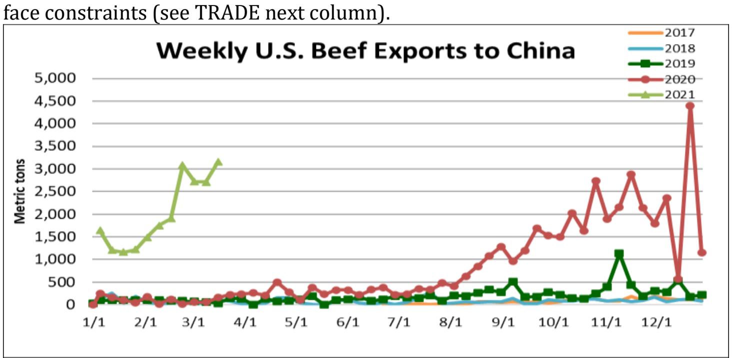
U.S. Meat Bulletin

March 30, 2021 Volume XIII | Issue 3.5

Note: Due to upcoming holidays, the next U.S. Meat Bulletin will be published April 13.

SUPPLY & DEMAND

The CHOICE cutout value moved higher throughout last week in signs that structural and seasonal factors are working to propel domestic and overseas beef demand higher. Beef may also be getting a lift from high wholesale pork prices. Live fed cattle prices, which have also been stuck at the $1.14/lb for weeks on end, broke out last week and moved higher on renewed market optimism, and despite USDA's report the previous week that front-end supplies were still large. Live cattle futures values also moved north last week and again yesterday as the cutout advanced to near the $2.40/lb level. Feedlotters noted that packers were aggressively seeking cattle supplies as prices of most primals gained week on week: values were higher for the USDA CHOICE brisket (+6%), short plate (+6%), rib (+4%), loin (+4%), flank (+3%), and chuck (+2%) primals. Moving forward, feedlots and packing plants will need to continue to process large numbers of animals in the coming 3-5 months as front end supplies are still plentiful. In addition to managing the flow out of feedlots of the large number of cattle placed during Q4 2020, sizeable numbers of winter-wheat grazed animals have been placed into feedlots the last few week. Also, February placements were restricted for a week during the big freeze, meaning March 2021 feedlot stocking activity will appear abnormally large. But the market may already be looking out beyond the likely swell of fed cattle supplies to the expected late spring tightening. By this time, vaccination-driven CoVID recovery trajectories should be further supporting already-robust global demand. Moreover, the U.S. tightening will take place as other suppliers also face constraints (see TRADE next column).



Beef Choice Beef Cutout Value: 29/3/2021 – US$239.53/cwt. (+4% from 22/3/2021)

A bullish USDA hog inventory report last Thursday helped push lean hog futures prices higher week-on-week (see June Lean Hog Futures 3/26 close below), with the spot pork cutout value following the upward momentum of the futures market. The March 1 Quarterly Hogs and Pigs report showed an unexpected 1.8% year on year fall in total U.S. swine inventories to 74.773 million head. Pre-report consensus analyst views had estimated the herd would show a very slight increase. Total U.S. breeding sow numbers also showed a larger than forecast -2.5% drop. This equates to the largest sow reduction since 2008-09. The largest falls in market hog numbers were in the 120 pound-and-over category suggesting that supplies of market hogs could tighten relatively quickly. And in a reversal of recent trends, the average pigs per litter index dropped 0.9% to 10.94. The decline in average sow productivity could indicate that U.S. producers experienced herd health issues this past winter, a recent topic of discussion among analysts. Harvest activity remains muted, a sign of tight live hog numbers. U.S. plants processed 2.551 million hogs last week, up slightly from the previous week but noticeably down from the 2.77 million head of the same week last year. Pork export activity was steady the week ending March 18, but new sales to China slipped, perhaps due to high prices. Uncertainty continues over the impact of ASF's 2nd wave in China, but November 2021 Dalian futures suggest domestic traders assume pork prices will stay high throughout the year.

Hog Carcass Cutout Value: 29/3/2021 – US$107.84/cwt. (+4% from 22/3/2021)

MOVING AHEAD

Every year, meat industry analysts look forward to the Power of Meat consumer research survey as a source of detailed data on how consumer meat purchasing and utilization behavior changed over the previous year. This year's study is of particular interest because of the abrupt changes in normal behavior patterns due to the pandemic. The study highlighted a number of clear changes in meat buying & usage patterns. **1)** Meat reemerged as the predominant center-of-the plate raw material for home meal preparation. Consumers spent more time cooking at home last year compared to any in recent memory. Retail meat department dollars and sales volumes increased 19.2% and 11% respectively. Retail stores also saw increased meat trips and increased spending per trip, as consumers stocked up pantries in preparation for self-quarantine and/or other social distancing measures. **2)** As a result of the above, consumers became more knowledgeable about cooking meat, and experimented more with new cuts and brands. This could have implications for future demand as consumers are now more aware of the greater variety of meat options available, including value-added options. **3)** More meat was purchased online. This forced rapid innovations in last mile servicing and delivery, including curbside pickup, & drive up and go grocery collection. According to the survey, over ½ of all consumers purchased groceries online in 2020; 31% of shoppers purchased meat online last year compared to just 19% in 2019. **4)** Despite spending less at restaurants, consumers were extra attentive of promotions as they were generally purchasing greater quantities during each visit or purchase experience. **5)** Consumers generally were more averse to purchasing meat at full-service counters, opting instead to buy case-ready product. Acceptance of case ready product reached an all time high of 81%. **6)** though not a new trend, healthiness and nutrition became even more important food themes to consumers during the pandemic. This translated into more purchases of meat sold with health or nutrition claims, including plant-based protein alternatives. **7)** as part of the above, consumers are increasingly shopping for 'sustainable' food, including meat. To American consumers, besides the impact of a product's production process on the environment 'sustainability' has come to also encompass animal welfare, and the welfare of the farmer/producer. Four in 10 shoppers now believe American farmers are working to protect the planet, but that still leaves a large number of shoppers unsure of agriculture's positive benefits to the environment. **8)** Animal welfare is increasingly being cited as an important factor in purchasing meat. The Power of Meat survey revealed that factors such as how animals are handled during slaughter, whether animals have access to outdoors and the amount of living space given to livestock are important when making purchasing decisions. Finally, although one often hears about growing vegetarianism, almost all-American households (98.4%) purchased some meat in 2020, with 43% of those claiming they purchased more meat than before the pandemic.

TRADE

More signs are emerging that global beef supplies will be tight this year, and demand strong, especially from China. After dropping 2% last year, beef production may only rise 1% in 2021, with supplies still falling in Australia, Argentina, and New Zealand. With analysts moderating their optimism for China's hog herd rebuild, continued high pork prices could mean China's rapidly growing beef consumption could be sustained throughout 2021. Even though early spring is normally a slack season for beef consumption in #1 import market **China**, demand is robust. One indicator is that the average per ton price of beef exported by #1 supplier **Brazil** to China in February was the highest in 7 months at U.S. $4,640. China's continued buying interest comes as some analysts are forecasting a 7-10% decline in total South American beef exports this year. Although the % of total beef production exported (to all destinations) by Brazil and Argentina is only 25% and 26% respectively, it is high for other suppliers to China, including Australia (69%), Uruguay (78%) and New Zealand (89%). Australia's new rains, despite being positive for the cattle herd size in the longer run, will mean more females held back for breeding and tighter supplies this year. Overall Aussie slaughter is expected to fall for the 2nd straight year, and 2021 beef production is forecast at 2.075 metric tons carcass weight equivalent (CWE), down 2% from 2020 and the lowest level since 2003. Exports are estimated to reach only 1.4 million tons (CWE), another 5% drop from 2020. Despite U.S. beef prices being the highest among all major beef supplying countries, Chinese buyers have been chasing U.S. products and exports are running at a pace +2,000% of 2019. Although total U.S. beef exports could be record large this year, they would still account for only 11%-13% of production. That said, product availability for China remains constrained, and the U.S. is awaiting China's export eligibility approval of nearly 20 U.S. beef plants.

ACTIVITIES:
SIAL, Shanghai: May 18-20, 2021
Restaurant and Bar/HOFEX, Hongkong: September 7-9, 2021

U.S. MEAT EXPORT FEDERATION

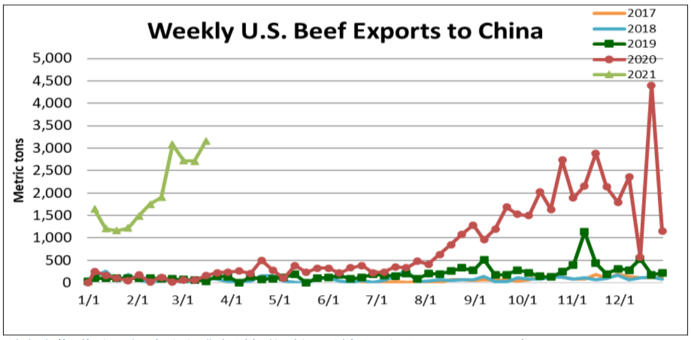
美國肉品新知

2021 年 3 月 30 日　　第十三卷 3.5 期

編輯筆記：下期《美國肉品新知》將於 2021 年 4 月 13 日發布。

供應與需求

上週，CHOICE 牛肉分切價持續走高，這表明結構性和季節性因素正在推動美國國內和海外增加的牛肉需求。且豬肉批發價格高企可能會帶動牛肉價格的上漲。儘管 USDA 前一周報告稱，前端供應量仍然較大，且已肥育活牛價格連續數週停留在 1.14 美元/磅，上週因市場樂觀情緒重現使價格走高。上週，活牛期貨價格也向北移動，昨日又再次向北移動，因牛肉分切推進至 2.40 美元/磅的水平。肥育場指出，包裝商正在積極尋求牛群供應，因大多數的價格逐周上漲：USDA CHOICE 前胸肉（+6%）、胸腹肉（+6%）、肋排（+4%）、腰脊部（+4%）、腹脅部（+3%）和肩胛部（+2%）的價格上漲。因前端供應仍然充足，未來 3-5 個月肥育場和包裝廠將需要持續處理大量的牛隻。除了管理 2020 年第四季期間投放的大量牛群進入肥育場，過去幾周也有相當數量的冬麥放牧牛隻也被投放至肥育場。另外，2 月即將置入肥育場的牛隻被寒冷的氣候限制了一周，意味著 2021 年 3 月肥育場放養活動將有極大的異常。但是，市場可能已經超出了肥育牛的供應可能增加至預期春季末收緊的預期。屆時，疫苗接種驅動 CoVID 恢復的跡象應該會進一步支撐全球已經很旺盛的需求。此外，其他供應商也面臨限制，美國的供應也將出現緊縮（見下一欄貿易新聞）。



美國農業部牛肉屠體價格指數（特選級）：2021 年 3 月 29 日 – $239.53 美元/百磅（較 2021 年 3 月 22 日增加 4%）

USDA 上週四公佈的看漲生豬庫存報告有助於推動瘦豬期貨周環價格上漲(請參見 6 月瘦豬期貨，3/26 收盤價下跌），且現貨豬肉分切價格也隨期貨市場上漲。3 月 1 日的豬肉季報顯示，美國生豬總頭數相較同比意外的下降 1.8%，至 7477.3 萬頭。報告前分析師達成共識的觀點，估計牛群會出現非常輕微的增長。美國育種母豬總數量也高於預期的下降 2.5%。這相當於 2008-09 年以來最大的母豬減產量。市場生豬數量跌幅最大的是 120 斤以上的種類，這說明市場生豬供應可能會比較快地趨緊。而與近期趨勢相反的是，平均每胎的豬隻數量下降 0.9%，至 10.94 頭豬。最近分析師正在討論的話題是，母豬的平均生產力下降可能表明美國生產業者在今年冬天面臨了豬群健康的問題。生豬數量出現緊縮的一個跡象，因屠宰活動依然平淡。美國屠宰廠上週屠宰 255.1 萬頭豬，相較前一周略有上升，但相較去年同期的 277 萬頭有明顯的減少。截至 3 月 18 日，豬肉出口活動保持穩定，但可能由於價格上漲，美國出口至中國的新銷售有所下滑。ASF 第二波在中國的影響仍存在不確定性，但 2021 年 11 月大連期貨顯示，國內貿易商認為豬肉價格將全年保持高位。

豬屠體分切價格 ：2021 年 3 月 29 日—$107.84 美元/ 百磅（較 2021 年 3 月 22 日增加 4%)

產業動態

每年肉類產業分析師都希望“肉類的力量”消費者研究調查，能夠有詳細關於消費者購買肉類和使用方式與前年改變的數據來源。 由於疫情導致常態行為迅速改變，因此今年的研究特別受到關注。該研究強調購買肉類和使用方式的一些明顯變化。1）肉類再次成為在家料理的主要原料。與近期相比，去年消費者在家中烹飪的時間更多。肉類部門的零售額和銷售量分別增長 19.2%和 11%。零售店也看到了更多購買肉類的次數和支出，因消費者為準備自我檢疫和/或其他社交距離措施而儲備糧食，且家庭普及率仍然很高。2) 由於上述原因，消費者對烹飪肉類的知識更加豐富，並且更勇於嘗試新的分切肉品和品牌。這可能會影響未來的產生需求，因消費者現在更加意識到更多的肉類選擇，包括增值選項。3）越多越多消費者於線上購買肉類。這迫使我們進行快速創新最後一哩運送的服務，包括路邊取貨、開車取貨、超市取貨。根據調查，2020 年超過半數的消費者於線上購買食品；去年，有 31%的消費者於線上購買肉類，而 2019 年僅有 19%。4）儘管現在到餐廳消費的次數較少，但消費者對促銷活動格外的有興趣，因消費者每次到超市採買時的採購量普遍較大。5）消費者普遍不願意在全方位服務的櫃檯購買肉類，而是選擇購買現成產品。消費者對現成產品的接受度達到了 81%的歷史新高。6）儘管這不是新的趨勢，但在疫情期間健康和營養分面對消費者而言變得更加重要。這意味著更多的消費者購買帶有健康或營養價值的肉類，包括植物性蛋白質替代的肉品。7）作為上述情況的一部分，消費者越來越多地購買”可持續性”的食品，包括肉類。對於美國消費者而言，除了產品生產過程對環境的影響外，“可持續性”還包括動物福利以及農民或生產業者的福利。現在，十分之四的消費者認為，美國農民正在努力保護地球，但仍有使許多人不確定畜牧業對環境的積極效益。8）越來越多的動物福利被認為是購買肉類的重要因素。Power of Meat 的調查顯示，在做出購買決定時，重要的因素包括動物在屠宰過程中的處理方式、動物是否可以到戶外活動、動物的生活空間大小等。儘管人們經常聽到素食主義的增長，但在 2020 年，幾乎所有美國家庭（98.4%）都有購買一些肉類，其中 43%的家庭還聲稱他們購買的肉類較疫情前還多。

貿易新聞

更多的跡象顯示，今年全球牛肉供應將會緊縮且需求強勁，尤其是來自中國的需求。繼去年下降 2%後，牛肉產量至 2021 年可能僅增長 1%，而澳大利亞，阿根廷和新西蘭的牛肉供應仍在下降。隨著分析師對中國豬群重建的樂觀情緒有所緩和，豬肉價格持續走高，意味著 2021 年一整年的牛肉消費量將接續增長。儘管早春通常為排名第一大進口市場**中國**牛肉消費的淡季，但需求旺盛。一項指標為排名第一的供應商**巴西**於 2 月出口至中國的牛肉平均每噸價格是 7 個月來最高，為 4,640 美元。中國持續購買興趣是來自一些分析師的預測，今年南美洲牛肉總出口將下降 7-10%。雖然巴西和阿根廷分別出口至所有目的地的牛肉產量占總產量的百分比分別只有 25%和 26%，但對中國其他供應國來說，卻很高包括澳大利亞（69%）、烏拉圭（78%）和紐西蘭（89%）。澳大利亞的降雨雖然可能對牛群規模有利，但這意味著今年將有更多的母牛被限制配種，使供應變的趨緊。澳洲整體屠宰量預計將連續第二年下降，至 2021 年牛肉產量預計為 2.075 公噸屠體重量(CWE)，較 2020 年下降 2%，為 2003 年以來最低水平。出口量估計僅達到 140 萬噸（CWE），較 2020 年再下降 5%。儘管美國牛肉價格是所有主要牛肉供應國中最高的、但中國買家持續在追逐美國產品、出口的增速為 2019 年的 2,000%。儘管今年美國牛肉出口總量可能創下歷史新高，但仍僅占產量的 11%-13%。儘管如此，中國產品的供應仍然受到限制，但美國正在等待中國對近 20 家美國牛肉屠宰廠的出口資格核准。

美國肉類出口協會活動預告:
中國國際食品和飲料展覽會, 上海: 2021 年 5 月 18-20 日
香港餐飲展/HOFEX, 香港: 2021 年 9 月 7-9 日