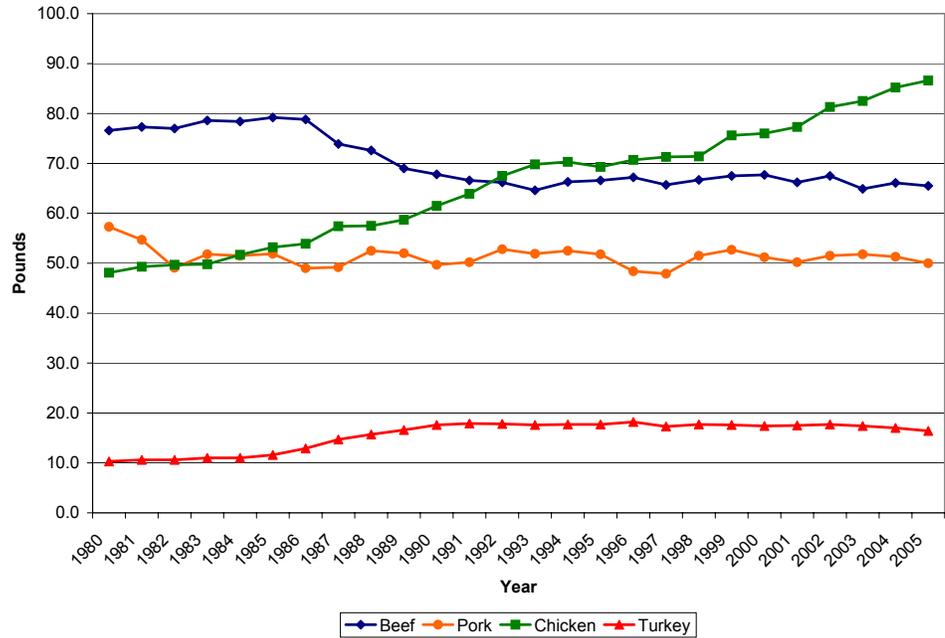


The meat and poultry industry is the largest segment of United States agriculture. Total meat and poultry production in 2003 reached more than 85 billion pounds. Annual sales for 2002, the last year for which statistics are available, are estimated at more than \$119 billion among the meat packing, meat processing and poultry processing industries. Americans consumed 218.3 pounds of meat and poultry per person in 2003. And Americans are not the only people benefiting from the most bountiful supply of agricultural commodities on earth. Meat and poultry products represent America's top agricultural export and account for 9.5 percent of the total U.S. meat production. Meat and poultry production and consumption statistics illustrate the impressive size and scope of the industry.

Average Annual Per Capita Consumption (in pounds)



Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture

red meat. Red meat includes beef, veal, lamb, mutton and pork. American meat packers produced 24.6 billion pounds of beef, 156 million pounds of veal and lamb and 187 million pounds of mutton and 20 billion pounds of pork.

Poultry production in the U.S. in 2005 totaled 41 billion pounds, with chicken production totaling 35.8 billion pounds and turkey production totaling 5.5 billion pounds.

Meat and poultry industry sales topped \$143 billion in 2004, the most current year for which there is data. Red meat slaughter and processing industry sales topped \$100 billion. Sales for the poultry industry totaled \$42.6 billion in 2004.

The value of exported livestock, meat, poultry and related products totaled \$12.357 billion in 2003. Related meat products include animal byproducts like tallow, lard, oils and greases, casings, hides and skins, and wool and mohair.

Major U.S. export markets include Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Uruguay, Costa Rica and Argentina for fresh or frozen beef; Brazil, Argentina,

Production

Meat production starts with raw materials from farms and feedlots in nearly all 50 states. The national livestock population – cattle, sheep, and hogs – on farms January 1, 2005, was 164 million. Just over 9 billion chickens and 248.1 million turkeys were processed into poultry products in 2005.

Livestock are situated on farms and feedlots across the country, with some states having a higher livestock population than others. Texas, Kansas and Nebraska had the highest number of cattle on the farm on January 1, 2006; Texas, California and Wyoming had the highest number of sheep. Iowa, North Carolina and Minnesota had the highest number of hogs on Dec. 1, 2005. Georgia, Ohio and Pennsylvania had the highest number of chickens sold for slaughter in 2002.

In 2005, the U.S. produced 45.7 billion pounds of

Canada, Mexico and Costa Rica for processed or canned beef; Canada and the European Union for fresh or frozen pork; and Canada, the European Union, Denmark and Poland for processed or canned pork.

In 2005, the U.S. exported about 2.3 million metric tons of chicken and 232,900 metric tons of turkey products to major foreign markets such as the Russian Federation, Latvia, Canada, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Mexico. The Russian Federation imported the most U.S. chicken in 2005, purchasing more than 760,600 metric tons. Mexico imported the bulk of U.S. turkey in 2005, purchasing 153,000 metric tons. The value of poultry exports to major markets totals nearly \$1.6 billion.

Consumption

Meat and poultry consumption is best measured on a retail weight basis, which refers to the weight of the meat purchased at retail stores. In 2005, per capita consumption of red meat, poultry and fish was 201.8 pounds. A little more than half (54 percent) of all meat consumed are red meat products—beef, veal, lamb, mutton and pork. Poultry comprises 36.8 percent of meat consumption and fish comprises 8.1 percent.

Pork consumption has remained fairly stable over the last two decades, USDA data show. Annual per capita pork consumption reached a high of 60.5 pounds in 1971 and a low of 42.9 pounds in 1975. In 2005, per capita consumption was 50 pounds.

Beef consumption has trended downward since the 1970s. Per capita consumption of beef reached an all-time high of 94.3 pounds in 1976 when beef supplies were at record levels because of the liquidation of the nation's beef herd. Beef consumption has continued to decline in the 1980s and 1990s, but over the past ten years has remained at an average of 66.4 pounds per capita. In 2005, per capita beef consumption was 66.5 pounds. Americans consumed 33.5 pounds of hamburger and 32 pounds of other beef cuts per capita in 2003.

Veal and lamb consumption in the U.S. is small relative to other products. Americans consumed .5 pounds per capita of veal and .8 pounds per capita of lamb in 2005.

Per capita consumption of chicken and turkey has increased dramatically since the 1970s, according to USDA data. Chicken consumption rose from 40.3 pounds per person in 1970 to 86.6 pounds per person in 2005. Turkey consumption climbed from 8.1 pounds

per person in 1970 to 16.4 pounds per person in 2005.

Consumer Expenditures

Over an 11-year period, consumer spending on fresh meat—beef, veal, lamb and pork—climbed from \$27 million in 1988 to nearly \$29 million in 1999, according to statistics compiled by Supermarket Business Magazine.

Consumers increased their spending on poultry products from more than \$10 million in 1988 to more than \$18 million in 1999. To put that in perspective, grocery sales topped \$310 million in 1988 and \$414 million in 1998.

Consumers have increased their spending at grocery store delis from \$9.5 million in 1988 to \$24.4 million in 1999, according to statistics compiled by Supermarket Business Magazine. Statistics and anecdotal evidence point to a growing trend of consumers purchasing home meal replacements—fully cooked or heat and serve meals—from grocery store delis.

Per capita, Americans in 2005 spent \$268.12 on beef, \$141.09 on pork, \$148.27 on chicken and \$17.48 on turkey. In 1970, Americans spent \$86.02 on beef, \$42.80 on pork, \$15.22 on chicken and \$4.54 on turkey.

Consumers spent an average of \$2.30 per pound on hamburger last year and \$4.09 per pound for choice beef cuts. Choice beef cuts can include loins, ribeyes, chuck and flank steaks.

Helpful Links

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