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July 1 Cattle Inventory Up Slightly

All cattle and calves in the United States on July 1, 2026 totaled 94.2 million head, slightly above the 94.0 million head on July 1, 2025.

All cows and heifers that have calved totaled 38.1 million head, unchanged from the 38.1 million head on July 1, 2025. Beef cows, at 28.5 million head, are down 1 percent from a year ago. Milk cows, at 9.65 million head, are up 2 percent from previous year.

All heifers 500 pounds and over on July 1, 2026 totaled 14.7 million head, 1 percent above the 14.6 million head on July 1, 2025. Beef replacement heifers, at 3.80 million head, are up 3 percent from a year ago. Milk replacement heifers, at 3.60 million head, are up 3 percent from previous year. Other heifers, at 7.30 million head, are 1 percent below a year earlier.

Steers 500 pounds and over on July 1, 2026 totaled 13.9 million head, up 1 percent from July 1, 2025.

Bulls 500 pounds and over on July 1, 2026 totaled 1.90 million head, unchanged from previous year.

Calves under 500 pounds on July 1, 2026 totaled 25.6 million head, unchanged from a year earlier.

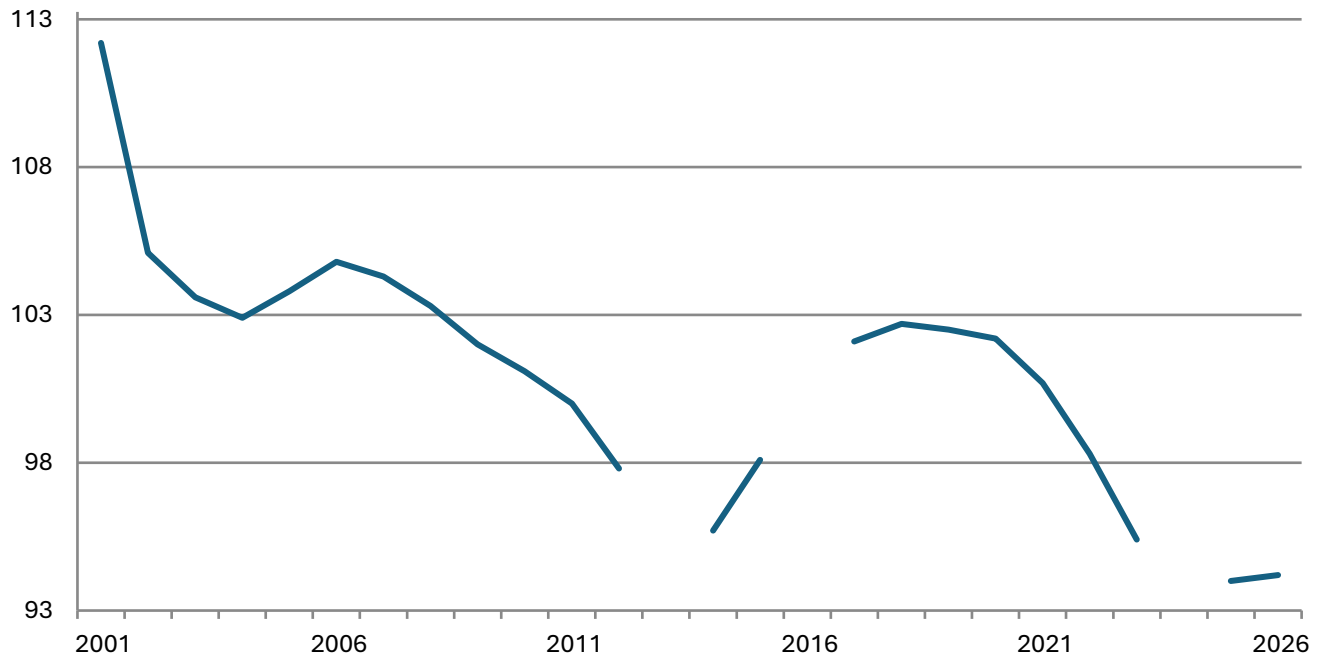
Cattle and calves on feed for the slaughter market in the United States for all feedlots totaled 13.2 million head on July 1, 2026, up 2 percent from previous year. Cattle on feed in feedlots with capacity of 1,000 or more head accounted for 86.1 percent of the total cattle on feed on July 1, 2026, up 1 percent from previous year. The total of calves under 500 pounds and other heifers and steers over 500 pounds (outside of feedlots), at 33.6 million head, is down 1 percent from the 33.8 million head on July 1, 2025.

Calf Crop Down 2 Percent

The 2026 calf crop in the United States is expected to be 32.5 million head, down 2 percent from last year. Calves born during the first half of 2026 are estimated at 23.9 million head, down 2 percent from the first half of 2025. An additional 8.60 million calves are expected to be born during the second half of 2026.

Cattle Inventory – United States: July 1

Million head



The July 2013, 2016, and 2024 Cattle reports were not conducted due to reduced funding.

This report was approved on July 24, 2026.

Secretary of Agriculture
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Agricultural Statistics Board
Chairperson
Lance Honig

Cattle Inventory by Class and Calf Crop – United States: July 1, 2025 and 2026

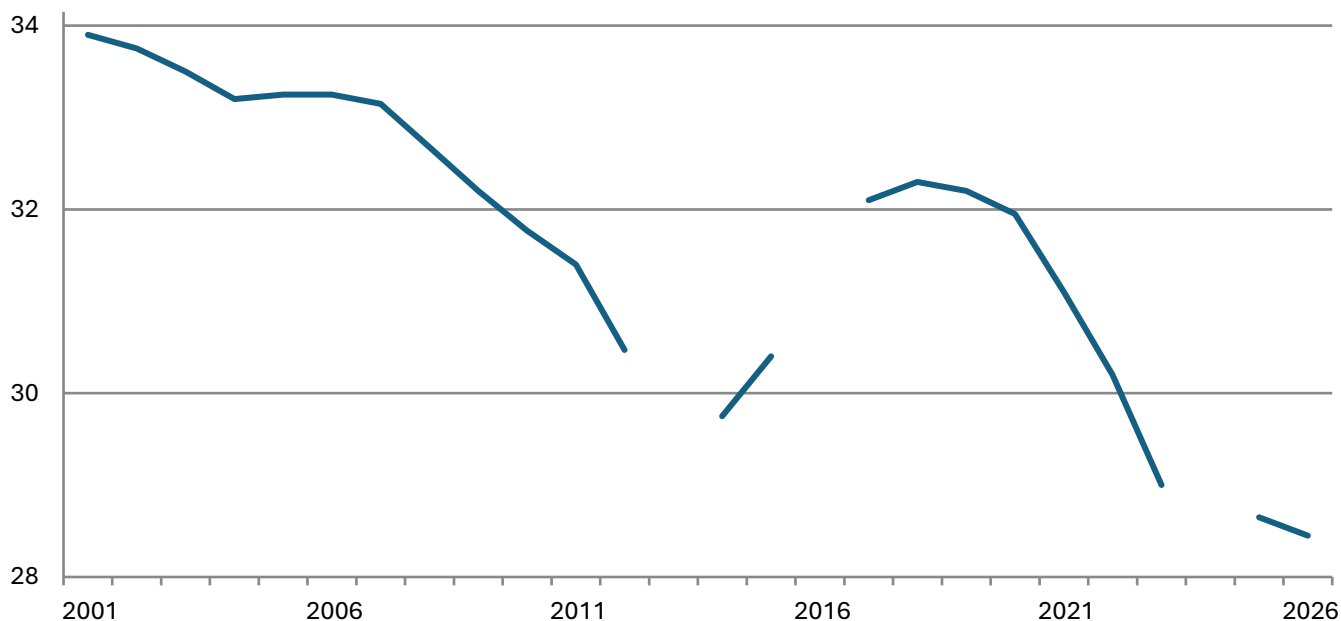
Class	2025	2026	Percent of previous year
	(1,000 head)	(1,000 head)	(percent)
Cattle and calves	94,000.0	94,200.0	100
Cows and heifers that have calved	38,100.0	38,100.0	100
Beef cows	28,650.0	28,450.0	99
Milk cows	9,450.0	9,650.0	102
Heifers 500 pounds and over	14,600.0	14,700.0	101
For beef cow replacement	3,700.0	3,800.0	103
For milk cow replacement	3,500.0	3,600.0	103
Other heifers	7,400.0	7,300.0	99
Steers 500 pounds and over	13,800.0	13,900.0	101
Bulls 500 pounds and over	1,900.0	1,900.0	100
Calves under 500 pounds	25,600.0	25,600.0	100
Cattle on feed	13,000.0	13,200.0	102
Calf crop	32,995.6	32,500.0	98

Calf Crop and Percent of Total by Six-Month Period – United States: 2025, and Preliminary 2026

Period	2025		2026	
	Number	Percent of total	Number	Percent of total
	(1,000 head)	(percent)	(1,000 head)	(percent)
January 1 - June 30	24,300.0	73.6	23,900.0	73.5
July 1 - December 31	8,695.6	26.4	8,600.0	26.5
Total	32,995.6	100.0	32,500.0	100.0

Beef Cow Inventory – United States: July 1

Million head



The July 2013, 2016, and 2024 Cattle reports were not conducted due to reduced funding.

Statistical Methodology

Survey Procedures: A random sample of United States producers were surveyed to provide data for these estimates. Survey procedures ensured that all cattle producers, regardless of size, had a chance to be included in the survey. A probability list frame survey with a sample of approximately 17,400 producers and feedlots was conducted. These operations were contacted during the first half of July by mail, telephone, internet, and face-to-face personal interviews and 66 percent of the reports were usable. An additional sample of operators representing those not found on our list frame was also contacted. Operators were asked to report inventories as of the first of the month and calf crop for the entire year of 2026.

Estimating Procedures: These cattle estimates were prepared by the Agricultural Statistics Board after reviewing National indications and analysis. National survey data was reviewed for reasonableness with estimates from the previous year using a balance sheet. The balance sheet begins with the previous inventory estimate, adds to it estimates of births and imports for the first six months, and subtracts estimates of slaughter, exports, and deaths for the first six months of the current year. This indicated ending inventory level is compared to the Agricultural Statistics Board estimate for reasonableness. Class estimates are rounded to the nearest 100,000 head with the exception of beef cows, milk cows, beef heifers, and milk heifers which are rounded to the nearest 50,000 head.

Revision Policy: Revisions to previous estimates are made to improve year to year and item to item relationships. Estimates for the previous year are subject to revision when current estimates are made and when the January 1 cattle inventory estimates are made. The revisions are primarily based on livestock slaughter and additional foreign trade and survey data. Estimates will also be reviewed after data from the five-year *Census of Agriculture* are available. No revisions will be made after that date.

Reliability: Since all cattle operators are not included in the sample, survey estimates are subject to sampling variability. Survey results are also subject to non-sampling errors such as omissions, duplications, and mistakes in reporting, recording, and processing the data. The effects of these errors cannot be measured directly. They are minimized through rigid quality controls in the data collection process and through a careful review of all reported data for consistency and reasonableness.

To assist users in evaluating the reliability of estimates in this report, the "**Root Mean Square Error**" is shown for selected items in the following table. The "Root Mean Square Error" is a statistical measure based on past performance and is computed using the differences between first and latest estimates. The "Root Mean Square Error" for July cattle inventory estimates over the past 10 years is 0.5 percent. This means that chances are 2 out of 3 that the final estimate will not be above or below the current estimate of 94.2 million head by more than 0.5 percent. Chances are 9 out of 10 that the difference will not exceed 0.9 percent.

The table on the following page shows a 10-year record of the range of differences between first and latest estimates for selected items. Using estimates of all cattle and calves as an example, changes between the first inventory estimate and the latest estimate during the past 10 years have averaged 470,000 head, ranging from 200,000 to 800,000 head. During this period, the initial inventory estimate has been below the latest estimate 1 time and has been above the latest estimate 9 times. This does not imply that the July 1 estimate is likely to understate or overstate final inventory.

Reliability of July 1 Cattle Estimates

[Based on data from the past 10 years]

Item	Root mean square error	90 percent confidence level	Difference between first and latest estimate				
			Average	Smallest	Largest	Years	
						Below latest	Above latest
	(percent)	(percent)	(1,000 head)	(1,000 head)	(1,000 head)	(number)	(number)
All cattle and calves	0.5	0.9	470	200	800	1	9
All cows and heifers that have calved	0.6	1.1	190	0	400	0	8
Calf crop	1.0	1.9	295	20	703	1	9

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