



# January Cattle Report Training Materials

Below you will find links to a video, PowerPoint presentation, survey information sheet, and practice interviews for NASS's January Cattle Report. The practice interviews can be used to enter data in CATI or CAPI to get familiar with those data collection instruments.

<b>Links</b>	<b>Length (minutes/pages)</b>
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Strategic Planning and Business Services Division  
Strategic Planning Branch  
Workforce Performance and Staff Development Section

# NASS Survey Training

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## Cattle Report: January 1 (CATTLE INV)



**United States Department of Agriculture  
National Agricultural Statistics Service**



Workforce Performance and Staff Development Section



# Who Uses the Data?

- Producers use the cattle inventory information along with price information to help determine production and marketing strategies and plan purchases and capital investments.
- Industry and market analysts use inventory and calf crop data to forecast the expansion and contraction of beef supplies.
- Processors; warehouse, storage, transportation companies; and retailers rely on the reports to anticipate future volume.



# Survey Information

- Project Code: **150 - January Cattle Report**
- Questionnaires:
  - Three versions
  - Mail out around December 20 – 22 each year
- Release:
  - *Cattle*; last few days of January

NASS website: [www.nass.usda.gov/](http://www.nass.usda.gov/)



# January Cattle: Data Collected

- January 1 inventories
  - By use/weight class
- Prior Year Production and Disposition
  - Calf Crop
  - Deaths and losses
  - Cattle and calves on feed
  - Inventory values
  - On farm consumption

# Questionnaire Versions

CATTLE REPORT - January 1, 2025

OMB No. 0535-0212  
Approval Expires: 1/31/2027  
Project Code: 150  
Survey ID: 1472  
Version A - AL, AK, AR, CT, DE, FL, GA, HI, IL, IN, IA, KY, LA, ME, MD, MA, MI, MN, MS, MO, NH, NJ, NY, NC, OH, PA, RI, SC, TN, VT, VA, WV, WI

**USDA** United States Department of Agriculture  
**NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE**  
USDA/NASS National Operations Division

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Only \_\_\_\_\_

1. Please verify name and mailing address of this operation.  
Make any corrections necessary (including the correct operation name) on the label and continue.

2. Were any cattle or calves, regardless of ownership, on this operation on January 1, 2025 or at any time during 2024? (Cattle and calves on grazing land leased on a fee per head or animal unit month (AUM) basis should be included by the cattle owner, excluded by the land owner.)

Yes - Go to item 3, page 2

No -

a. Will there be any cattle or calves, regardless of ownership, on this operation during 2025?

Yes - Enter code 1

No - Enter code 3

Don't Know - Enter code 2

b. Were you (the individual named on the label) operating a farm or ranch on January 1, 2025?

Yes - Go to Section 3, back page

No - Go to Section 2, page 7

Version A = all the general questions

Version B = all general questions +  
Grazing Fees (AZ, CA, CO, ID, MT, NE,  
NV, NM, ND, OR, SD, UT, WA, WY)

Version C = all general questions +  
On Small Grain Pasture + Grazing  
Fees (KS, OK, & TX only)

# Introduction

- Questions used to determine:
  - Whether the operation is still in business
  - Name and address verification
  - If the operation currently has cattle OR had cattle at any time during the prior year
    - NO: Are you currently operating a farm or ranch?
  - Operation structure
    - Individual
    - Partners
    - Hired Manager

# Section 1 - Cattle and Calves

- On January 1, of this year were any cattle or calves on the total acres operated?
  - If no cattle currently: still asks for prior year calf crop
  - If on a fee per head/AUM basis, cattle owner reports
  - All cattle and calves should be reported, even if only a few head kept as pets, 4-H projects, etc.
    - These animals must be reported





# Section 1 - Cattle and Calves

- Of the total cattle and calves on hand, how many were:
- **Beef Cows**
  - Including beef heifers that have calved
- **Milk Cows**
  - Females that have calved at least once
  - Milk cows = Dry + milked
    - Amount of milk produced on January 1 will also be asked
      - Be sure to get only one day's production
- **Bulls weighing 500 lbs. or more**
  - Intact male, usually used for breeding

# Section 1 - Cattle and Calves

- **Heifers** (female, not yet calved) weighing 500 lbs. or more
  - For beef cow replacement
    - How many are expected to calve this year
  - For milk cow replacement
    - How many are expected to calve this year
  - Other heifers 500 lbs. or more
- **Steers** (castrated male) weighing 500 lbs. or more
- **Heifer, steer and bull calves** under 500 lbs.
  - *Include* newborn calves

# Section 1 – On Small Grain Pasture

- Asked only in KS, OK, and TX
- How many head of other heifers, steers, and calves were grazing on small grains on January 1?
  - Winter wheat, Oats, Barley or Rye
  - Seeded in the fall and then grazed over the winter months

# Section 1 – Calf Crop

- Of the calves born on the operation (*exclude* calves purchased) during the prior year, how many:
  - Were on hand January 1, of this year
  - Were sold, moved off this operation, or slaughtered by January 1
  - Had died by January 1
    - Excluding born dead
  - Of the total calves born, how many were born during July 1 through December 31, of the prior year
    - Calves born July through Dec. generally weigh less than 500 lbs.



# Section 1 – Deaths and Losses

- Died or were lost from all causes during the year:
  - How many cattle weighing 500 pounds or more
  - How many calves weighing less than 500 pounds
    - *Exclude* calves born dead
    - Include calves born on the operation, purchased, traded for, or given to

# Section 1 – Cattle and Calves on Feed

- Any cattle and calves on feed that will be shipped **directly** from your feedlot to slaughter market?
  - These animals must be receiving a ration of grain, silage, hay and/or protein supplement preparing them for slaughter
  - Exclude:
    - Any cattle that will eventually be shipped to another feedlot
    - Cattle that are being backgrounded/warmed up, if they will be shipped to another feedlot before slaughter
    - Any cattle that will be returned to pasture prior to slaughter
    - Cows and Bulls on feed

# Section 1 – Cattle and Calves on Feed



- How many cattle and calves on feed January 1 that will be shipped?
- Total capacity of operator's feedlot
- During the prior year how many cattle and calves on feed were shipped?
  - If feedlot capacity is 1,000 or more skip this question.

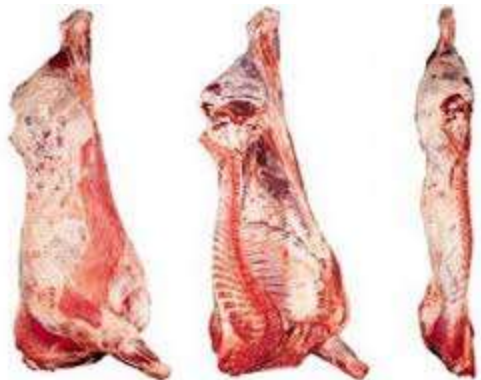
# Section 1 – Inventory Values

- What is the average value per head for Cattle and Calves on hand January 1, of this year for:
  - Beef cows
  - Replacement beef heifers 500 lbs. or more
  - Milk cows
  - Replacement milk heifers 500 lbs. or more
  - Bulls 500 lbs. or more
  - Other heifers 500 lbs. or more
  - Steers 500 lbs. or more
  - Calves less than 500 lbs.
- Report to nearest dollar per head – Not \$ per CWT or price per pound



# Slaughter for Consumption by this Operation

- How many cattle and calves:
  - Custom slaughtered at commercial establishments
  - Slaughtered on the operation
    - Must have been for **consumption by this operation** – not animals sold for slaughter
    - Anything over 5 cattle or calves for home consumption, please leave a note



# Section 1 – Grazing Fees

## (Only in Versions B & C)

- This section refers ONLY to **privately** owned grazing land
- Most commonly used method of charging in your area?
  - Per Head Per Month
  - Per Animal Unit Month (AUM)
  - Per Cow with Nursing Calf Per Month
- What was the average charge?
- Did this operation pay a fee to graze cattle on **privately** owned land during the prior year?

# Cattle/Milk Overlap

- If operation was selected for both January Cattle & January Milk Production, collect both surveys during the same contact.



# Things to watch out for:

- Less than 80% of milk cow inventory actually milked
  - Rule of thumb: about 10% of total would be dry
- Milk production per cow seems high/low
- Beef/Milk cows on hand but no beef/milk cow replacement heifers
  - And vice versa
- No beef/milk cow replacement heifers expected to calve
  - Normally expect at least some bred to calve

# More things to watch out for:

- Calves born and on hand not accounted for in inventory
- Calf crop seems high/low
  - Should be “around” 1 calf per cow
  - Exclude any calves purchased
- Cattle and calf deaths are high/low
  - About 2 percent for cattle, 2-10 percent for calves
- Calves died cannot be greater than total Death/Loss

# Even more things to watch out for:

- Other heifers + steers on hand less than cattle on feed
  - Could possibly be some lighter calves
- Feedlot capacity must be equal to or greater than total cattle on feed
- High number of cattle on feed shipped
- High/low value per head
- Large number slaughtered for on farm consumption
  - These questions reference ON FARM consumption only
    - For anything over 5 cattle or calves, please leave a comment

# Things to remember

- Out of business: Be sure to VERIFY through the screening questions that they are completely out of agriculture and not simply out of the cattle or milk business
  - May very well still have crops or other livestock
- Anything odd or unexpected?
  - Leave good notes – any time you feel something further explanation



# Conclusion

- Asking about now AND anytime during the prior year
  - Current January 1 inventory
  - Previous year production numbers (calf crop, death loss, etc.)
- Be aware of the inventory “sum of parts”
- Practice before interviewing
- Concerns, Comments, Questions?
  - Contact your supervisor or the Regional Field Office



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## Cattle Report Information Sheet

If **beef or milk cows** are reported, expect to “find” calves reported somewhere in the inventory and/or disposition questions.

A milk cow will generally produce 25 to 70 pounds of milk per day.

Watch out for dairy operations that have every other day milk pickup—they may report the total amount shipped (for 2 days) rather than just what was produced in 1 day.

Technically, a heifer that has had a calf is a cow. However, cattle producers may refer to 2 or 3 year old females who have had calves as “first / second calf heifers”.

The **calves on hand** from the previous year calf crop in item 4a will generally be accounted for in items 2d (**heifers over 500 lbs**), 2e (**steers over 500 lbs**), and/or 2f (**calves under 500 lbs**).

**Calves born between July 1 and Dec 31** will likely weigh **less than 500 pounds** on January 1.

Deaths listed in items 6 & 7 must be equal to or greater than the number of deaths in item 4c (**calves born but died** by January 1).



The total **Cattle and Calves on Feed** (item 9) should be accounted for in item 2diii (**other heifers over 500 lbs**), 2e (**steers over 500 lbs**), or possibly 2f (**calves under 500 lbs**).

Cattle are *usually* over 500 lbs before being placed in a feedlot.

Verify that cattle on feed will go directly from the operation to slaughter market.

Be careful NOT to enter an animal in more than one place. Doing this will create an incorrect total.

In many areas, if someone has beef cows, they generally do not have dairy cows, and vice-versa.

**REPLACEMENT HEIFERS:** Most cow/calf operations and dairy operations will have replacement heifers. So, if item 2a (**beef cows**) is positive, then item 2di (**heifers for beef cow replacement**) will likely be positive. If item 2b (**milk cows**) is positive, then item 2dii (**heifers for milk cow replacement**) will likely be positive.

It is also becoming more common for operations to raise *only* dairy replacement heifers—e.g. no milk cows reported BUT report having a large number of heifers for milk cow replacement.

The **heifers for beef/milk cow replacement** categories (items 2di and 2dii) could include:

- A 6-7 month old “calf” barely over 500 pounds
- A 15 month old, 900 pound breeding age “yearling”
- A 24 month old, 1300 pound “springer” just about ready to calve

Remember, heifers are typically bred around 14-16 months of age, and with a gestation period of 280 days, their first calve will be born when they are about 24 months old.

A farmer would typically keep a similar number of heifers each year as replacements. So, of the heifers for beef/milk cow replacement reported, you could “expect” about half of them to have been born in the previous year and the others in the year before that. Those born two years ago would generally be expected to calve during the current year

These “rules of thumb” work out nicely for beef cows as they typically calve all together in the spring. The numbers can get...much less straight-forward for operations that: split their calving across 2 calendar years, have multiple calving seasons in 1 calendar year, for milk cows and heifers for milk cow replacements as these typically calve year around, etc.

**CALF CROP:** Since the gestation period for cattle is 280 days (just over 9 months), a cow or heifer will only calve once per year. Twins are relatively rare and each cow “usually” has one calf per year, so the birth rate should be around 90-100% (about 1 calf per 1 cow).

This means that item 2a and/or 2b (**beef cows, milk cows**) should be very close to item 5 (**total calves born**). If the birth rate is not close to 100%, please make sure item 4 (**calves on hand, sold/moved, died**) was completed correctly and that item 2a and/or 2b are correct.

All item 4 (**calves on hand, sold/moved, died**) entries **MUST** be calves born on the farm. Calves born elsewhere and moved onto the farm and still-born calves are **EXCLUDED**.

**OUT OF BUSINESS:** Watch out for the operations that say they are “out of business” or are “no longer farming” **BUT** have actually just quit raising cattle. If they still have crops, hay, other livestock, etc. they are *still* in business



# Cattle Report Practice Interviews

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Some adjustment may be needed based on questionnaire version.\*

Of the total number of cattle and calves on hand January 1, how many were:

Beef cows, including beef heifers that had calved? **180**

Milk cows, both dry or in milk, including milk heifers that had calved? **0**

Bulls weighing 500 pounds or more? **4**

Heifers, that had not calved, weighing 500 pounds or more for beef cow replacement?  
**25**

- How many of these 25 beef cow replacement heifers, are expected to calve during 20XX? **15**

Of the total number of cattle and calves on hand January 1, how many were:

Heifers, that had not calved, weighing 500 pounds or more for milk cow replacement?  
**0**

Other heifers 500 pounds or more? **0**

Steers weighing 500 pounds or more? **15**

Heifer, steer, and bull calves weighing less than 500 pounds, including newborn calves?  
**30**

Then the total number of cattle and calves on hand January 1 was 254. Is that correct?

**Yes**



Of the calves born on the total acres operated during 20XX, how many were on hand January 1, 20XX? **55**

Of the calves born on the total acres operated during 20XX, how many were sold, moved off of the total acres operated, or slaughtered before January 1? **115**

Of the calves born on the total acres operated during 20XX, how many had died by January 1? **6**

Then the total number of calves born during 20XX was 176. Is that correct? **Yes**

Of these 176 calves, how many were born in the 6-month period, July 1 through December 31, 20XX? **0**

How many cattle weighing 500 pounds or more died or were lost from all causes during 20XX? **2**

How many calves weighing less than 500 pounds died or were lost from all causes during 20XX? **6**

Are there any cattle and calves on feed, regardless of ownership, on the total acres operated that will be shipped directly from your feedlot to slaughter market? **Yes**

How many cattle and calves were on feed January 1 that will be shipped directly from your feedlot to slaughter market? **15**

Considering your cattle feeding facilities, what is the largest number of cattle and calves that you would feed for slaughter market, at any one time? **25**

During 20XX, how many cattle and calves on feed were shipped directly to slaughter market from your feedlot? **20**

What is the average value per head of beef cows? **\$1900**

What is the average value per head of heifers weighing 500 pounds or more for beef cow replacement? **\$1100**

What is the average value per head of bulls weighing 500 pounds or more? **\$2,500**

What is the average value per head of steers weighing 500 pounds or more? **\$950**

What is the average value per head of calves weighing less than 500 pounds? **\$625**

During 20XX, how many cattle were custom slaughtered at commercial establishments for consumption by this operation? **3**

During 20XX, how many calves were custom slaughtered at commercial establishments for consumption by this operation? **0**

During 20XX, how many cattle were slaughtered on this operation, for consumption by this operation regardless of ownership? **2**

During 20XX, how many calves were slaughtered on this operation, for consumption by this operation regardless of ownership? **0**

**After practicing, go back through and complete other scenarios such as out of business, in business with no cattle, etc.**

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