

# Record meat supplies in 2020

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Disruptions in normal activities due to COVID-19 have produced a surge in at-home food demand. Recent reports indicate a 77 percent year over year increase in grocery meat sales in mid-March. The spike in grocery demand has overwhelmed the retail meat supply chain resulting in temporary shortages of meat in many grocery stores. The shortages are due to the tremendous logistical challenges of shifting meat supplies from food service channels to retail grocery channels.

It is critical for consumers to know that there is no shortage of meat in the U.S. In fact, production of beef, pork and poultry are projected at record levels in 2020 and are at record levels in the first quarter of the year. Production of all meat is projected at 109.3 billion pounds in 2020, up 4.3 percent year over year. Total meat production in the first quarter of 2020 is estimated at 26.9 billion pounds, up 6.9 percent year over year. Total meat production includes, beef, veal, pork, lamb and mutton, broiler, other chicken and turkey.

Broiler production, which represents about 88 percent of total poultry production, is projected at 46.0 billion pounds in 2020, up 5.8 percent year over year. Broiler production is up due to both increased slaughter and heavier bird weights so far this year. Broiler production in the first quarter is up 7.7 percent year over year.

Pork production in 2020 is projected to total 28.9 billion pounds, up 4.4 percent year over year. Hog slaughter is up 4.7 percent thus far in 2020 and carcass weights are heavier this year. First quarter pork production is estimated to be 7.6 percent higher year over year compared to one year ago.

Beef production is projected to be 1.9 percent higher year over year in 2020, totaling 27.7 billion pounds. Increased beef production is concentrated in the first half of the year. Total steer and heifer slaughter is up 3.9 percent year over year for the year to date. Steer carcass weights for the year to date are up over 21 pounds year over year with heifer carcass weights up over 12 pounds. First quarter beef production is estimated to increase 6.6 percent year over year over last year.

Poultry, pork and beef production are all at record levels of production. Total domestic meat consumption in 2020 is projected at 228.2 pounds per capita (retail weight), up 2.1 percent year over year and a record level. While COVID-19 is changing how and where meat consumption happens and is temporarily overwhelming certain supply chains, supplies of all meats are assured in 2020.