

U.S. MEAT AND POULTRY PRODUCTION & CONSUMPTION: AN OVERVIEW

The meat and poultry industry is the largest segment of United States agriculture. Total meat and poultry production in 2012 reached more than 93.1 billion pounds. Annual sales for 2011, the last year for which statistics are available, are estimated at more than \$185.8 billion among the meat packing, meat processing and poultry processing industries. Americans consumed 182.7 pounds of meat and poultry and fish per person in 2012. And Americans are not the only people benefiting from the most bountiful supply of agricultural commodities on earth. Meat and poultry production and consumption statistics illustrate the impressive size and scope of the industry both here and abroad.

Production

Meat production starts with raw materials from farms and feedlots in nearly all 50 states. The national livestock population – cattle, sheep, lambs and hogs – on farms in 2013 was 316.2 million.

Livestock are situated on farms and feedlots across the country, with some states having a higher livestock population than others. Texas, Nebraska and Kansas had the highest number of cattle on the farm in 2013; Texas, California and Colorado had the highest number of sheep. Iowa, North Carolina and Minnesota had the highest number of hogs in 2013.

In 2012, the U.S. produced more than 49.6 billion pounds of red meat. Red meat includes beef, veal, lamb, mutton and pork. American meat packers produced 2 billion pounds of beef, 125.5 million pounds of veal, 160.8 million pounds of lamb and mutton and 23.3 billion pounds of pork.

Poultry production in the U.S. in 2012 totaled 43.5 billion pounds, with chicken production totaling 37.6 billion pounds and turkey production totaling 6.00 billion pounds.

Meat and poultry industry sales topped \$185 billion in 2011, the most current year for which there is data. Red meat slaughter and processing industry sales totaled \$133 billion. Sales for the poultry industry totaled \$52.4 billion in 2011.

The value of exported livestock, meat, poultry and related products totaled \$29 billion in 2012. 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, Mexico, Nicaragua, Uruguay and Costa Rica for fresh or frozen beef; Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay for processed or canned beef; Canada and the European Union for fresh or frozen pork; and Canada, the European Union, Denmark, Italy, Poland and Mexico for processed or canned pork.

In 2013, the U.S. exported around 4.13 million metric tons of poultry and poultry variety meats to major foreign markets such as Mexico, China, and Canada. Mexico imported the most U.S. poultry product in 2013, purchasing 769,091 metric tons. U.S. poultry exports were up 1% from last year's world export total of 4.10 million metric tons.

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 2012, per capita consumption of red meat, poultry and fish (boneless equivalent) was 182.7 pounds.

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 2012, per capita consumption was 45.9 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 pounds per capita. In 2012, per capita beef consumption was 57.4 pounds. Americans consumed 29.6 pounds of hamburger and 27.8 pounds of other beef cuts per capita in 2012.

Veal and lamb consumption in the U.S. is small relative to other products. Americans consumed .3 pounds per capita of veal and .6 pound per capita of lamb and mutton in 2012.

Per capita consumption of chicken and turkey has increased dramatically since the 1970s, according to USDA data. Chicken consumption rose from 40.2 pounds per person in 1970 to 81.3 pounds per person in 2012. Turkey consumption climbed from 8.1 pounds per person in 1970 to 16 pounds per person in 2012.

Consumer Expenditures

Over the past 10 years, per capita expenditures for beef rose from \$188.65 in 1998 to \$287.65 in 2012. Pork expenditures also increased from \$120.40 in 1998 to \$160.06 in 2012.

Consumers increased their spending on chicken products from more than \$111 per capita in 1998 to \$154.14 in 2012. Expenditures on turkey products have also risen from \$22.12 in 1998 to \$26.73 in 2012.

Consumers spent an average of \$3.03 per pound on hamburger in 2012 and \$4.99 per pound for choice beef cuts. Choice beef cuts can include loins, ribeyes, chuck and flank steaks.

In 2012, meat and poultry expenditures accounted for 1.6 percent of disposable income per capita, and for 14.3 percent of total food expenditures. This figure has remained relatively steady in recent years.