

# DAIRY PRODUCTION

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## SUMMARY

Production of milk on U. S. farms during March totalled 10,447 million pounds -- 2 percent below the March 1954 record but 8 percent above average for the month. Output in the first three months of 1955 is estimated at 28.4 billion pounds, 2 percent below last year's record January-March total. Production per cow in crop reporters' herds continued upward at record high levels for the season, averaging 18.96 pounds on April 1, almost one-half pound above last year. Crop reporters were milking a record high 73.6 percent of the cows in their herds on April 1 -- 6 percent above average for the date. Feeding of grains and concentrates in crop reporters' herds set a new high April 1 rate of 6.41 pounds per cow, with record or near record quantities being fed in all regions. The condition of dairy pastures in the southern half of the country and on the West coast where milk cows were on pasture averaged 64 percent of normal on April 1 -- the lowest for the date in over three decades of record. Development of green feed was retarded by late March freezes in the southeastern half of the country, by lack of moisture in the Central and Lower Great Plains and by cold weather and drying winds over the West. From the Corn Belt and Great Lakes States eastward, moisture conditions on April 1 were satisfactory and the prospects for grass with the coming of warm weather are good.

MONTHLY MILK PRODUCTION ON FARMS, UNITED STATES,  
1944-53 AVERAGE, 1954 AND 1955

Month	Monthly total			Percent	Daily average per capita		
	Average : 1944-53	1954	1955		Average : 1944-53	1954	1955
	Million pounds				Pounds		
Jan.	8,305	9,202	9,105	99	1.82	1.84	1.79
Feb.	8,168	9,001	8,884	99	1.96	1.99	1.93
Mar.	9,653	10,683	10,447	98	2.11	2.13	2.05
Apr.	10,408	11,280			2.35	2.32	
May	12,318	12,999			2.69	2.59	
June	12,306	12,600			2.78	2.59	
July	11,552	11,558			2.52	2.29	
Aug.	10,529	10,474			2.29	2.08	
Sept.	9,174	9,369			2.06	1.91	
Oct.	8,601	9,021			1.87	1.78	
Nov.	7,743	8,474			1.73	1.73	
Dec.	8,035	8,841			1.74	1.74	
Year	116,792	123,502			2.16	2.08	

This report includes milk production and related information released in CROP PRODUCTION, together with selected special summaries brought together for those interested primarily in dairy statistics.

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Milk output below year earlier for fourth straight month

Production of milk on United States farms during March totaled 10,447 million pounds -- 2 percent below last year's record output, but otherwise the highest March production in 31 years of record. Production conditions during the first three weeks of March were quite favorable with normal or above temperatures over most of the country, but in late March the weather turned unseasonably cold. Liberal grain and concentrate feeding in all parts of the country helped boost milk output per cow and fair pasture feed was available in the South up till the late March freeze. Milk production in the first three months of 1955 totaled 28.4 billion pounds, one-half billion pounds or 2 percent below the record January-March output last year.

Production per cow in crop reporters' herds on April 1 averaged 18.96 pounds, 2 percent above last year's previous record high and the seventh consecutive month of record high first-of-the-month production. Output per cow was above a year ago and set new highs for April 1 in 5 of the 6 regions. In the East North Central area, production per cow was the second highest for the date. Nationally, production per cow in crop reporters' herds on April 1 was 15 percent above average for the date, and increases by regions ranged from 11 percent in the West to 22 percent in the South Atlantic. Crop reporters were milking a record high 73.6 percent of the milk cows in their herds on April 1 -- 2 percent above a year earlier and 6 percent above the 10-year average for the date.

Production record high in one-third of States

March milk output was above a year ago in about half of the 33 States making monthly milk production estimates, established new highs for the month in 11 States, and equalled the record high in another. On the other hand, production was the lowest for March in a quarter century of records in Wyoming and reached near record lows in Nebraska, Texas, and Montana. Wisconsin, as usual, led all States in output during March with 1,533 million pounds, followed by Minnesota with 849 million; California, 618 million, and Pennsylvania with 570 million.

ESTIMATED MONTHLY MILK PRODUCTION ON FARMS, SELECTED STATES 1/									
State	March : average : 1944-53	March : 1954	Feb. : 1955	March : 1955	State : average : 1944-53	March : 1954	Feb. : 1955	March : 1955	State : average : 1944-53
	Million pounds					Million pounds			
N. J.	94	105	95	109	Ga.	95	107	96	
Pa.	465	543	475	570	Ky.	157	180	152	
Ohio	406	475	421	485	Tenn.	166	189	153	
Ind.	286	317	255	306	Ala.	103	111	95	
Ill.	440	463	378	445	Miss.	112	136	110	
Mich.	438	478	404	469	Ark.	96	108	89	
Wis.	1,323	1,561	1,271	1,533	Okla.	176	159	136	
Minn.	800	884	731	849	Texas	295	280	230	
Iowa	515	488	409	481	Mont.	46	41	34	
Mo.	294	342	272	335	Idaho	101	118	105	
N. Dak.	141	144	122	146	Wyo.	20	17	14	
S. Dak.	117	115	91	110	Utah	56	58	54	
Nebr.	190	190	151	176	Wash.	143	148	124	
Kans.	218	218	174	207	Oreg.	98	99	79	
Va.	135	155	135	157	Calif.	512	606	515	
W. Va.	59	60	53	63	Other				
N. C.	118	132	121	133	States	1,392	1,604	1,294	1,414
S. C.	46	52	46	54	U. S.	9,653	10,683	8,884	10,447

1/ Monthly data for other States not yet available.

Liberal grain and concentrate feeding on April 1

Grain and concentrate feeding continued at record or near record levels over most of the country as the feeding season passed its late winter seasonal peak. On April 1, crop reporters fed an average of 6.41 pounds of grains and concentrates per milk cow -- 1 percent above last year's previous high and 8 percent above the 1944-53 average. Unusually low and below freezing temperatures over most of the country in late March contributed to the heavy feeding, and less than normal pasture feed was available on April 1. The amount of grain fed per cow usually increases slightly between February 1 and April 1, but this year declined, partly because the rate was very high on February 1.

Regionally, the amounts of grain fed per milk cow in the North and South Atlantic States were the highest of record for April 1. All other regional figures were near their record highs. The average per cow on April 1 ranged from 7.7 pounds in the North Atlantic to 4.9 pounds in the South Central. Feeding rates in other regions were 7.1 pounds in the East North Central, 6.7 pounds in the West North Central, 5.7 pounds in the South Atlantic, and 5.6 pounds in the West. For the country as a whole, 88 percent of the farmers reported feeding some grain or other concentrates to their milking herds on April 1 this year, compared with a range of 86 to 89 percent for the date over the previous 11-year period.

Dairy product-feed price ratios below average

The value per 100 pounds of grain and concentrate rations fed to milk cows in March was 5 percent below a year ago and the lowest for the month in 5 years. Rations averaged \$3.30 per hundredweight in milk-selling areas and \$2.90 in cream-selling areas. Although the March milk-feed price ratio was 2 percent above a year earlier, it was lower than in every other year since 1948, and 6 percent below the 1934-53 average. The butterfat-feed price ratio was the lowest for any March since 1937, down 3 percent from a year earlier, and 15 percent from the longtime average.

DAIRY PRODUCT-FEED PRICE RATIOS, BY REGIONS

Region	Milk-Feed 1/				Butterfat-Feed 2/			
	Mar. 1934-53 av.	Mar. 1954	Feb. 1955	Mar. 1955	Mar. 1934-53 av.	Mar. 1954	Feb. 1955	Mar. 1955
N. Atl.	1.21	1.12	1.21	1.14	-	-	-	-
E.N.C.	1.23	1.12	1.15	1.13	22.6	19.2	17.9	17.9
W.N.C.	1.42	1.18	1.25	1.22	25.7	22.0	21.4	21.7
S. Atl.	1.50	1.40	1.44	1.42	-	-	-	-
S. Cent.	1.37	1.26	1.38	1.34	18.0	14.9	14.1	14.4
West	1.28	1.20	1.28	1.25	20.6	17.7	17.1	16.9
U. S.	1.26	1.17	1.23	1.19	23.4	20.4	19.6	19.8

1/ Pounds of concentrate ration equal in value to 1 pound of whole milk sold by farmers to plants and dealers.

2/ Pounds of concentrate ration equal in value to 1 pound of butterfat in cream sold by farmers.

## Poorest April 1 dairy pastures of record

Condition of dairy pastures in the areas of the country where milk cows are generally on green feed on April 1 averaged 64 percent of normal -- the lowest condition in 32 years of record. The April 1 dairy pasture average represents the combined condition of pasture feed in the early pasture States in the southern half of the country and on the Pacific Coast. The current April 1 condition is 5 percentage points below last year and 13 points below the 1944-53 average for the date. The low condition of dairy pastures on April 1 is due to freeze damage to green feed in the southeastern half of the country, continued drought in the central and lower Great Plains and cold weather and drying winds over the West. From the Corn Belt and Great Lakes States eastward, moisture conditions were generally favorable and ample green feed for dairy stock is anticipated as the season progresses, although dairy pastures as yet are furnishing very little feed.

## Pastures in South, hurt by late March freeze

In most of the southern States east of the Great Plains, dairy pasture feed grew well through most of March only to suffer a major setback from cold weather late in the month. Freezes during the March 25-27 period severely damaged pasture legumes, spring plantings of small grains for grazing, and new seedings of pasture grasses. The April 1 condition of pasture feed in the lower Atlantic and Gulf Coast States ranged mostly from 10 to 15 points below average for the date. The effect of the freeze probably was not fully reflected in the April 1 condition figure and grazing will continue to be reduced for several weeks. However, with normal weather, pasture growth will be resumed and, except in a few areas that are dry, green feed is expected to come back rapidly.

In California, cold weather and drying winds retarded green feed, and in the Pacific North West, cold weather held back early growth. In parts of the Intermountain States, the coolness and dry weather affected pastures and ranges. Soils were critically dry over parts of Wyoming, eastern Colorado, western Kansas, western Oklahoma, western and northwest Texas, and eastern New Mexico.

In the eastern edge of the Great Plains and in the northern States to the east, soil moisture supplies were generally ample and prospects for grazing with the coming of warmer weather seem good. In most of those States, pasture conditions on April 1 were mostly close to average and somewhat better than a year ago.

MILK PRODUCED AND "GRAIN" FED PER MILK COW IN HERDS KEPT BY REPORTERS 1/

State	Milk produced per milk cow			"Grain" fed per milk cow 2/		
	April 1, av.	April 1,	April 1,	April 1, av.	April 1,	April 1,
Division	1944-53	1954	1955	1944-53	1954	1955
	Pounds			Pounds		
Me.	15.0	19.2	18.7	6.0	6.9	7.1
N. H.	18.1	21.4	21.9	5.8	6.6	6.4
Vt.	18.0	21.1	20.7	6.2	6.2	6.3
Mass.	18.9	21.1	22.9	6.6	6.7	6.8
Conn.	19.1	23.4	23.3	6.5	7.3	7.3
N. Y.	21.8	24.2	24.4	7.2	7.8	7.9
N. J.	22.1	23.7	25.1	8.3	8.1	8.4
Pa.	20.2	22.3	23.2	8.0	8.0	8.1
N. Atl.	20.34	22.93	23.39	7.2	7.6	7.7
Ohio	17.3	20.7	21.6	6.7	7.3	7.0
Ind.	16.0	19.0	19.9	6.3	6.9	7.3
Ill.	17.7	20.1	20.9	7.4	7.9	7.9
Mich.	20.3	23.2	22.4	6.8	7.3	7.0
Wis.	19.9	23.3	22.8	6.7	7.1	6.9
E.N.Cent.	19.26	22.16	22.08	6.8	7.3	7.1
Minn.	21.6	23.6	24.1	6.5	7.3	7.1
Iowa	17.8	18.9	19.8	7.9	7.8	7.7
Mo.	11.8	14.6	14.3	5.2	6.4	6.0
N. Dak.	15.6	17.8	18.4	5.2	5.8	6.1
S. Dak.	13.7	16.4	16.4	4.8	5.2	5.4
Nebr.	16.4	19.5	19.1	6.1	5.9	6.3
Kans.	16.1	18.8	18.8	5.7	6.5	6.6
W.N.Cent.	16.82	19.20	19.54	6.2	6.8	6.7
Md.	17.3	19.0	19.9	7.5	7.7	8.5
Va.	13.7	15.5	17.3	5.4	5.6	5.4
W. Va.	10.7	11.8	12.6	4.1	4.4	4.5
N. C.	12.5	14.7	15.8	5.4	6.2	6.0
S. C.	11.6	12.4	14.6	4.0	3.9	4.1
Ga.	9.8	10.5	11.6	4.2	4.4	5.1
S. Atl.	12.59	13.87	15.33	5.0	5.3	5.7
Ky.	11.5	12.2	13.4	5.6	6.0	5.8
Tenn.	11.2	12.1	12.1	4.8	5.6	5.5
Ala.	9.4	9.1	9.3	4.6	5.0	4.7
Miss.	7.9	8.8	10.2	3.6	3.3	4.1
Ark.	8.2	10.1	11.0	3.7	4.7	4.9
Okla.	11.2	12.4	14.0	4.5	4.7	5.3
Tex.	9.4	9.5	10.2	4.3	4.9	5.0
S. Cent.	10.07	11.05	11.78	4.3	4.8	4.9
Mont.	15.3	17.4	16.8	4.1	4.7	4.7
Idaho	19.2	21.4	21.4	4.4	4.5	4.4
Wyo.	17.0	18.5	15.8	4.1	4.6	3.7
Colo.	17.2	18.3	20.0	5.3	5.5	5.8
Utah	19.6	20.2	22.3	4.4	4.5	5.0
Wash.	19.4	20.9	20.3	6.1	5.8	5.6
Oreg.	17.1	18.0	17.2	4.9	5.2	5.0
Calif.	21.2	22.8	25.6	4.9	4.5	6.2
West	18.86	20.58	20.94	4.9	4.9	5.6
U. S.	16.42	18.55	18.96	5.91	6.33	6.41

1/ Figures for New England States and New Jersey represent combined crop and special dairy reporters; other States, regions, and U. S., crop reporters only. Regional figures include less important dairy States not shown separately.

2/ Includes grain, millfeeds and other concentrates.