

Dollar Weakness Contributes To Huge Meat Export Levels



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Beef exports during March totaled 245.288 million pounds, up 46.5 percent compared to a year earlier and the second largest monthly total ever behind 259.2 million pounds exported in June 2003. Beef imports during March totaled 175.01 million pounds, down 21.0 percent from 12 months earlier. During March, 10.8 percent of U.S. beef production was exported while imports equaled 9.8 percent of production.

Pork exports during March were the largest ever. The weakness of the dollar is contributing to these huge meat export levels.

Beef exports during the first quarter of 2011 were up 32.4 percent compared to last year and were the largest for any January-March quarter since 2000. The big export growth markets for U.S. beef this year are South Korea and Japan. First quarter beef imports were down 19.4 percent compared to last year.

Cattle imports from Canada were down 35 percent in the first quarter while imports from Mexico were up 35 percent compared to January-March 2010. Total cattle imports were down 3 percent.

Fed cattle prices are lower for the third week in a row and boxed beef prices are lower for the fifth consecutive week. Friday morning the choice boxed beef carcass cutout value was \$174.84/cwt, down \$2.58 from last week. The select carcass cutout was down 84 cents from the previous Friday to \$170.94 per hundred

pounds of carcass weight.

The 5-area daily weighted average price for slaughter steers sold through Thursday of this week on a live weight basis was \$113.17/cwt, down \$1.92 from last week. Steers sold on a dressed weight basis this week averaged \$183.15/cwt, 95 cents lower than the week before. This week in 2010 the average 5-area live price for steers was \$99.98/cwt and the carcass price was \$162.30/cwt.

This week's cattle slaughter totaled 653,000 head, down 0.6 percent from the week before and down 3.7 percent compared to the same week last year. The average steer dressed weight for the week ending on April 30 was 815 pounds, unchanged from the week before and 11 pounds heavier than for the same week in 2010.

Cash bids for feeder cattle around the country this week were mostly steady to \$5 lower than last week. Oklahoma City prices were \$3 to \$5 lower on stocker cattle and \$2 to \$4 lower on feeder cattle with price ranges for medium and large frame #1 steers: 400-450# \$146.50-\$152, 450-500# \$144-\$153, 500-550# \$144-\$150.75, 550-600# \$138-\$150, 600-650# \$137-\$148.75, 650-700# \$131-\$138.50, 700-750# \$130-\$134.75, 750-800# \$127-\$132.25, 800-900# \$117-\$131.25 and 900-1000# \$114.35-\$120.25/cwt.

The June fed cattle futures contract ended the week at \$109.00/cwt, down 85 cents from last week's close. The August contract closed out the week at \$110.55/cwt, down \$1.02 from the previous Friday. October settled at \$115.50 and December ended the week at \$117.80/cwt.

The May corn futures contract lost 4 cents this week to close at \$6.79/bushel. July corn ended the week at \$6.82/bu. Δ

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