

**HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS REPORT**

Livestock Slaughter  
Average Prices Received by Farmers  
U.S. Farm Labor & Wage Rates  
NASS Monthly Ag Newsletter

**Louisiana Livestock Slaughter**

Commercial red meat production in Louisiana during April totaled 1.3 million pounds, unchanged from March and the previous year.

There were 1,100 head of **cattle** slaughtered during April, unchanged from March but 200 head below the previous year. Average live weight was 909 pounds, down 24 pounds from the previous month but 48 pounds above April 2002. Total live weight, at 1.03 million pounds, was 1 percent above the previous month but 5 percent below the previous year.

**Calves** slaughtered during April totaled 800 head, unchanged from March and the previous year. Live weight averaged 487 pounds, down 2 pounds from March and 16 pounds below a year ago. Total live weight, at 398,000 pounds, was up 2 percent from March but 1 percent below the previous year.

The number of **hogs** slaughtered during April totaled 2,300 head, up 100 head from March and 300 head above April 2002. Average live weight was 209 pounds, down 28 pounds from March and 6 pounds below the previous year. Total live weight was 483,000 pounds, down 5 percent from March but 14 percent above a year ago.

The number of **sheep** slaughtered during April was 100 head, down 100 head from March and the previous year. Live weight averaged 100 pounds, down 7 pounds from the previous month and 3 pounds below the previous year.

**United States Livestock Slaughter**

Commercial red meat production for the United States totaled 3.85 billion pounds in April, down 1 percent from the 3.90 billion pounds produced in April 2002.

April 2002 contained 22 weekdays and 4 Saturdays. April 2003 contained 22 weekdays and 4 Saturdays.

**Beef production**, at 2.15 billion pounds, was 2 percent below the previous year. Cattle slaughter totaled 2.97 million head, up 1 percent from April 2002. The average live weight was 1,209 pounds, down 18 pounds from April a year ago.

**Veal production** totaled 16.0 million pounds, 1 percent below April a year ago. Calf slaughter totaled 79,300 head, down 3 percent from April 2002. The average live weight was 336 pounds, up 9 pounds from April a year ago.

**Pork production** totaled 1.66 billion pounds, down 1 percent from the previous year. Hog kill totaled 8.33 million head, 1 percent below April 2002. The average live weight was 268 pounds, up 1 pound from April a year ago.

**Lamb and mutton production**, at 19.4 million pounds, was up 2 percent from April 2002. Sheep slaughter totaled 295,600 head, 6 percent above last year. The average live weight was 132 pounds, down 5 pounds from April a year ago.

January to April red meat production was 15.12 billion pounds, virtually unchanged from 2002. Accumulated beef production was down 2 percent from last year, veal was up 6 percent, pork was up 1 percent, and lamb and mutton was down 11 percent.

**Commercial Livestock Slaughter and Meat Production: Louisiana and United States**

Item	Louisiana					United States			
	March	April		January - April		April		January - April	
	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003
	-----Number, thousand head-----					-----Number, thousand head-----			
Cattle	1.1	1.3	1.1	5.5	4.9	2,948.7	2,966.2	11,359.0	11,317.7
Calves	0.8	0.8	0.8	3.0	3.1	82.1	79.3	320.5	341.2
Hogs	2.2	2.0	2.3	9.9	9.2	8,425.3	8,333.5	32,573.6	32,953.4
Sheep & Lambs	0.2	0.2	0.1	1.0	0.7	278.9	295.6	1,119.1	1,022.7
	-----Total live weight, thousand pounds-----					-----Total live weight, thousand pounds-----			
Cattle	1,021	1,083	1,027	4,853	4,401	3,618,825	3,586,198	14,150,272	14,058,032
Calves	389	402	398	1,481	1,550	26,876	26,677	103,916	110,204
Hogs	511	424	483	2,160	1,987	2,253,148	2,231,821	8,703,349	8,814,567
Sheep & Lambs	25	17	14	103	78	38,343	38,868	154,199	137,007
	-----Average live weight, pounds-----					-----Average live weight, pounds-----			
Cattle	933	861	909	882	898	1,227	1,209	1,246	1,243
Calves	489	503	487	494	500	327	336	325	323
Hogs	237	215	209	218	216	267	268	267	267
Sheep & Lambs	107	103	100	103	111	137	132	138	134
	-----Million pounds-----					-----Million pounds-----			
Red meat	1.3	1.3	1.3	5.7	5.3	3,901.8	3,845.5	15,162.6	15,122.6

## United States Prices Received Index Up

The preliminary All Farm Products Index of Prices Received by farmers in May was 107, based on 1990-92=100, up 5.9 percent from the April Index. All commodity group indexes except potatoes and dry beans, tobacco, and the other crops category increased since last month. Higher prices for lettuce, hogs, broilers and soybeans more than offset lower prices for eggs, asparagus, onions and tomatoes. The seasonal change in the mix of commodities farmers sell, based on the past 3-year average, also affects the overall index. Increased marketings of cantaloupes, grapes, sweet corn and peaches offset decreased marketings of cattle, dairy, apples and asparagus.

The preliminary All Farm Products Index was up 12 percent from May 2002. Higher prices for cattle, lettuce, corn, and soybeans more than offset lower prices for dairy, potatoes, sweet corn and tomatoes.

The Food Commodities Index increased 7.1 percent above last month to 106, and is 12 percent above May last year.

## United States Prices Paid Index Down 1 Point

The May Index of Prices Paid for Commodities and Services, Interest, Taxes, and Farm Wage Rates was 127 percent for the 1990-92 average. The index was down 1 point from April but 3.3 percent above May 2002. Lower prices in May for LP gas, diesel fuel, gasoline, and feeder pigs more than offset higher prices for nitrogen fertilizers, hay and forages, feed grains, and potash and phosphate materials.

### Average Prices Received by Farmers

Item	Louisiana			United States		
	Entire Month		Preliminary	Entire Month		Preliminary
	May 2002	April 2003	May 2003 <sup>1</sup>	May 2002	April 2003	May 2003 <sup>1</sup>
	-----Dollars-----			-----Dollars-----		
Soybeans, per bushel	2/	5.96	6.33	4.64	5.82	6.19
Rice, per cwt	4.04	4.54	4.70	3.98	4.33	4.51
Upland Cotton, per pound	.233	.447	3/ .437	.267	.450	3/ .466
Hay, all, baled, per ton	n/a	n/a	n/a	103.00	94.50	99.20
Beef Cattle, per cwt	50.10	48.60	49.10	65.10	74.60	74.90
Steers & Heifers, per cwt	73.00	75.70	76.00	68.10	78.80	79.00
Cows, per cwt	39.80	37.50	37.00	39.80	40.20	41.10
Calves, per cwt	86.20	89.30	88.00	99.50	99.10	99.30
Broilers, live, per pound	n/a	n/a	n/a	.300	.310	.330
Eggs, all, per dozen	n/a	n/a	n/a	.505	.690	.587
Milk, all, per cwt <sup>4</sup>	n/a	n/a	n/a	12.10	11.00	11.10

<sup>1</sup>Mid-month.

<sup>2</sup>Not Published.

<sup>3</sup>Based on sales during the first half of the month.

<sup>4</sup>Before deductions for hauling and government withholdings. Includes bulk tank, quantity, and other premiums. Excludes hauling subsidies.

n/a = not available

## United States Farm Labor & Wage Rates

Item	Delta <sup>1</sup>			United States		
	April 2002	January 2003	April 2003	April 2002	January <sup>2</sup> 2003	April 2003
	-----Thousand Workers-----			-----Thousand Workers-----		
<b>Hired Workers (All)</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>1,079</b>	<b>889</b>	<b>938</b>
<b>Ag Service Workers</b>	---	---	---	189	160	157
<b>Hired Farm Workers</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>890</b>	<b>729</b>	<b>781</b>
150 Days or More	21	16	25	722	614	619
149 Days or Less	9	2	6	168	115	162
	-----Per Week-----			-----Per Week-----		
<b>Average Hours Worked</b> <b>(Hired Farm Workers)</b>	<b>37.1</b>	<b>38.3</b>	<b>43.1</b>	<b>40.2</b>	<b>37.7</b>	<b>40.1</b>
	-----Per Hour-----			-----Per Hour-----		
<b>Average Wage Rate</b> <b>(Hired Farm Workers)</b>	<b>\$7.50</b>	<b>\$8.63</b>	<b>\$7.63</b>	<b>\$8.83</b>	<b>\$9.34</b>	<b>\$9.16</b>
<b>By Type of Worker</b>						
Field	\$7.05	\$8.56	\$7.20	\$8.06	\$8.30	\$8.40
Livestock	\$7.06	\$7.89	\$7.54	\$8.43	\$8.90	\$8.75

<sup>1</sup>Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi.

<sup>2</sup>Revised.

--- Data not published.

### United States Farm Labor

There were 938,000 hired workers on the Nation's farms and ranches during the week of April 6-12, 2003, down 13 percent from a year ago. There were 781,000 workers hired directly by farm operators. Agricultural service employees on farms and ranches made up the remaining 157,000 workers.

Farm operators paid their hired workers an average wage rate of \$9.16 per hour during the April 2003 reference week, up 33 cents from a year earlier. Field workers received an average of \$8.40 per hour, up 34 cents from last April. Livestock workers earned \$8.75 per hour compared with \$8.43 a year earlier. The Field and Livestock worker combined wage rate was up 34 cents from last year.

## Nass Monthly Ag. Newsletter

The following estimates, forecasts, and projections are mainly taken from recent publications of the National Agricultural Statistics Service, Economic Research Service, and the World Agricultural Outlook Board of the USDA.

**Wheat:** Winter wheat production is forecast at 1.56 billion bushels, up 37 percent from last year. Based on May 1 conditions, the U.S. winter wheat yield is forecast at 42.9 bushels per acre, 4.4 bushels more than last year's yield. Total U.S. wheat production is projected by the USDA's World Agricultural Outlook Board (WAOB) at 2.11 billion bushels, up 31 percent from last year. The projected price range for 2003/04 is \$3.05 to \$3.65 per bushel, compared with an estimated \$3.56 for 2002/03.

**Corn:** The U.S. 2003 corn crop is projected at 10.1 billion bushels by the WAOB, up 12 percent from last year. The March Prospective Plantings area, historic harvested-to-planted relationships, and a trend yield of 139.7 bushels per acre are assumed. The trend yield is adjusted for planting progress and assumes normal weather. While the larger corn crop is partially offset by smaller forecast carryin stocks, total U.S. corn supplies for 2003/04 are up 5 percent. The projected price range for the 2003 corn crop is \$1.90 to \$2.30 per bushel, compared with \$2.25 to \$2.35 for 2002/03.

**Soybeans:** The U.S. 2003 soybean production is projected at 2.86 billion bushels by the WAOB, 5 percent higher than the 2002/03 crop. U.S. soybean production is based on intended soybean plantings of 73.2 million acres and a trend yield of 39.7 bushels per acre. Season average soybean prices for 2003/04 are projected at \$4.45 to \$5.45 per bushel, compared with a forecast of \$5.50 for the 2002/03 crop. Soybean meal prices are forecast at \$150 to \$180 per short ton, compared with \$175 per ton for 2002/03.

**Cotton:** The first U.S. cotton projections by the WAOB for 2003/04 include stable production, declining domestic mill use, and record exports, resulting in sharply lower ending stocks. Production is projected at 17.2 million bales, based on a planted area of 14.3 million acres and average abandonment and yield. U.S. cotton exports are projected at a record 11.5 million bales, due mainly to tight supplies and rising demand in foreign markets. Projected ending stocks declined 24 percent to 4.7 million bales, their lowest level in 4 years.

**Rice:** The U.S. rice production in 2003/04 is projected at 199 million cwt by the WAOB, 6 percent lower than the 2002/03 crop. Domestic and residual use is projected at a record 126 million cwt, up 2 percent from the previous year. Projected exports, at 86 million cwt, are 26 percent below last year. The 2003/04 market year average price is expected to average between \$5.00 and \$5.50 per cwt. Global rice production is projected at 394 million tons, 3 percent above the previous year with world consumption projected at a near record level.

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