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Kentucky remains leading cattle producer east of the Mississippi

LOUISVILLE, Ky. – The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) released the Cattle report today, showing only a slight decline in overall numbers for cattle in Kentucky compared to 2017. The **Kentucky** cattle and calf inventory for Jan. 1, 2018, was estimated at 2.16 million head. Total inventory was down 10,000 head from last year.

“The cattle industry is one of the most important sectors of Kentucky’s agriculture,” said David Knopf, director of the NASS Eastern Mountain Regional Office in Kentucky. “Kentucky ranks 14th in the United States in total cattle, including calves inventory, and eighth in beef cow inventory. In 2016 gross receipts from the production of cattle totaled \$734 million, ranking it fifth among all commodities. Despite a slight retreat in total inventory, today’s report shows the large breeding herd will continue to produce sizeable calf crops. Heifers held for beef cow replacement dropped slightly to the lowest level in three years, but inventory is not showing a longer term trend.”

Cows and heifers that have calved were estimated at 1.09 million head, up 10,000 head from the 1.08 million for 2017. Beef cow inventory was estimated at 1.03 million head and milk cows were estimated at 57,000 head.

“While milk cow inventory has declined every year for the last 16 years, this year’s numbers held steady from 2017,” Knopf said.

Heifers 500 lbs. and over were estimated at 305,000 head, unchanged from last year's estimate. Beef replacement heifers totaled 145,000 head, down 5,000 from January 2017. Dairy heifers, at 45,000 head, were up 5,000 from 2017. Other heifers, at 115,000 head, were unchanged from the previous year. Steers 500 pounds and over numbered 195,000 head, down 20,000 from 2017. Bulls 500 pounds and over were unchanged head from a year ago and numbered 70,000 head. Calves less than 500 pounds were estimated at 500,000 head, unchanged from the 2017 estimate. Cattle on feed were estimated at 17,000 head, down 1,000 from the previous year.

The 2017 calf crop was estimated at 990,000 head, up 10,000 from the previous year’s estimate.

All cattle and calves in the **United States**, as of Jan. 1, 2018, totaled 94.4 million head, one percent above the 93.7 million head on Jan. 1, 2017.

All cows and heifers that have calved, at 41.1 million head, were one percent above the 40.6 million head on Jan. 1, 2017. Beef cows, at 31.7 million head, were up two percent from a year ago. Milk cows, at 9.4 million head, were up one percent from the previous year.

All heifers 500 pounds and over, as of Jan. 1, 2018, totaled 20.2 million head, one percent above the 20.1 million head on Jan. 1, 2017. Beef replacement heifers, at 6.13 million head, were down four percent from a year ago. Milk replacement heifers, at 4.78 million head, were up one percent from the previous year. Other heifers, at 9.33 million head, were four percent above a year earlier.

Steers weighing 500 pounds and over, as of Jan. 1, 2018, totaled 16.4 million head, down slightly from Jan. 1, 2017.

Bulls weighing 500 pounds and over, as of Jan. 1, 2018, totaled 2.25 million head, up slightly from Jan. 1, 2017.

Calves under 500 pounds, as of Jan. 1, 2018, totaled 14.4 million head, up slightly from Jan. 1, 2017. Cattle and calves on feed for the slaughter market in the United States for all feedlots totaled 14 million head on Jan. 1, 2018. The inventory is up seven percent from the Jan. 1, 2017 total of 13.1 million head.

Cattle on feed, in feedlots with capacity of 1,000 or more head, accounted for 82 percent of the total cattle on feed on Jan. 1, 2018, up one percent from the previous year. The combined total of calves under 500 pounds and other heifers and steers over 500 pounds (outside of feedlots) is 26.1 million head, two percent below one year ago.

The 2017 calf crop in the United States was estimated at 35.8 million head, up two percent from last year's calf crop. Calves born during the first half of 2017 were estimated at 26 million head, up two percent from the first half of 2016. Calves born during the second half of 2017 were estimated at 9.81 million head, 27 percent of the total 2017 calf crop.

This and all Kentucky NASS reports are available online at https://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Kentucky/. For more information, call the NASS Kentucky Field Office at (800) 928-5277.

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