



# LIVESTOCK

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## **CATTLE AND CALVES**

New Mexico's inventory of all cattle and calves as of January 1, 2003 increased slightly to 1.59 million head. The majority of this increase came from the continued growth of the dairy industry. The January 1, 2003 milk cow inventory increased 6.9 percent from the previous year, totaling 310,000 head. Dairy producers kept 70,000 dairy heifers for replacement, 16.7 percent above the 2002 total. Beef cow inventory fell to 470,000 head. Ranchers maintained 90,000 heifers for beef cow replacement, 10 percent lower than the previous year's total of 100,000. The inventory of steers weighing 500 pounds and over increased 30,000 head from previous year to 230,000. Bulls on hand remained steady at 50,000 head. The 2002 calf crop, including both beef and dairy calves, was estimated at 600,000 head, a 10,000 head decrease from the previous year. Calves on hand totaled 260,000 head. Cattle and calves on full feed for the slaughter market on January 1, 2002 rose to 119,000 head, 11,000 more than a year earlier. The 2002 gross income from cattle and calves declined by 26.4 percent from 2001 to \$597 million. 2000 still remained one of the highest years on record with \$924 million.

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## **RANGE AND PASTURE FEED**

Drought conditions persisted in 2002 and spring began with the state at about 50% short on its normal rainfall. Pasture conditions were rated in mostly poor to fair conditions. During April ranchers reported supplemental feeding much heavier than normal. As summer progressed, conditions began to decline. By July and August ranges began receiving rain but tanks were low and cattle fed on new grass as quickly as it came up. Some areas began greening up by early August but concerns for the upcoming winter were beginning to be heard. Herds were being reduced before the fall season. September rains were spotty and

rangeland growth was slow due to the lower overnight temperatures. By October and November conditions improved slightly and though it was too late for the 2002 livestock year, hopes were up for a better beginning to the 2003 season.

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## **DAIRY**

The State dairy industry continued its growth pattern with milk cow numbers increasing as well as milk production reaching higher levels. The number of milk cows during the year averaged 299,000 head, up 11.6 percent from 2001. Milk production set another record high at 6.3 billion pounds, up 13.6 percent from a year earlier when 5.6 billion pounds were produced. Milk production per cow, at 21,124 pounds, was up 374 pounds from last year. Among the 20 major milk producing states, New Mexico ranked 4<sup>th</sup> in milk production per cow and 7<sup>th</sup> in total milk production. For the second straight year, milk has been ranked New Mexico's number one cash commodity.

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## **SHEEP AND LAMBS**

Sheep and lambs inventory as of January 1, 2003 totaled 215,000 head, down 6.5 percent from a year earlier. The number of breeding sheep decreased 10,000 head to 175,000 head during the year. Market sheep and lambs dropped 11.1 percent to 40,000 head. The 2002 lamb crop, at 125,000 head, was 10.7 percent below the previous year. Producer gross income decreased 11.3 percent to \$7.6 million. Wool was sheared from 215,000 sheep and lambs, producing 1.75 million pounds. Value of wool produced, increased 6.4 percent to \$1.4 million, as the average price of wool increased to \$0.80 per pound.