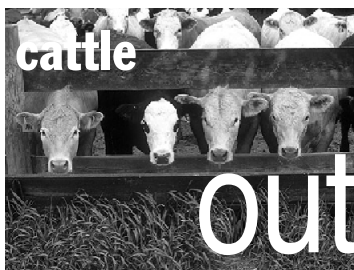


# March Cattle On Feed Numbers Rise



**GLENN GRIMES AND  
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**S**pring planting slowed this week because of rains, but as of April 25, USDA/NASS says 50 percent of U.S. corn acreage was planted. This was up from 19 percent the week before and 20 percent at this time last year.

USDA's April cattle on feed report said the number of cattle placed on feed during March was up 2.7 percent while marketings were up 4.3 percent. The increase in placements was smaller than most analysts expected. The on-feed number for April 1 was 3.5 percent lower than a year ago and the lowest April inventory in 6 years.

The proportion of feedlot animals that are heifers increased for the fourth consecutive year, an indication that cow-calf producers are not yet ready to expand the cow herd. On April 1, 2006, 33.8 percent of cattle on feed were heifers. This April, 37.3 percent are heifers.

USDA's annual estimate of cattle marketings said U.S. farmers received \$43.777 billion from cattle sales in 2009. That may sound like a lot of money, but it is \$4.741 billion less than in 2008. The top three states ranked by cash receipts are Texas, Nebraska and Kansas. Ten states had cash receipts from cattle sales in excess of \$1 billion last year.

Livestock prices have done well thus far in 2010, due in part to a tightening meat supply. USDA is forecasting 2010 per capita consumption of red meat and poultry will average 208.6

pounds, down 1.9 pounds from last year, 7.5 pounds lower than in 2008, and 13.0 pounds less than in 2007. The meat supply is very tight. If consumer confidence strengthens, then livestock prices should move higher yet.

On Friday morning, the choice boxed beef carcass cutout value was \$1.7022/pound, up 1.95 cents for the week, and 20.83 cents higher than last year. The select cutout was up 1.53 cents from the previous Friday to \$1.67.11 per pound. This week's cutout is the highest since July 2008.

The 5-area daily weighted average price for slaughter steers sold through Thursday of this week on a live weight basis was \$98.31/cwt, down \$1.00 from a week earlier but \$10.74 higher than a year ago. Steers sold on a dressed basis this week averaged \$157.78/cwt, \$2.57 lower than the week before, but \$19.82 higher than the same week of 2009.

This week's cattle slaughter equaled 660,000 head, up 3.0 percent from the previous week but down 0.9 percent compared to the same week last year.

Steer carcass weights averaged 810 pounds during the week ending April 17. That was down 4 pounds from the week before and 18 pounds lighter than a year ago. Steer weights have been below year-earlier levels for each of the last 21 weeks.

Cash bids for feeder cattle this week were between steady to \$3 higher at most locations. The price ranges at Oklahoma City for medium and large frame steers were: 400-450# \$137-147.50, 450-500# \$129.50-\$143, 500-550# \$128.50-\$139, 550-600# \$126-\$131.25, 600-650# \$121-\$128, 650-700# \$117.50-\$127.50, 700-750# \$116-\$120.25, 750-800# \$114-\$117, and 800-1000# \$100-\$113.25/cwt.  $\Delta$

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