

Reduced Sow Slaughter Due To Small Canada Imports



GLENN GRIMES AND RON PLAIN
Agricultural Economists •
University of Missouri

outlook

Gilt slaughter for the past six weeks has run high. However, sow slaughter is running well below a year earlier. For the four weeks ending March 28, sow slaughter was down 12 percent from 2008 after adjusting for the size of the breeding herd. For 2009 through the week ending March 28, sow slaughter was down 6.5 percent.

A portion of the reduced sow slaughter is due to smaller cull sow and boar imports from Canada. For the year through March 21, sow and boar imports from Canada were down 16.5 percent in 2009 from 2008. Barrow and gilt imports from Canada for the year through March 21 were down 79.7 percent, and feeder pig imports were down 26.3 percent for this short three-month period this year from last year.

A substantial portion of the reduced imports is probably due to the Country of Origin Labeling legislation or COOL.

Even with the mixed slaughter data for gilts and sows, we do not believe the breeding herd is changing very much, if any, in either direction but possibly a slow reduction.

Feeder pig prices this week at United Producers Tel-O-Auction were steady to a little higher than two weeks ago. The prices this week by weight groups were: 40-50 pounds at \$122 per cwt and 50-60 pounds at \$110.50-131.50 per cwt.

The prices last week nationally for feeder pigs had ten-pound basis at an average of \$36.54 per head and 40-pound basis \$61.75 per head.

Barrow and gilt live weights finally slipped a little from a week earlier. For last week in Iowa-Minnesota, barrow and gilt weights at an average of 269.1 pounds per head were down 0.4 pound from a week earlier but 2.1 pounds above a year earlier. Barrow and gilt carcass weights under Federal Inspection at 202 pounds for the week ending March 28 were two pounds

per head above a year earlier.

The major reasons for these higher weights are feeding a hotter ration including fat and lower grain costs. With the high prices last year, most producers removed fat from hog rations.

Pork product prices gained a little traction this week with the cutout Thursday afternoon at \$58.94 per cwt, up \$2.81 per cwt from seven days earlier. Loin prices at \$72.75 per cwt were up \$3.14 per cwt, Boston butts at \$66.43 per cwt were up \$3.76 per cwt, hams at \$42.58 per cwt were up \$5.88 per cwt and bellies at \$76.66 per cwt were up \$1.85 from a week earlier.

Live barrow and gilt prices this Thursday morning were steady to \$1 per cwt lower compared to last Friday. Weighted average negotiated carcass prices Friday morning were \$0.73 – \$3.02 per cwt lower compared to a week earlier. The live prices Thursday morning for select markets were: Peoria \$34 per cwt, Zumbrota, Minnesota, \$38 per cwt and interior Missouri \$39.50 per cwt. The weighted average negotiated carcass prices Friday morning by area were: western Cornbelt \$54.71 per cwt, eastern Cornbelt \$53.64 per cwt, Iowa-Minnesota \$54.67 per cwt and nation \$54.13 per cwt.

Slaughter this week under Federal Inspection was estimated at 2,129 thousand head, down five percent from a year earlier. Δ

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