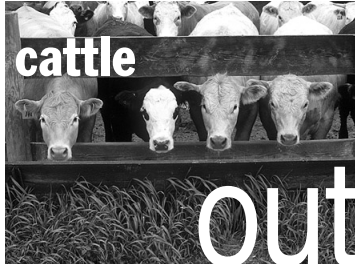


# Dairies Reduce Herds, Beef Cow Numbers Are Steady



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**C**ow slaughter for the year through the week ending May 21 is up 1.7 percent from last year. All of the increase in cow slaughter, plus some, is dairy cow slaughter. Beef cow slaughter for this period is down 5.9 percent. For the four-week period ending May 23, total cow slaughter is down 6.1 percent from a year earlier. Dairy cow slaughter for this four-week period was up 9.5 percent, but beef cow slaughter was down 11.2 percent from 12 months earlier.

This data indicates cow-calf producers have slowed or possibly even stopped the decline in the beef cow herd. With only about a two percent reduction in the cow herd on January 1, the odds are low that the herd has been reduced enough to get the beef supply in line with demand that will be profitable for producers with \$4 per bushel corn.

Wholesale beef prices in recent weeks with Choice beef at the end of last week at \$138.53 per cwt indicate a weak consumer demand. The most

recent complete data we have shows beef demand at home for consumers down slightly, but all signs indicate demand for beef in the hotel and restaurant trade is quite weak.

Feeder steers and heifers at Oklahoma City this week were \$1-3 per cwt lower and steers and heifer calves were \$2-5 per cwt lower than last week.

The prices for medium- and large-frame Number One steers at Oklahoma City this week were: 450-500 pounds \$108.75-113 per cwt, 500-600 pounds \$100-112.50 per cwt, 600-700 pounds \$97.50-107.25 per cwt, 700-800 pounds \$94.20-103 per cwt, and 800-1,000 pounds \$83.75-96.50 per cwt.

Wholesale beef prices this Friday morning had Choice beef at \$138.51 per cwt, down \$0.02 per cwt from a week earlier. Select beef at \$132.71 per cwt was down \$0.87 per cwt from seven days earlier.

The weighted average price for live fed cattle for the five-market area through Thursday at \$81.22 per cwt was down \$0.88 per cwt from a week earlier. The weighted average negotiated carcass price for the five-market area at \$129.79 per cwt was down \$1.84 per cwt from last week.

Slaughter this week under Federal Inspection was estimated at 663 thousand head, down 2.9 percent from a year earlier. Δ

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