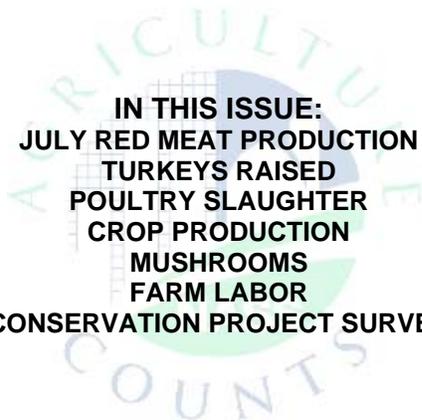


MOUNTAIN STATE REPORTER

RELEASED: SEPTEMBER 2006

VOLUME 19, NUMBER 9



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JULY RED MEAT PRODUCTION

West Virginia - Commercial red meat production during July 2006 totaled 300,000 pounds. This was up 25 percent from July 2005 and up 17 percent from June 2006 production. Commercial red meat production is the carcass weight after slaughter including beef, veal, pork, and lamb and mutton. Individual commodity production is total live weight of commercial slaughter.

Commercial cattle slaughter totaled 390,000 pounds live weight, up 77,000 pounds from July 2005. Cattle slaughter totaled 300 head, the same as the previous year. The average live weight, at 1,204 pounds, was up 113 pounds from a year ago.

Commercial calf slaughter was not published to avoid disclosing individual operations.

Commercial hog slaughter totaled 115,000 pounds live weight, up 6,000 pounds from last year. Hog slaughter totaled 500 head, the same as July 2005. The average live weight, at 216 pounds, was down 16 pounds from the previous year.

Commercial sheep and lamb slaughter was not published to avoid disclosing individual operations.

United States - Commercial red meat production totaled 3.78 billion pounds in July, up 5 percent from the 3.61 billion pounds produced in July 2005.

Beef production, at 2.20 billion pounds, was 6 percent above the previous year. Cattle slaughter totaled 2.83 million head, up 4 percent from July 2005. The

average live weight was up 18 pounds from the previous year, at 1,272 pounds.

Veal production totaled 12.0 million pounds, 4 percent below July a year ago. Calf slaughter totaled 57,900 head, down 1 percent from July 2005. The average live weight was 10 pounds below last year, at 340 pounds.

Pork production totaled 1.55 billion pounds, up 3 percent from the previous year. Hog kill totaled 7.88 million head, 3 percent above July 2005. The average live weight was 1 pound above the previous year, at 265 pounds.

Lamb and mutton production, at 13.2 million pounds, was down 1 percent from July 2005. Sheep slaughter totaled 202,100 head, 1 percent above last year. The average live weight was 131 pounds, down 3 pounds from July a year ago.

January to July 2006 commercial red meat production was 27.1 billion pounds, up 5 percent from 2005. Accumulated beef production was up 7 percent from last year, veal was down 4 percent, pork was up 2 percent from last year, and lamb and mutton production was up 2 percent.

July 2005 contained 21 weekdays (including one holiday) and 5 Saturdays. July 2006 contained 21 weekdays (including one holiday) and 5 Saturdays.

TURKEYS RAISED

United States - The preliminary estimate of turkeys raised in the United States during 2006 is 265 million, up 3 percent from the number raised during 2005.

The following six States are expected to account for about two-thirds of the turkeys produced in the United States during 2006:

Minnesota, at 45.0 million birds, is expected to raise the largest number of any state, showing a 1 percent increase from last year.

North Carolina ranks second with 37.0 million birds, up 3 percent from 2005.

Arkansas is in third place by producing 30.0 million birds, 3 percent more than a year ago.

Virginia, at 22.5 million birds is up 7 percent from 2005.

Missouri growers expect to produce 21.5 million birds in 2006, up 5 percent from the previous year.

California expects to raise 16.0 million turkeys, 7 percent more than a year earlier.

POULTRY SLAUGHTER

United States - Poultry certified wholesome during July 2006 (ready-to-cook weight) totaled 3.36 billion pounds, up 2 percent from the amount certified in July 2005. Totals for June 2006 were up slightly with 3.67 billion pounds certified.

The **preliminary total live weight of poultry inspected** during July 2006 was 4.51 billion pounds, up 2 percent from 4.42 billion pounds a year ago. Young chickens inspected totaled 3.85 billion pounds, up 2 percent from July 2005. Mature chickens, at 62.7 million pounds, were down 9 percent from the previous year. Turkey inspections totaled 578 million pounds, an increase of 6 percent from a year ago. Ducks totaled 14.2 million pounds, up slightly from last year.

Young chickens slaughtered during July 2006 averaged 5.38 pounds per bird, up 2 percent from July 2005. The average live weight of mature chickens was 6.37 pounds per bird, up 9 percent from a year ago. Turkeys slaughtered during July 2006 averaged 27.8 pounds per bird, up 1 percent from July 2005.

Ante-mortem condemnations during July 2006 totaled 22.7 million pounds. Condemnations were 0.50 percent of the live weight inspected, as compared with 0.45 percent a year earlier. Post-mortem condemnations, at 42.6 million pounds (N.Y. dressed weight), were 1.05 percent of quantities inspected, compared with 1.07 percent a year earlier.

CROP PRODUCTION

United States - Corn for Grain: Acreage harvested and to be harvested for grain is forecast at 71.8 million acres, down 250,000 acres from August and down 4 percent from 2005. Area harvested for grain was reduced by 250,000 acres in South Dakota where hot, dry conditions during the growing season caused producers to either abandon acreage or harvest additional acreage for silage.

The September 1 **corn objective yield data** indicates the highest stalk count and the second highest ear count on record, behind 2004, for the combined 10 objective yield States (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, South Dakota, and

Wisconsin). The indicated number of ears per acre is higher than last year in all objective yield States, except Kansas and South Dakota. In Illinois, the indicated ear count is the highest on record.

As of September 3, fifty-nine percent of the crop was rated in good to excellent condition in the 18 major corn producing States, up 3 percentage points from last month and 8 points above a year ago. Moderate to heavy precipitation across the northern and central Great Plains and western Corn Belt during the month improved soil moisture levels and crop conditions. Mostly dry conditions across the eastern Corn Belt and middle Atlantic States caused crop conditions to decline from last month. Compared to last year, crop conditions were generally better in the eastern Corn Belt and Ohio Valley and worse in the western Corn Belt and Great Plains.

Ninety-seven percent of the acreage was at or beyond the dough stage on September 3, compared with 96 percent last year and 92 percent for the 5-year average. Doughing progress was at or ahead of the normal pace in all States. Acreage in the dent stage advanced to 81 percent, 4 percentage points ahead of last year and 14 points ahead of normal. Denting was farthest ahead in the northern Corn Belt and northern Great Plains, with Michigan leading the normal pace by 33 points, Minnesota by 31 points, and North Dakota by 27 points.

Soybean production is forecast at 3.09 billion bushels, up 6 percent from the August forecast and up slightly from the 2005 crop. If realized, this would be the second highest production on record. Based on September 1 conditions, yields are expected to average 41.8 bushels per acre, up 2.2 bushels from August but down 1.5 bushels from last year's record high yield. Compared with last month, yields are forecast higher across the Corn Belt and most of the northern and central Great Plains. Near or above normal moisture in those areas during August improved crop conditions. In contrast, yields are down or unchanged from the August 1 forecast across the Gulf Coast States and Atlantic Coast States, with the exception of South Carolina.

Area for harvest is forecast at 73.9 million acres, unchanged from August but up 4 percent from last year. The September 1 objective yield data for the combined 7 major soybean producing States (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, and Ohio) indicate only slightly lower pod counts from last year's record high pod counts. Illinois and Indiana pod counts are up from last year, while in Nebraska and Iowa fewer pods are indicated this year compared with last year's record or near record high pod counts. As of September 3, thirteen percent of the acreage was dropping leaves or beyond, equal to 2005 but 1 point ahead of the 5-year average.

As of September 3, fifty-nine percent of the **soybean crop** was rated good to excellent, 6 percentage points above the rating at the beginning of August and 5 points above the same week in 2005. With the exception of Kansas and Missouri, crop conditions improved or were unchanged for the month of August in the Corn Belt, the central and northern Great Plains, and the Delta States. The eastern part of Kansas did receive some needed rain during the month but much of it was too late to improve the soybean crop. Drought conditions continued in Alabama, Georgia, and Mississippi, where harvest is well underway. A record high yield is forecast in Kentucky, along with record tying yields in Michigan and New York.

MUSHROOMS

United States - Sales of the 2005-06 U.S. mushroom crop are 843 million pounds, down 1 percent from both the 2004-05 and 2003-04 seasons. Value of sales for the 2005-06 U.S. mushroom crop is \$881 million, down 3 percent from the previous season and 4 percent below the 2003-04 season. The number of growers, at 305, is up 9 from last season. The average price is \$1.05 per pound, down 2 cents from 2004-05.

Sales reported by growers of **Agaricus mushrooms** for fresh market are 701 million pounds, up 1 percent from last season. Sales of Agaricus mushrooms for processing are 129 million pounds, 9 percent below last season. Value of sales for all Agaricus mushrooms totaled 841 million dollars, down 2 percent from the previous season and 4 percent below 2003-04.

Value of sales for commercially grown **specialty mushrooms** in 2005-06 is \$41 million, down 13 percent from the 2004-05 season. A specialty grower is defined as having at least 200 natural wood logs in production or some commercial indoor growing area. The average price per pound received by growers, at \$3.01, is down 8 cents from the previous season.

Sales of **Shiitake mushrooms** totaled 7.76 million pounds for the 2005-06 season, down 10 percent from the previous season. Price per pound received by growers, at \$3.24, is down 1 cent from 2004-05. Sales volume of Oyster mushrooms, at 4.56 million pounds, is down 11 percent from the previous season. Price per pound received by growers, at \$2.15, is down 20 cents from the previous season. Sales of exotic mushrooms, other than Shiitake or Oyster, are 1.19 million pounds, down 10 percent from last season. Price per pound received by growers, at \$4.85, is down 5 cents from 2004-05.

FARM LABOR

United States - There were 1,202,000 hired workers on the Nation's farms and ranches during the week of July 9-15, 2006, down 11 percent from a year ago. Of these hired workers, 875,000 workers were hired directly by farm operators. Agricultural service employees on farms and ranches made up the remaining 327,000 workers.

Farm operators paid their hired workers an average wage of \$9.74 per hour during the July 2006 reference week, up 36 cents from a year earlier. Field workers received an average of \$8.95 per hour, up 34 cents from last July, while livestock workers earned \$9.56 per hour compared with \$9.26 a year earlier. The field and livestock worker combined wage rate, at \$9.10 per hour, was up 32 cents from last year. The number of hours worked averaged 40.9 hours for hired workers during the survey week, up 1 percent from a year ago.

The **largest decreases** in the number of hired farm workers from last year occurred in California and in the Pacific (Oregon and Washington), Northeast I (New England and New York), Southern Plains (Oklahoma and Texas), and Corn Belt II (Iowa and Missouri) regions. In California, the cool, wet spring caused considerable delays in planting and slowed development of many field and vegetable crops. The ongoing worker shortages due to the heightened security at the Mexican border, combined with the late growing season, have kept the number of hired workers below last year. Wheat harvest in the Pacific region was behind normal due to cool early season temperatures, and worker shortages were reported due to the tight Mexican border security. In the Northeast I region, rain and wet conditions delayed field activities, and worker shortages were also reported in New York. These factors combined to reduce the number of hired workers from the previous year. Although some rain was received in the Southern Plains region, drought conditions prevailed over much of the area and severely curtailed crop growth and hay production, minimizing the need for field workers. Deteriorating pastures and decreased hay supplies caused more culling of livestock herds, reducing the demand for livestock workers. In the Corn Belt II region, wet conditions compared with the extreme dryness experienced during last year's reference week lessened the need for hired workers.

The **largest increases** in the number of hired farm workers from a year ago were in the Delta (Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi), Appalachian II (Kentucky, Tennessee, and West Virginia), and Appalachian I (North Carolina and Virginia) regions, and in Florida. Warm, dry weather in the Delta region allowed field activities to progress rapidly and increased the need for irrigation, causing more hired workers to be required. In the Appalachian II region, dry conditions in Tennessee

more than offset the impact of wet weather in the remainder of the region, resulting in a collectively stronger demand for hired workers. Slightly drier conditions in the Appalachian I region compared with last year's reference week allowed field activities to make good progress and increased the need for hired workers. In Florida, the previous year's reference week was heavily impacted by moisture from earlier hurricanes. A return to more normal weather patterns this year led to an increased demand for field workers.

Hired farm worker wage rates were generally above a year ago in most regions. The largest increases occurred in the Pacific, Appalachian II, Corn Belt II, Delta, and Appalachian I regions. In the Pacific and Corn Belt II regions, the higher wages were due to a significantly lower percentage of part time workers in the work force. The higher wages in the Appalachian II region were due to a larger proportion of highly paid equine workers in the work force. In the Delta region, the higher wages were due to increased demand for highly skilled workers on aquaculture and dairy farms. The higher wages in the Appalachian I region were due to a greater percentage of nursery and greenhouse workers in the work force.

CONSERVATION PROJECT SURVEY

How are farmers' and ranchers' conservation practices improving water, soil and air quality and enhancing wildlife habitat across the country? To help answer this question, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) will conduct the Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP) mid-September through mid-December.

Selected producers will be asked for information about their farming activities, land management practices and participation in USDA conservation programs. The information gathered through CEAP will be combined with data from other sources to create a complete picture of environmental and conservation management conditions across the United States. As with all NASS surveys, CEAP participants can be assured that the confidentiality of their responses is protected by law.

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