

CHICKEN

Production

Production of young chicken in January totaled 3.5 billion pounds on a ready-to-cook basis. Daily production was up 2 percent compared to January 2016 and nearly 6 percent compared to December. All of the increases were driven by increases in the number of birds slaughtered; average dressed weight was unchanged both month-over-month and year-over-year. Production increases in the coming weeks should be modest. For the four weeks ending March 4, eggs set in incubators were up 2 percent and chicks placed were up 1 percent.

Overall stocks of chicken in cold storage on January 31 were down 4 percent compared to December and down 6 percent compared to last January, driven mainly by decreases in dark meat holdings. Whole broiler inventories were up 13 percent from December and 23 percent from January 2016, while breast meat inventories were up 1 percent on the month and 6 percent on the year. Dark meat holdings overall were down 10 percent month-over-month and 21 percent year-over-year, with leg quarters down 14 percent and 15 percent, respectively. Most other dark meat inventories were down as well. Of note: compared with January 2016, drumstick holdings were down 43 percent and thigh holdings were down 56 percent. Supplies of wings were down 8 percent from December but up 3 percent year-over-year.

Price

Prices for whole chickens and most parts were up in February. Whole broiler prices rose nearly 4 percent and were 87 cents/lb. at month's end. Boneless/skinless (B/S) breast meat rose 17 percent and closed at 122 cents/lb. Dark meat prices were mixed. Leg quarter prices rose 7 percent, ending the month at 27 cents/lb. (Southern States bulk). B/S thigh meat was up 9 percent to 95 cents/lb., but drumsticks fell 3 percent to 38 cents/lb. Wing prices were down 9 percent, closing at 177 cents/lb.

International Trade

The U.S. exported 252 thousand metric tons of chicken products values t $229 million in January. This was 9 percent lower in volume and 6 percent lower in value than December but up 12 percent in volume and 11 percent in value compared to January 2016. In January, our five largest export destinations were Mexico, Canada, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Guatemala.

BEEF/VEAL

Production

January 2017 beef production was 8 percent above 2016 but 3 percent under the December 2016 level at 2.12 billion pounds. Cattle slaughter was up 9 percent, at 2.56 million head, but down 1 percent on a monthly basis. The average live weight was down 11 pounds from last year, to 1,370 pounds. Veal production totaled 6.3 million pounds, 6 percent below last January, and 7 percent lower than December. At 46,600 head, calf slaughter was up 12 percent from the year before and down 5 percent monthly. The average live weight was down 39 pounds from last year, at 235 pounds. Total cold storage of beef at the end of January was down 5 percent from December, and up 1 percent from 2016, as was the inventory of boneless beef. Beef cuts in freezers were 10 percent higher than last month and 5 percent higher than last year. Frozen veal stocks were 11 percent higher month over month, and up 169 percent on a yearly basis.

Price

Live cattle prices (FOB, steers and heifers) started the month of February down, but prices rose at the end of the month, to close up $3 per cwt from the end of January at $124 per cwt, 9 percent below last year. The beef cutout value had a similar pattern, but a much larger change in value, up $13 to $205 per cwt, 5 percent below the 2016 value. The 90 percent lean boneless beef price has continued to follow the pattern set in 2016, steadily increasing through the month, ending up $5 to $211 per cwt, but down 2 percent from 2016. The 50 percent lean trim price continued to rise, but at a slower rate than earlier in the year, closing the month up $18 to $83 per cwt, 25 percent above the 2016 level. Packer-owned veal carcasses rose $1 to $303 per cwt, while non-packer owned veal carcasses fell $3 to $298 per cwt, 21 and 22 percent below 2016, respectively. The veal cutout average lost $13 in February, ending the month at $435 per cwt, 21 percent below last year's value.

International Trade

Compared to January 2016, beef and veal exports (including variety meats) increased 17 percent to 96.5 thousand MT and the export value rose 18 percent to $515 million. The export volume and value were both down 17 percent from December. Japan, South Korea and Canada were our largest export markets in December. Year-over-year beef import volumes were down 20 percent to 81 thousand MT, and down 24 percent in value to $395 million. Compared to December, beef imports were up 14 percent and value was up 11 percent. Australia, Mexico and Canada were the largest importers of beef to the U.S.

PORK

Production

Pork production for the first month of 2017 totaled 2.15 billion pounds, up 3 percent from January 2016, but down 2.5 percent from December. Hog slaughter totaled 10.1 million head, up 4 percent from 2016 and down 3 percent monthly. The average live weight was down 1 pound from the previous year, at 284 pounds. The total inventory of frozen pork was down 16 percent from the end of December, and up 11 percent from last January. Picnic supplies were 16 percent lower than the prior month, and 8 percent above 2016. Total hams in cold storage were down 14 percent month-over-month, but up 39 percent yearly. Total loin stocks were down 15 percent monthly, while rib stocks were down 8 percent, and inventories of butts were up 8 percent. Year-over-year, loins, ribs and butts were down 4, 11 and 40 percent, respectively. Pork trimmings in cold storage were down 19 percent from December, and up 1 percent yearly. Stocks of pork bellies were down 22 percent from last month and down 77 percent from last year.

Price

The negotiated carcass price for barrows and gilts increased during the first half of February and peaked mid-month at $73 per cwt. A loss of $6 through the remainder of the month yielded a closing price of $67 per cwt, up $4 from January, 9 percent above 2016. The pork cutout value had a similar pattern, peaking at $85 per cwt, while closing at $81 per cwt, down $3 from January but up 8 percent from the 2016 value. The price of trimmed, bone-in hams, 23-27 pounds was relatively steady the first half of the month, but lost $2 to close at $57 per cwt, 1 percent below 2016. Picnic meat combos, cushion out prices fell most of the month, down $9 per cwt, before regaining enough to close February with a net gain of $2, at $69 per cwt, 15 percent higher than last year. Pork trim, 72 percent lean also saw losses and gains, but ended down $2 to close at $65 per cwt, 22 percent higher than in 2016. Pork belly primals climbed to a peak of $182 per cwt at mid-month, but dropped to close at $155 per cwt, down $16 monthly but up 23 percent yearly.

International Trade

Pork exports in January (including variety meats) were up 21 percent from 2016 to 199 thousand MT, and the value was up 26 percent to $491 million. Pork export volume was down 9 percent from December, and the value was down 10 percent. The largest overseas markets for U.S. pork were Japan, Mexico and Canada. Compared to 2016, January pork imports were down 15 percent in volume at 38 thousand MT, and down 7 percent in value to $128 million. The volume of pork imports fell 8 percent from December, and the value lost 3 percent. The countries of Canada, Poland and Denmark imported the largest volumes of pork to the U.S.

LAMB

Production

Lamb and mutton production was 12.3 million pounds in January 2017, up 10 percent from 2016, and down 6 percent from December. Sheep slaughter totaled 177,000 head, 10 percent more than last year but down 10 percent from the previous month. The average live weight was 138 pounds, down 1 pound from a year ago. Cold storage of lamb and mutton in January was 22 percent below December supplies and down 57 percent from last year.

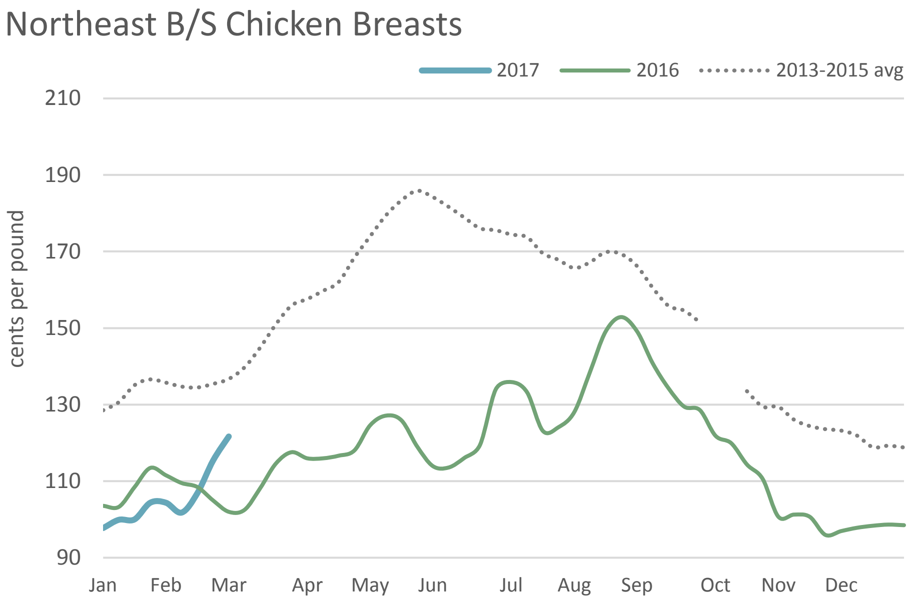
Price

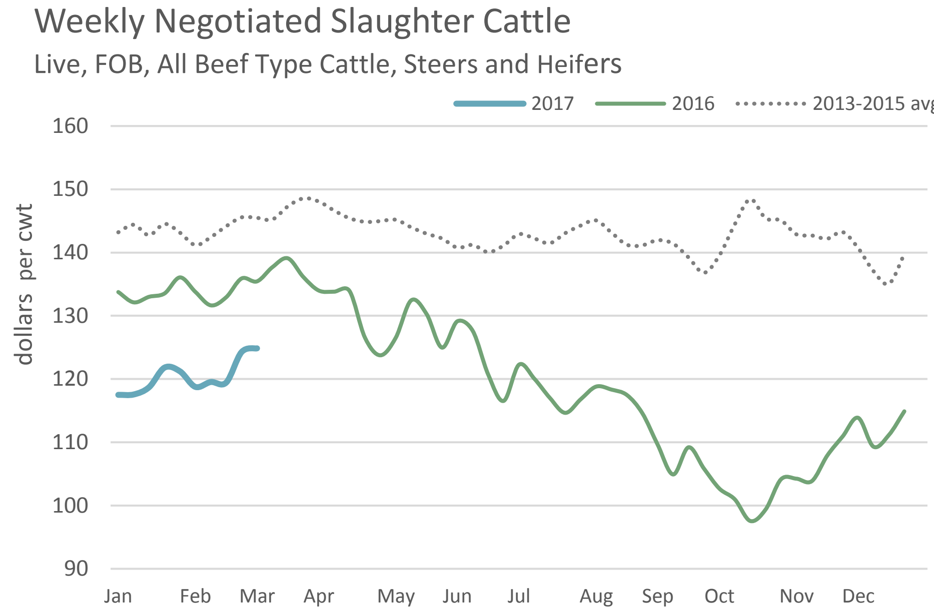
Negotiated live slaughter lamb prices were not reported at the end of February due to confidentiality, but varied only slightly through the month. The February 24, 2017 price was reported at $140 per cwt, the same as January but up 3 percent from 2016. The lamb cutout continued to lose value, down $15 in February, to $332 cwt, 4 percent below 2016. Leg of lamb, trotter off prices plummeted $44 through the month, closing at $310 per cwt, 11 percent below the 2016 price. Boneless lamb shoulder prices had both loses and gains, but closed down $9 at $550 per cwt, 3 percent above the price last year.

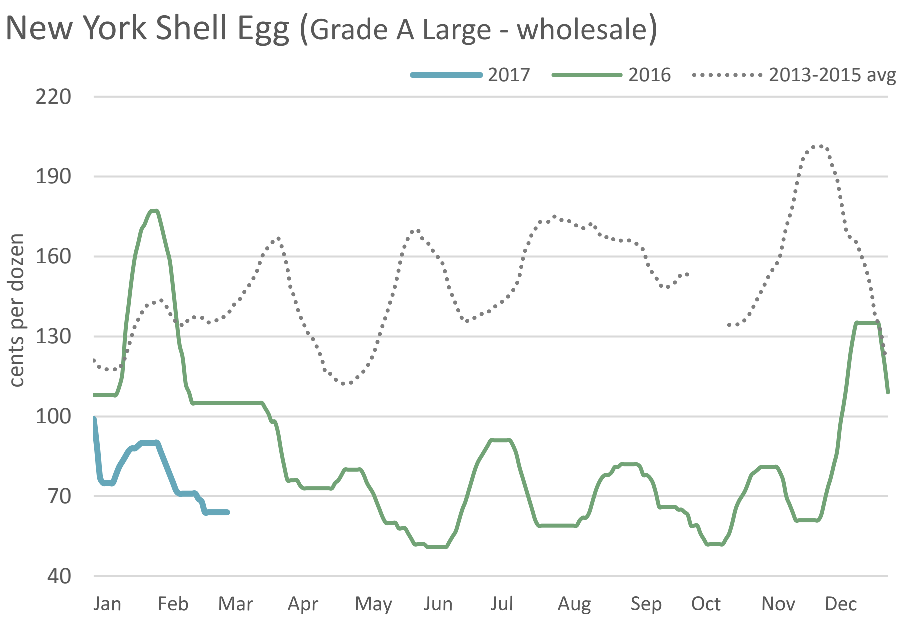
International Trade

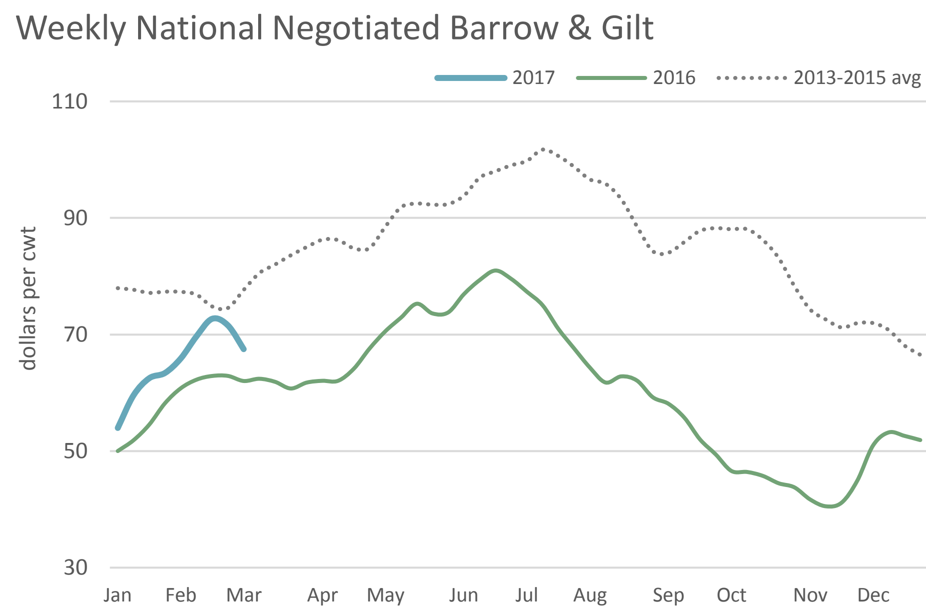
December lamb exports were up 43 percent from 2016 levels to 196 MT, and up 29 percent in value to $991,000. Compared to December, export volume was down 21 percent and the value was down 25 percent. Mexico, the Netherlands Antilles and The Bahamas were the largest export markets of lamb and mutton. U.S. lamb imports in December were up 11 percent from 2016 to 9.7 thousand MT, with the value up 22 percent to $69 million. The import volume and value were 29 and 16 percent, respectively, up from December. Australia, New Zealand and Canada were the largest sources of imports.

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


Northeast B/S Chicken Breasts
2017
2016
2013-2015 avg
cents per pound
210
190
170
150
130
110
90
Jan
Feb
Mar
Apr
May
Jun
Jul
Aug
Sep
Oct
Nov
Dec


Weekly Negotiated Slaughter Cattle
Live, FOB, All Beef Type Cattle, Steers and Heifers
2017
2016
2013-2015 avg
dollars per cwt
160
150
140
130
120
110
100
90
Jan
Feb
Mar
Apr
May
Jun
Jul
Aug
Sep
Oct
Nov
Dec


New York Shell Egg (Grade A Large - wholesale)
2017
2016
2013-2015 avg
cents per dozen
220
190
160
130
100
70
40
Jan
Feb
Mar
Apr
May
Jun
Jul
Aug
Sep
Oct
Nov
Dec


Weekly National Negotiated Barrow & Gilt
2017
2016
2013-2015 avg
dollars per cwt
110
90
70
50
30
Jan
Feb
Mar
Apr
May
Jun
Jul
Aug
Sep
Oct
Nov
Dec

ROMAN

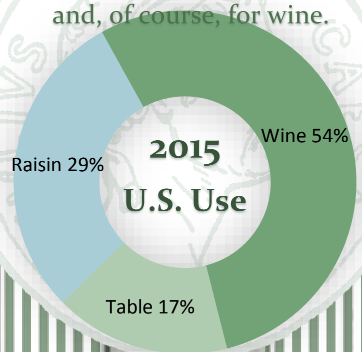
Contributions to Some of Our Favorite Foods

BEWARE THE IDES OF MARCH

On March 15, 44 B.C., Julius Caesar was stabbed to death by a group of senators led by Gaius Cassius Longinus and Marcus Junius Brutus. "Et tu Brute?"

GRAPES

Used for fresh eating, raisins, and, of course, for wine.



SALAMI

Salumi (plural) are a category of dry and semi-dry, fermented pork and/or beef. Includes pepperoni and prosciutto.

252 million lbs.

of pepperoni is eaten in the U.S. each year, primarily on pizza.

Did you Know?

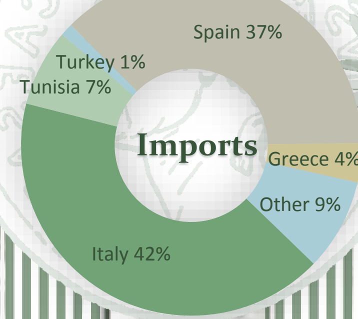
The ubiquitous Slim Jim is a form of salami.

500 million

Slim Jims are produced each year

OLIVE OIL

Used in cooking, in sauces, in lamps, and as a body wash.



95% is imported

97% of U.S. production comes from California

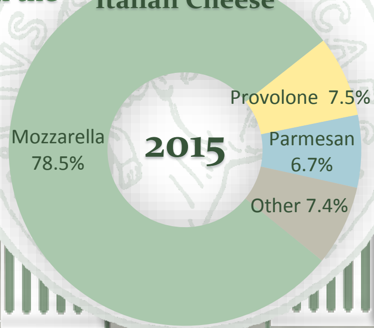
4 billion

pounds of mozzarella cheese produced in the U.S. in 2015,

62% in California and Wisconsin.

CHEESE

U.S. Production of Italian Cheese



ARTICHOKE

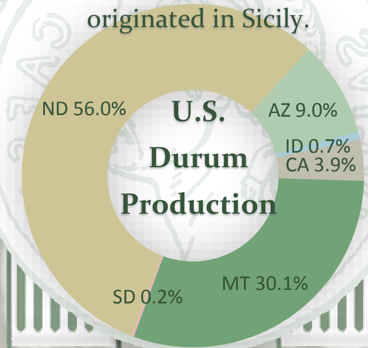
Thought to have originated in Sicily. Romans considered them a delicacy and an aphrodisiac.

99 million lbs.

were produced in 2016, 100% in California with no imports.

PASTA

Pasta made from durum wheat originated in Sicily.



Thomas Jefferson is credited with bringing pasta to the U.S. in 1789.

Source: USDA AMS Agricultural Analytics, NASS, ERS, American Olive Oil Producers Association, ConAgra Foods

"Morte di Giulio Cesare" - Vincenzo Camuccini, 1798