

Average Price For Slaughter Steers Rose \$1



**GLENN GRIMES AND
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Today's Cattle on Feed report says the number of cattle in large feedlots at the start of May was down 3.4 percent from a year ago. April placements were up 15.1 percent and April marketings were up 2.2 percent, due to one extra slaughter day.

The average price of choice beef at retail was \$5.264 per pound in April. That was down 3.6 cents from March, but up 27.8 cents from April 2012. The average retail price for all fresh beef was \$4.853 per pound in April, up 23 cents from a year earlier. Over the last 24 months, the average price of choice beef at retail has increased 9.2 percent. The average retail price for all fresh beef is also up 9.2 percent. This implies the demand for choice beef is as strong as for select and ground beef.

The 5 area average price for slaughter steers in April was \$127.50/cwt, up a dollar from the month before and up \$6.30 from April 2012.

Corn planting is still way behind normal. As of May 12, 28 percent of corn acres were planted compared to 85 percent a year ago and a 5-year average of 65 percent planted by May 12.

Fed cattle prices were lower this week. Through Thursday, the 5-area average price for slaughter steers sold on a live weight basis was \$124.79/cwt, down \$1.43 from last week, but up \$3.36/cwt from the same week last year.

Steer prices on a dressed basis averaged \$199.76/cwt this week, down \$2.98 from a week ago, but up \$6.10 from a year ago.

The beef cutout value for choice carcasses reached \$200/cwt for the first time two weeks ago and continues to climb. This morning, the choice boxed beef carcass cutout value was \$208.96/cwt, up \$3.41 from the previous Friday and up \$16.45 from a year ago. The select carcass cutout is at \$192.52/cwt, up \$1.41 for the week. The choice-select price spread is \$16.44/cwt, the most since December.

This week's cattle slaughter totaled 652,000 head, up 3.3 percent from last week and up 1.2 percent from a year ago. The average steer dressed weight for the week ending on May 4 was 839 pounds, down 1 pound from the week before, but up 7 pounds from a year ago. This was the 69th consecutive week with average steer weight above the year-earlier level.

Oklahoma City feeder cattle prices were \$2 lower to \$2 higher this week with prices for medium and large frame #1 steers: 400-450# \$168-\$171, 450-500# \$162-\$169, 500-550# \$150-\$169, 550-600# \$141-\$156, 600-650# \$139.25-\$151.50, 650-700# \$135.50-\$143.50, 700-750# \$130-\$137, 750-800# \$131-\$135, 800-900# \$119-\$132.75, and 900-1000# \$116-\$123.25/cwt.

The June live cattle futures contract closed at \$119.40/cwt today, down \$1.15 from last week's close. The August fed cattle contract lost \$2.22 from last Friday to settle at \$118.55/cwt. October fed cattle futures settled at \$121.97/cwt.

May feeder cattle futures settled at \$133.90/cwt, down \$1.47 for the week. The August contract lost \$3.25 to close at \$143.37. Δ

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