Record High Beef Production for December

Commercial red meat production for the United States totaled 4.15 billion pounds in December, down slightly from the 4.16 billion pounds produced in December 2008.

Beef production, at 2.13 billion pounds, was 2 percent above the previous year. Cattle slaughter totaled 2.75 million head, up 3 percent from December 2008. The average live weight was down 7 pounds from the previous year, at 1,296 pounds.

Veal production totaled 13.1 million pounds, 2 percent below December a year ago. Calf slaughter totaled 92,300 head, down 2 percent from December 2008. The average live weight was down 5 pounds from last year, at 240 pounds.

Pork production totaled 1.99 billion pounds, down 3 percent from the previous year. Hog kill totaled 9.83 million head, down 3 percent from December 2008. The average live weight was unchanged from the previous year, at 270 pounds.

Lamb and mutton production, at 15.9 million pounds, was up 3 percent from December 2008. Sheep slaughter totaled 235,300 head, 2 percent above last year. The average live weight was 136 pounds, up 2 pounds from December a year ago.

January to December 2009 commercial red meat production was 49.3 billion pounds, down 2 percent from 2008. Accumulated beef production was down 2 percent from last year, veal was down 3 percent, pork was down 2 percent from last year, and lamb and mutton production was down 2 percent.

December 2008 contained 23 weekdays (including one holiday) and 4 Saturdays.
December 2009 contained 23 weekdays (including one holiday) and 4 Saturdays.
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<th>Dec 09 % of</th>
<th>Jan - Dec</th>
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* Revised.
1 Based on packers' dressed weights and excludes farm slaughter.
2 Accumulated totals and percentages based on unrounded data.
3 Totals may not equal sum of the parts due to rounding.

### Federally Inspected Red Meat Production: United States

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<th>Dec 2009</th>
<th>Dec 09 % of</th>
<th>Jan - Dec</th>
<th>09 as % of 08</th>
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* Revised.
1 Based on packers' dressed weights and excludes farm slaughter.
2 Accumulated totals and percentages based on unrounded data.
3 Totals may not equal sum of the parts due to rounding.
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* Revised.  
1 Excludes slaughter on farms.  
2 Accumulated totals and percentages based on unrounded data.  
3 Totals may not equal sum of the parts due to rounding.
### Commercial Red Meat Production: By State and United States

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* Revised.

1 Includes total beef, veal, pork, lamb, and mutton.

2 Percentages based on unrounded data.

3 N ENG includes CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, and VT.
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1 Includes slaughter under Federal inspection and other Commercial slaughter, excludes farm slaughter.
2 N ENG includes CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, and VT.
3 States with no data printed are still included in the US total, data not printed to avoid disclosing individual operations. Accumulated totals and percentages based on unrounded data.
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1 Includes slaughter under Federal inspection and other Commercial slaughter, excludes farm slaughter.
2 N ENG includes CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, and VT.
3 States with no data printed are still included in the US total, data not printed to avoid disclosing individual operations. Accumulated totals and percentages based on unrounded data.
### Commercial Hog Slaughter: By State and United States, December 2008 and 2009

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1 Includes slaughter under Federal inspection and other Commercial slaughter, excludes farm slaughter.
2 N ENG includes CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, and VT.
3 States with no data printed are still included in the US total, data not printed to avoid disclosing individual operations. Accumulated totals and percentages based on unrounded data.
### Commercial Sheep and Lamb Slaughter: By State and United States, December 2008 and 2009

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1 Includes slaughter under Federal inspection and other Commercial slaughter, excludes farm slaughter.
2 N ENG includes CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, and VT.
3 States with no data printed are still included in the US total, data not printed to avoid disclosing individual operations. Accumulated totals and percentages based on unrounded data.
## Classification of Livestock Slaughtered Under Federal Inspection:
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1 Total and percentages based on unrounded data.
2 Included in cattle average dressed weight.
3 Included in hog average dressed weight.
4 Included in sheep average dressed weight.
### Federally Inspected Slaughter: By Region and United States, December 2009

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1 States included in regions are as follows: 1- CT, ME, NH, VT, MA, & RI; 2- NY & NJ; 3- DE-MD, PA, WV, & VA; 4- AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, & TN; 5- IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, & WI; 6- AR, LA, NM, OK, & TX; 7- IA, KS, MO, & NE; 8- CO, MT, ND, SD, UT, & WY; 9- AZ, CA, HI & NV; 10- AK, ID, OR, & WA.

2 Regions with no data printed are still included in the US and Region total, data not printed to avoid disclosing individual operations. Totals may not add due to rounding.
### Federally Inspected Slaughter: By Region and United States, January - December 2009

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¹ States included in regions are as follows: 1- CT, ME, NH, VT, MA, & RI; 2- NY & NJ; 3- DE-MD, PA, WV, & VA; 4- AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, & TN; 5- IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, & WI; 6- AR, LA, NM, OK, & TX; 7- IA, KS, MO, & NE; 8- CO, MT, ND, SD, UT, & WY; 9- AZ, CA, HI & NV; 10- AK, ID, OR, & WA.

² Regions with no data printed are still included in the US and Region total, data not printed to avoid disclosing individual operations. Totals may not add due to rounding.
<table>
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U.S. Monthly Commercial Red Meat Production

[Graph showing million pounds of commercial red meat production from January to December for 2008 and 2009.]
U.S. Monthly Commercial Slaughter
Average Live Weight
Cattle

Pounds

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

2008 2009

U.S. Monthly Commercial Slaughter
Average Live Weight
Hogs

Pounds

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

2008 2009
U.S. Monthly Federally Inspected Average Dressed Weight Cattle

Pounds

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

2008 2009

U.S. Monthly Federally Inspected Average Dressed Weight Hogs

Pounds

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

2008 2009
U.S. Monthly Federally Inspected Average Dressed Weight Steers

Pounds

880
870
860
850
840
830
820
810
800

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

2008 2009

U.S. Monthly Federally Inspected Average Dressed Weight Heifers

Pounds

810
800
790
780
770
760
750
740
730

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

2008 2009
Reliability of Livestock Slaughter Estimates

Data Sources: Primary data for the commercial livestock slaughter estimates are obtained from electronic reports completed by inspectors from the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), USDA, which provide daily counts of animals slaughtered in Federally Inspected (FI) plants, in addition to total live and dressed weights. These counts are combined with data from State-administered Non-Federally Inspected (NFI) slaughter plants to derive total commercial slaughter estimates. More than 95 percent of the total U.S. slaughter for any species is under Federal Inspection.

There are nearly 800 livestock slaughter plants in the U.S. operating under Federal Inspection and over 2,000 Non-Federally Inspected (State-inspected or custom-exempt) slaughter plants. Slaughter from State-inspected Talmedge-Aiken plants is included in FI totals (see Types of Plants, page 19). To prevent duplication in reporting between FI and NFI plants and assure all FI plants are included, certificates prepared by FSIS identifying operating status are constantly monitored.

Revision Policy: Number of head slaughtered, live weights, and dressed weights are subject to revision the following month after the monthly release. Annual totals are published in the slaughter summary each March which includes any revisions made to current and previous year’s published data. Revisions are generally the result of late reports received from slaughter plants and are usually less than one-half of one percent. No revisions will be made to the previous year’s data after the publication of the annual summary in March.

Procedures and Reliability: The livestock slaughter data is obtained electronically on a daily basis and summarized approximately two weeks after the week of slaughter. An edit compares each plant’s data with the historical data for that plant. Data are checked for unusual values for head kill, patterns of kill, average weights, and dressing percent, based on each plant’s past operating profile. In addition, the edit provides a listing of missing reports for follow-up contact with FSIS. Average live and dressed weights and dressing percentages by State are compared with the previous weeks as an additional check. Fluctuations are frequently the result of plants permanently or temporarily closing and a shift in the species reported.

The FSIS District Veterinary Medical Specialists (DVMS) are contacted by e-mail or telephone for missing or potentially erroneous slaughter data. This assures that plants slaughtering a large number of head or several species are accounted for each week. Any corrections FSIS makes to the slaughter data are included in the summary.

Imputation may be necessary for incomplete reports. The imputation of live and dressed weights is based on the current week reported data of plants of similar size and location. Imputation for live and dressed weight data for cattle and hogs is less than 10 percent and 7 percent, respectively. The imputation for calves and sheep is more frequent and variable. If no data is received electronically or by other means, for plants slaughtering fewer than 50 total head weekly of only one species, data are imputed. The imputation of head for any plant is based on the historical data for that particular plant. The imputation of head slaughtered is rare but when necessary, the imputed head kill for missing plants usually is less than 1 percent of the U.S. head kill totals.

FI data are summarized weekly and accumulated to a monthly total for this release. These weekly totals are published by USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) in Livestock, Meat, Wool Market News, Weekly Summary, and Statistics and are also available on the NASS website. NFI data are summarized monthly only.
Livestock slaughter estimates are based on a census of operating plants and therefore, have no sampling error. However, they may be subject to errors such as omissions, duplications and mistakes in reporting, recording and processing the data. These errors are minimized through rigid quality controls in the edit and summarization process, and a careful review of all reported data for consistency and reasonableness.

No data are published when an individual plant’s data could be divulged. If not published, these data are still included in US and region totals. A review of the data is made annually to determine the publishable data.

**Types of Livestock Slaughter Plants**

There are generally **four types** of slaughtering plants.

1. **Federally Inspected (FI) Plants**: Plants that transport meat interstate must employ federal inspectors to assure compliance with USDA standards. Any State whose commercial plants operate entirely under federal inspection may still have custom-exempt establishments for which NFI estimates are made.

2. **Talmedge-Aiken (TA) Plants**: Slaughter plants in which USDA is responsible for inspection. However, federal inspection is carried out by State employees. These plants are considered to be federally inspected.

3. **Non-Federally Inspected (NFI) Plants**: Plants which sell and transport only intrastate. State inspectors assure compliance with individual State standards for these NFI plants. Mobile slaughtering units are excluded and are considered farm slaughter.

4. **Custom-Exempt Plants**: Plants that do not sell meat but operate on a custom basis only are custom-exempt. The animals and meat are not inspected, but the facilities must meet health standards. These are considered NFI plants and head kill is included in NFI totals.
Terms and Definitions Used for Livestock Slaughter Estimates

**Average Live Weight:** Excludes post-mortem condemnations.

**Commercial Production:** Includes slaughter and meat production in federally inspected and other plants, but excludes animals slaughtered on farms.

**Dressed Weight:** The weight of a chilled animal carcass. Beef with kidney knob in; veal with hide off; lamb and mutton with pluck out; pork with leaf fat and kidneys out, jowls on and head off.

**Dressing Percent:** Usually expressed as a percentage yield of chilled carcass in relation to the weight of the live animal on hoof. For example, a live hog that weighed 200 pounds on hoof and yielded a carcass weighing 140 pounds would have a dressing percentage of 70.

**Food and Meat Inspection:** Includes examination, checking, or testing of a carcass and/or meat against established government standards and involves checking the facility for cleanliness, health of animals, or parts of animals and quality of the meat produced.

**Number of Head:** Includes post-mortem condemnations.

**Plant, Slaughter:** An establishment where animals are killed and butchered.

**Red Meat:** Red meat production is the carcass weight after slaughter excluding condemnation and is comprised of beef, veal, pork, and lamb and mutton. The FI red meat production is equal to the total carcass weight after slaughter. The NFI meat production formula is (NFI head kill) X (live weight) X (FI dressing percentage) = NFI red meat production.

**Slaughter:** Killing and butchering of animals primarily for food.

**Slaughter, Farm:** Animals slaughtered on farms primarily for home consumption. Excludes custom slaughter for farmers at commercial establishments, but includes mobile slaughtering on farms. These estimates appear only in the annual slaughter release.

**Total Live Weight:** Excludes post-mortem condemnations.

**Wholesome Meat Act:** Legislation that specifies that all meat produced for sale in the U.S. must be inspected. Meat that is transported interstate must be inspected in compliance with Federal (USDA) Standards.

**Information Contacts**

Listed below are the commodity specialists in the Livestock Branch of the National Agricultural Statistics Service to contact for additional information.

Dan Kerestes, Chief, Livestock Branch ........................................................................................................... (202) 720-3570

Scott Hollis, Head, Livestock Section ............................................................................................................ (202) 690-2424
  Jim Collom – Dairy Products ........................................................................................................... (202) 690-3236
  Joe Gaynor – Dairy Products Prices .................................................................................................... (202) 690-2168
  Jason Hardegree – Cattle, Cattle on Feed ............................................................................................ (202) 720-3040
  Sherry Bertramsen – Livestock Slaughter ......................................................................................... (515) 284-4340
  Mike Miller – Milk Production and Milk Cows ...................................................................................... (202) 720-3278
  Everett Olbert – Sheep and Goats ....................................................................................................... (202) 720-4751
  Nicholas Streff – Hogs and Pigs ............................................................................................................ (202) 720-3106
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