

Total turkey production continues to post weekly numbers below a year ago, bringing the year-to-date total to 293 million pounds below a year ago or 6% smaller. USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) released turkey hatchery data this week reporting eggs in incubators for September and poult hatched and place data for August.

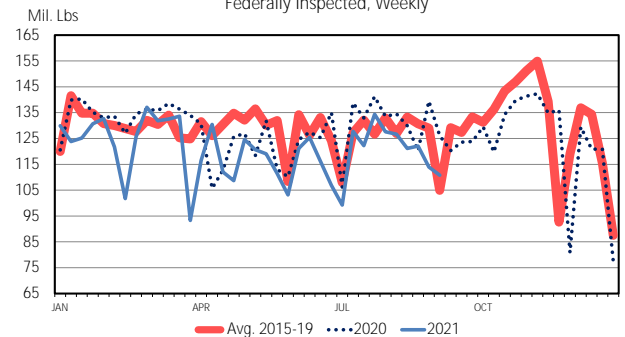
Turkey hatcheries continued to place eggs in incubators at a smaller rate. September was 5% below 2020. All months in 2021 have been below a year ago so far. January had the highest percentage decline, down 15%. Other hatchery data indicated poult hatched in August were down less than 1% and poult placed was above a year ago, 2.2%. August is only the third month in 2021 to show a year-over-year increase in poult placements.

August cold storage is scheduled to be released next week, but earlier reports in 2021 have indicated supplies of turkey in cold storage are well below a year ago. Seasonally, cold storage supplies would be peaking in the July/August timeframe. Holiday preparation plays a large role in turkey cold storage. July indicated whole bird inventory was down 8%. Breast meat, legs, unclassified, and other cuts were down 15% or more. Mechanically deboned turkey was the closest to a year ago, down only 3%.

Last year whole turkeys prices were above the 5 year average even with a lot of uncertainty around family gatherings for holiday. This year whole bird prices have remained higher than last year's levels and for several weeks have been above last year's peak price. Whole bird wholesale prices typically peak in October, which reached just under \$1.20 per pound in 2020. Whole hens reach \$1.30 per pound in mid August of this year, but since then USDA AMS has reported there are two few sales to report a price in subsequent weeks. A typical seasonal pattern would be that whole hen turkeys would see price improvements from that August figure through the end of September/early October. However, without a reported price it's difficult to assess how high this market will go or how that translates to retail prices. Whole tom prices have been able to be reported, and those have continued to climb in the last 5 weeks, since the last whole hen price was reported.

It is likely Thanksgiving and Christmas time whole turkeys will be significantly more expensive this holiday season. Lower production numbers and less available in cold storage both point to less supplies available as well. Pandemic uncertainty may still be a factor, but possibly less so than a year ago. Pork may offer some less expensive holiday meat alternatives, but both beef and lamb is expected to remain significantly more expensive.

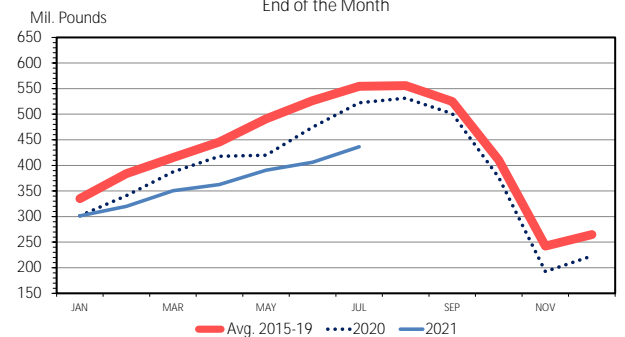
**TURKEY PRODUCTION**  
Federally Inspected, Weekly



Data Source: USDA-AMS & USDA-NASS  
Livestock Marketing Information Center

P-S-21  
09/16/21

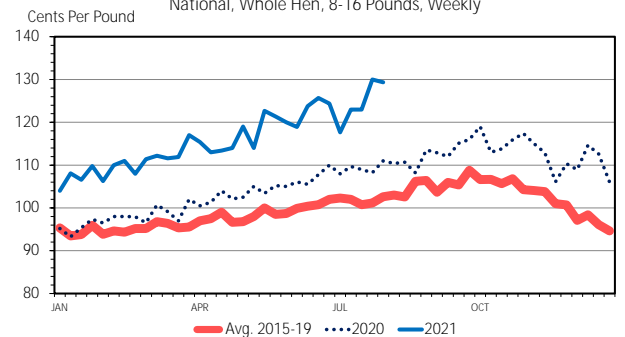
**TURKEY IN COLD STORAGE**  
End of the Month



Data Source: USDA-NASS  
Livestock Marketing Information Center

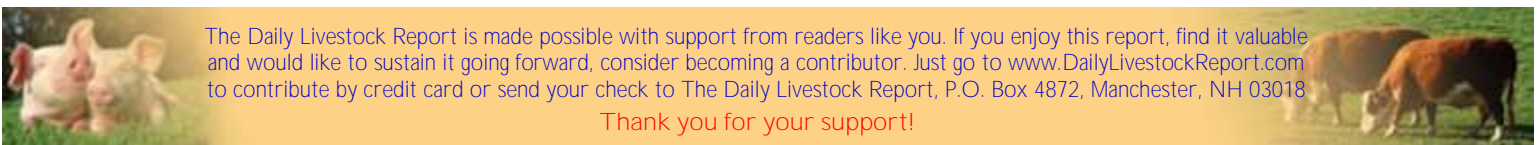
P-S-04  
08/23/21

**TURKEY PRICES**  
National, Whole Hen, 8-16 Pounds, Weekly



Data Source: USDA-AMS  
Livestock Marketing Information Center

P-P-08  
09/10/21



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