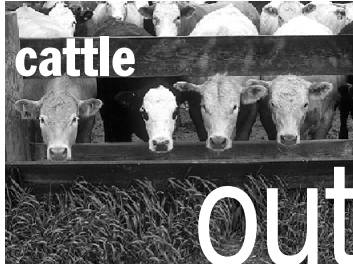


Number Of Cows, Heifers Calving Was Down In January



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The U.S. cattle industry continues to shrink slowly. The total inventory of cattle and calves in the U.S. January 1, 2008 was down 0.3 percent from a year earlier. This is the first year of decline following three years of quite slow growth.

The number of cows and heifers that have calved on farms and ranches January 1 was down 0.6 percent from 12 months earlier. The number of beef cows and heifers that have calved was down one percent. However, the number of dairy cows was up one percent from January 1, 2007.

The number of beef heifers being held for herd replacement was down 3.5 percent but the number of dairy heifers held for herd replacement was up 3.4 percent. The total number of heifer beings held for herd replacement was down 0.6 percent from a year earlier.

The number of young cattle outside feedlots not being held for herd replacement was down 0.2 percent from last year.

The total number of cattle and calves on farms January 1, 2008, in Missouri was down 3.4 percent from 2007. The number of cows and heifers that have calved was down 3.1 percent from 12 months earlier in Missouri.

The number of beef heifers being held for herd replacement in Missouri on January 1 was down 9.1 percent from a year earlier. The number of dairy heifers being held for replacement in Missouri was down 14.3 percent.

The smaller number of beef heifers being held for herd replacement is probably due mostly to the dry weather over a significant portion of Missouri last year and the high price for corn due to the demand for ethanol.

The total cattle herd in both the U.S. and Missouri is expected to decline some in the next few years as the meat industry adjusts to higher feed prices.

The total number of operations with an inventory of cattle and calves on January 1, 2008, in the U.S. was down 0.4 percent and the number of operations with a beef cow inventory was down 0.7 percent from last year.

Feeder steers at Oklahoma City this week were steady to \$3.00 per cwt higher than a week earlier. Stocker steers and steer calves were \$2-4 higher and feeder heifers and heifer calves were steady to \$3.00 per cwt higher this last week.

The range in prices by weight groups for medium and large frame No. 1 steers this week at Oklahoma City were: 450-500 pounds \$123-136.50 per cwt, 500-600 pounds \$111.50-125 per cwt, 600-700 pounds \$102.75-115 per cwt, 700-800 pounds \$98-106.50 per cwt and 800-1000 pounds 92-99.50 per cwt.

Wholesale beef prices Friday morning showed Choice beef at \$151.03 per cwt up \$7.39 per cwt. Select beef at \$145.56 per cwt up \$7.71 from a week earlier.

The weighted average live fed cattle price for the five market-area through Thursday at \$90.12 per cwt up \$0.86 per cwt from seven days earlier. The weighted average carcass price for fed cattle at \$147.30 per cwt up \$1.55 per cwt through Thursday from last week.

Fed cattle trade was relatively slow to start again this week with only 16 thousand head traded through Thursday in negotiated trade.

Slaughter this week under Federal Inspection was estimated at 620 head, down 0.2 percent from a year earlier. △