USDA

The Economic Landscape

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EGGS

Production

Table egg production in March was 702 million dozen, 4 percent above last March. Broiler-type hatching egg production in March was up 2 percent compared to 2018. There were 1.11 billion broiler-type hatching eggs produced. Egg-type hatching egg production was 90 million eggs, 7 percent higher than last year. Shell eggs broken totaled 205 million dozen during March, up 10 percent from March a year ago, and up 7 percent from the 191 million dozen broken in February.

The number of table-egg layers in the national flock on April 1 was up 3 percent compared to 2018 at 341 million birds. Hatching egg layers for the table egg flock fell slightly over last year to 63 million birds, and the broiler-type hatching egg flock increased slightly to 59 million birds. The number of pullets added during March for all types of egg production was down 3 percent year-over-year at 28 million.

Price

In typical post-Easter fashion, shell egg prices declined sharply, losing 29 cents to close the month at 67 cents for one dozen Large Grade A eggs in the New York wholesale market, 49 percent lower than 2018 when Easter was observed 3 weeks earlier. Breaking stock prices dropped 13 cents/dozen on more than adequate supplies to close at 27 cents/dozen, for a year-over-year loss of 65 percent.

International Trade

U.S. shell egg exports in March totaled 19 million dozen with a value of $40 million. This was an increase in volume of 59 percent and a rise of 24 percent in value compared with February. It is also a gain in volume of 37 percent with value up 5 percent compared with March 2018. Egg product exports in March were valued at $12 million, 12 percent below February and down 6 percent from last year. Cumulative yearly exports of shell eggs and egg products are up 4 and down 25 percent in volume, respectively, and up 1 but down 22 percent, respectively, in value. Mexico, Canada, Hong Kong, Brazil and Japan were the five largest importers of U.S. eggs and egg products in March.

TURKEY

Production

The United States produced 477 million pounds of turkey on a ready-to-cook basis in March. Daily production was down 1 percent compared with February and down 2 percent compared with last March. Average dressed weights were up 5 percent for the month and 2 percent for the year. Eggs in incubators on the first of April were up 2 percent from last year, and poult placements in the month of March were down 5 percent, year-over-year.

As of March 31, total turkey stocks in cold storage were 1 percent above the March 2018 level. Compared to February, total turkey stocks were 3 percent higher. Whole frozen birds were up 4 percent yearly, with hens up 4 percent and toms up slightly. White meat stocks were up 7 percent year-over-year, while dark meat stocks were up 1 percent.

Price

Whole frozen hens ended down 2 cents to 84 cents/lb., while whole frozen toms added 4 cents, also ended at 84 cents/lb., both 6 percent higher than last year. Boneless/skinless (B/S) breast prices added 3 cents to 207 cents/lb., 12 percent higher yearly. B/S thigh meat also rose 3 cents to 123 cents/lb., 6 percent below 2018, and tom drumsticks closed at 65 cents/lb., steady in April and 6 percent lower than last year.

International Trade

In March, the United States exported 24 thousand metric tons of turkey products with a value of $51 million. This volume was 12 percent higher than February and the value was 13 percent higher. Compared with March 2018, exports were down 4 percent in volume and 10 percent in value. Total 2019 exports to date are lower than for the same period in 2018 by 4 percent in volume and 8 percent in value. The top five destinations for exports of turkey in March were Mexico, Japan, Canada, Benin and South Africa.

CHICKEN

Production

Chicken production totaled 3.41 billion pounds on a on a ready-to-cook basis in March. Daily production was down 5 percent from February and up 5 percent from March 2018, with dressed weights 4 percent lower than February but 2 percent higher than March. For the four weeks ending April 30, eggs set were up 1.4 percent and chicks placed were up 1.7 percent compared with the same period last year.

Total stocks of chicken in cold storage on March 31 were 846 million pounds, down 3 percent from the end of both February 2019 and March 2018. Whole broilers remain high on a yearly basis (up 20 percent) but were down 3 percent monthly. Thighs in cold storage remain high, up 36 percent year-over year, and up 4 percent monthly, while drumstick supplies were up 40 percent yearly and 8 percent monthly. Breast and wing stocks continue on a downward path, respectively down 4 and10 percent from 2018, and down 5 and 6 percent monthly. Leg quarters remain down 26 percent from last year and held steady on a monthly basis.

Price

Whole broiler prices added 5 cents/lb. to close the month at 100 cents per pound, 8 percent below the 2018 price. Boneless/skinless (B/S) breast prices gained 3 cents to close the month at 127 cents/lb., down 4 percent from last year. Leg quarter prices added 1 cent to 43 cents/lb., 6 percent higher than in 2018. B/S thigh meat increased 2 cents to 119 cents/lb., 3 percent more than 2018. Drumsticks closed at 36 cents/lb., up 2 cents and 17 percent below last year. Wing prices varied slightly through the month but ended April down 3 cents to 199 cents per pound, 37 percent greater than 2018.

International Trade

March exports of chicken and chicken products totaled 269 thousand metric tons valued at $254 million. This is a decrease in volume of 8 percent but a 13 percent increase in value compared with February. Year-over-year, this represents a 3 percent decrease in volume and an 11 percent decrease in value. Year-to-date exports of chicken are up 1 percent in volume but down 9 percent in value. In March, our five largest export destinations for chicken were Mexico, Canada, Taiwan, Cuba and Angola.

BEEF/VEAL

Production

With one less day of operation, March 2019 beef production, was 4 percent below last year, but up 7 percent monthly at 2.12 billion pounds. Cattle slaughter numbers totaled 2.65 million head, down 2 percent on a yearly basis, 8 percent higher monthly. The average live weight was down 19 pounds from last year, at 1,339 pounds. Beef production for the year-to-date is down 1 percent from 2018. Veal production in March 2019 was 5.8 million pounds, up 5 percent on a yearly basis but down 6 percent monthly. Calf slaughter volume equaled 48,500 head, 5 percent lower than both the year and the month before. The average live weight was 21 pounds lower than last year, at 219 pounds. Accumulated veal production was down slightly from last year.

Total beef in cold storage was down 3 percent compared with the end of February 2018, and down 5 percent compared with last March. Stocks of boneless beef were 6 percent lower monthly and down 1 percent yearly, while beef cuts were down 5 percent month-over-month and 3 percent year-over-year. Veal stocks in freezers lost 51 percent on a monthly basis and 78 percent yearly.

Price

Live cattle prices (FOB, steers and heifers) regained $1 in April, ending at $127 per cwt, 8 percent lower than the April 2018 closing price. The beef cutout value gained $5, completing the month at $233 per cwt, 5 percent above last year. The 90 percent lean boneless beef price added $3 to close at $221 per cwt, 1 percent above 2018. 50 percent lean trim prices added $8 per cwt to $90 per cwt, 4 percent below last year. Packer-owned veal carcasses lost $1 t0 $309 per cwt, down slightly from 2018, while non-packer owned veal carcasses fell $3 to $303 per cwt, down slightly from 2018. The veal cutout average remained at $395 per cwt, down 6 percent from last year.

International Trade

Compared to 2018, March 2019 beef and veal exports (including variety meats) were down 4 percent to 108 thousand MT while the export value lost 2 percent to $678 million. The export volume and value were down by 13 and 16 percent, respectively, from February. Total exports for 2019 were 3 percent lower in volume, and 1 percent lower in value than 2018. South Korea, Japan and Mexico were our largest export markets in March 2018. Year-over-year beef import volumes for March were up 7 percent to 96 thousand MT and were up 10 percent in value to $551 million. Compared to February, beef import volume and value were up 25 and 29 percent, respectively. Year-to-date beef imports are 3 percent higher relative to 2018, with value up 5 percent. Canada, Mexico and Australia were the largest importers of beef to the U.S. in the first month of 2019.

PORK

Production

Pork production for the month of March was a monthly record-breaking 2.30 billion pounds, up slightly from 2018 despite the loss of a production data, and 6 percent higher than February. Hog slaughter totaled 10.7 million head, up slightly from March 2018 and up 6 percent monthly. The average live weight was up 1 pounds from last year, at 287 pounds. For 2019 so far, pork production was up 3 percent yearly.

March 2019 stocks of pork in cold storage were down 1 percent February and down slightly from last year. Ham inventories were down 19 percent month-over-month and 7 percent year-over-year. Belly inventories were up 9 percent monthly and down 1 percent from last year. Loin stocks added 9 percent to last month's inventory and 6 percent for the year. Pork trimmings in freezers gained 9 percent monthly but 1 percent lower than last year.

Price

The negotiated carcass price for barrows and gilts rose $6 in April 2019, to end at $80 per cwt, 48 percent above 2018. The pork cutout value gained $5 through April, ending the month at $86 per cwt, up 35 percent from 2018. Trimmed, bone-in hams, 23-27 pounds prices held steady in April at $74 per cwt, 35 percent above the 2018 price. Picnic meat combos, cushion out, jumped $24 in April, ending up at $99 per cwt, 47 percent more than the year before. Pork trim, 72 percent lean saw an increase of $14, ending the month at $86 per cwt, up 49 percent from 2018. Pork belly primal values lost $2, closing at 144 per cwt, 68 percent above 2018.

International Trade

Pork exports (including variety meats) in March 2019 were down 7 percent from 2018 to 207 thousand MT, and the value was down 15 percent at $493 million. Pork export volume and value gained 14 and 16 percent from February, respectively. The year-to-date volume of pork exports was down 6 percent and the value down 14 percent. The largest overseas markets for U.S. pork were Japan, Mexico and Canada. Compared to last year, March pork imports were 4 percent lower in volume at 41 thousand MT, and down 4 percent in value to $139 million. Import volume and value were up from February by 11 and 14 percent, respectively. Total imports for 2019 so far were 8 percent lower in volume and 10 percent lower in value. The countries of Canada, Poland and Italy imported the largest volumes of pork to the U.S. in March 2019.

LAMB

Production

March lamb and mutton production, at 13.0 million pounds, was 8 percent below the March 2018 production (with one less slaughter day) and 16 percent above February's production. Sheep slaughter totaled 190,700 head, 5 percent below last year but up 13 percent monthly. The average live weight was 137 pounds, down 3 pounds from March a year ago. Lamb and mutton production for the year so far was down 5 percent year over year. Lamb stocks remain 9 percent above the prior year but were down 12 percent monthly.

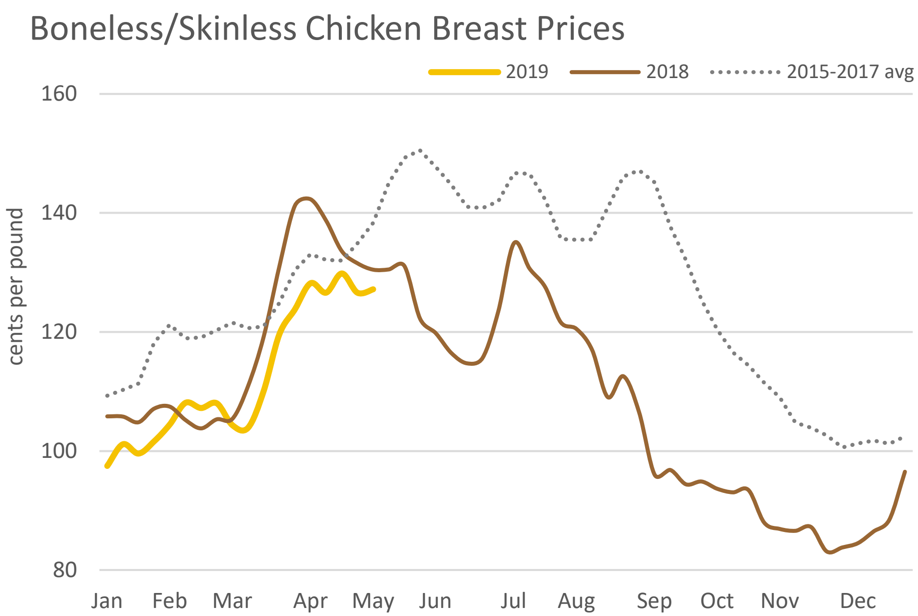
Price

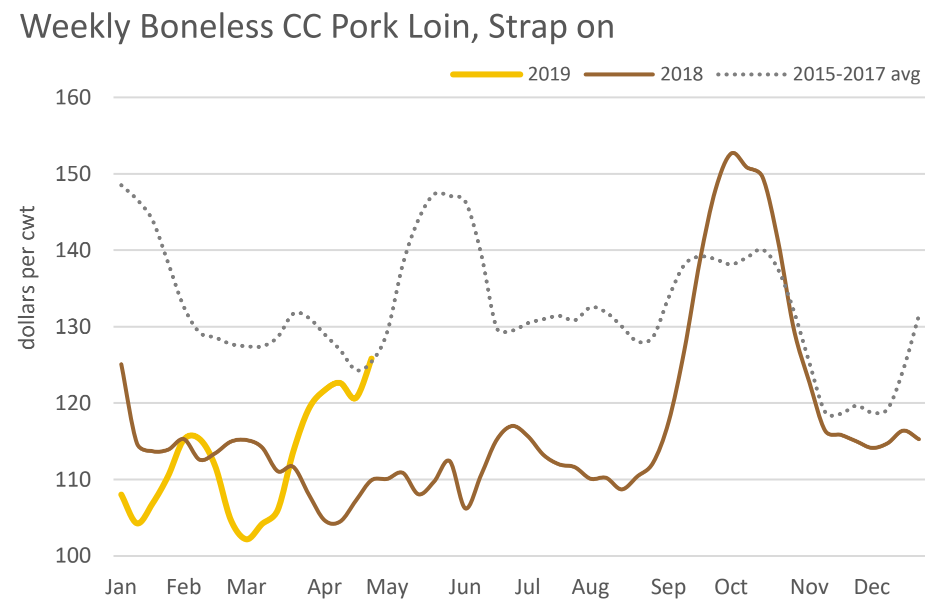
The negotiated live slaughter lamb price jumped $6, at the start of April, then slowly added $2 to end the month at $153 per cwt, up 3 percent from 2018. The lamb cutout gained $2 through April, to $384 per cwt, 1 percent higher than in 2018. Leg of lamb, trotter-off prices added $4 to close at $371 per cwt, 4 percent below the April 2018 price. Boneless lamb shoulder prices lost $12 through the middle of April but regained and ended the month up $7 per cwt to $538, down 3 percent from last year.

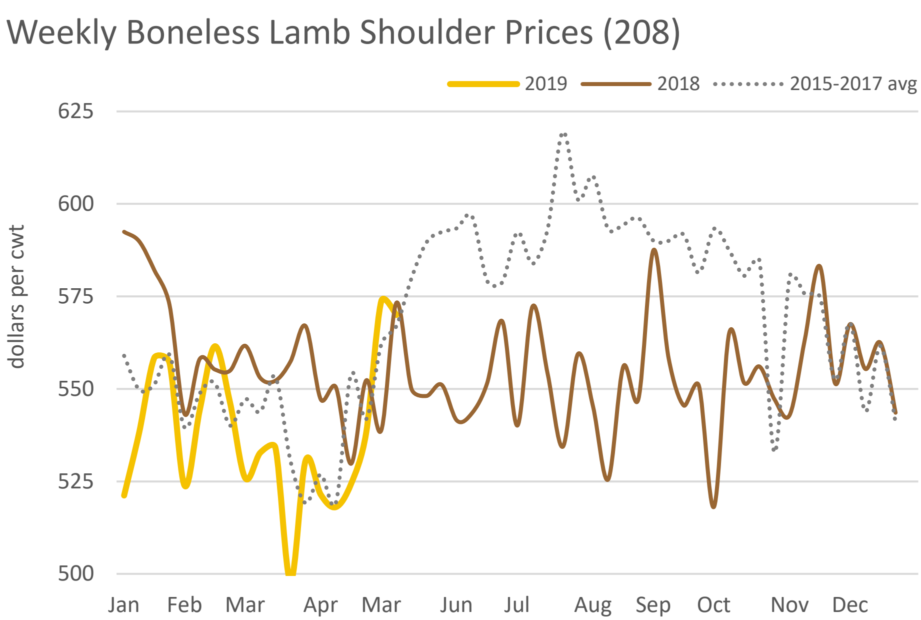
International Trade

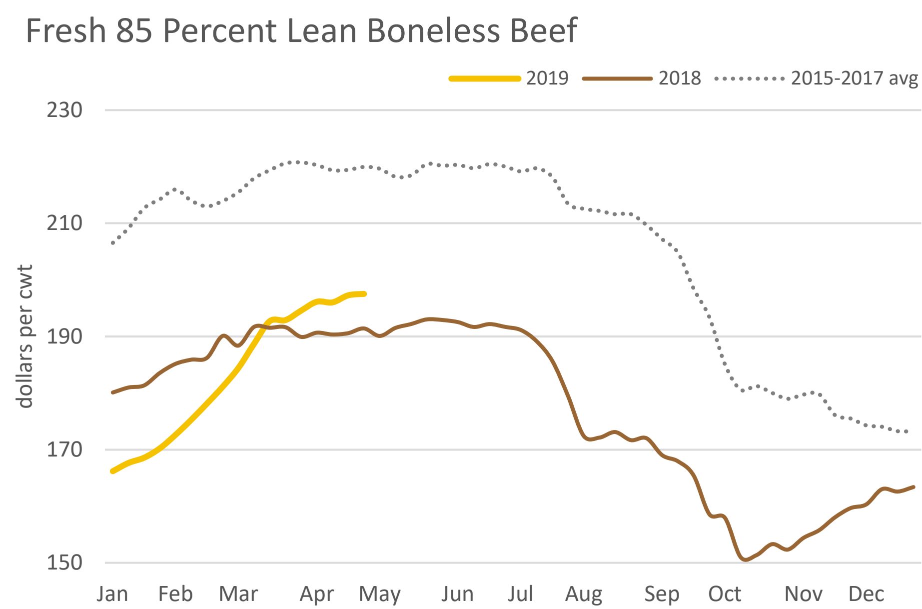
March 2019 lamb exports fell 11 percent from the 2018 level to 173 MT and 7 percent in value to $1.3 million. Compared to February, export volume was 29 percent lower while the export value lost 14 percent. Total lamb export volume for 2019 to date was 25 percent higher than 2018, at a value which was 19 percent higher. Mexico, The Bahamas and Netherlands Antilles were the largest export markets for U.S. lamb and mutton in March. Lamb imports in March 2019 were down 24 percent from 2018 at 8 thousand MT, while the value of imports was up 4 percent to $74 million. Compared to February, the import volume and value fell 32 and 33 percent, respectively. Cumulative imports were down 6 percent although the value was up 24 percent. Australia, New Zealand and Mexico were the largest sources of lamb and mutton imports to the US in March 2019.

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


Boneless/Skinless Chicken Breast Prices
2019
2018
2015-2017 avg
cents per pound
160
140
120
100
80
Jan
Feb
Mar
Apr
May
Jun
Jul
Aug
Sep
Oct
Nov
Dec


Weekly Boneless CC Pork Loin, Strap on
2019
2018
2015-2017 avg
dollars per cwt
160
150
140
130
120
110
100
Jan
Feb
Mar
Apr
May
Jun
Jul
Aug
Sep
Oct
Nov
Dec


Weekly Boneless Lamb Shoulder Prices (208)
2019
2018
2015-2017 avg
dollars per cwt
625
600
575
550
525
500
Jan
Feb
Mar
Apr
Mar
Jun
Jul
Aug
Sep
Oct
Nov
Dec


Fresh 85 Percent Lean Boneless Beef
2019
2018
2015-2017 avg
dollars per cwt
230
210
190
170
150
Jan
Feb
Mar
Apr
May
Jun
Jul
Aug
Sep
Oct
Nov
Dec

May is Egg Month

USDA shell egg grades provide assurance that eggs meet standards for quality and sanitary processing.

"A box without hinges, key, or lid, yet golden treasure inside is hid."
- J.R.R. Tolkien, The Hobbit

caged

cage-free

As of May 2019, the U.S. table egg layer flock numbers **342** million hens, **79%** in caged systems and **21%** in a cage-free environment (including **5%** organic).

201
eggs per year

American's love eggs in all forms and types. In 2019, per capita disappearance of eggs is estimated at **287** including **201** in shell form and **86** in egg products form. This marks a **13%** increase over the last 20 years.

86
eggs per year

In 2019, the U.S. layer flock produced **109.2** billion eggs, **87%** for human consumption (table eggs) and **13%** for hatching.

Iowa was #1 in table egg production with **17%**.

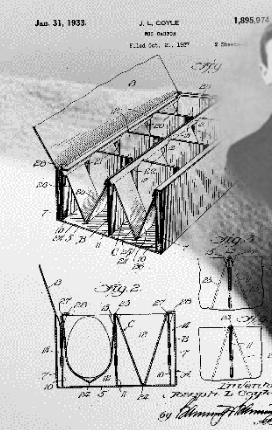
During the week of Jan 16, 2019, the U.S. egg-breaking industry broke **1.7** million cases of eggs (**614** million eggs) the highest weekly total recorded.

H.J. Keith founded the egg-breaking industry in the late 1890's in Minneapolis.

In 2018, of the total eggs broken for edible products, **60%** was used to make whole egg, **24%** to make whites, **12%** to make yolk and **4%** was turned into dried egg.

Weight Classes for Consumer Shell Eggs - 2019 Distribution

Jumbo	Extra Large	Large	Medium	Small
5%	14%	62%	17%	2%
30 oz/doz	27 oz/doz	24 oz/doz	21 oz doz	18 oz doz



Joseph Coyle of British Columbia invented the egg carton in 1911 – the Coyle Saftey Egg Carton

Source: USDA Agricultural Analytics, NASS, ERS