

Another month has passed, and USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) is scheduled to release the Cattle on Feed report this Friday. The on-feed inventory will be as of February 1. Data for head placed into feedlots and animals marketed will be for January. As a reminder, the monthly NASS data are for U.S. feedlots with a capacity of 1,000 head or more. Pre-report estimates discussed here are from the Urner Barry survey (see summary table).

On average, industry market analysts expect that the number of animals in feedlots as of February 1, will come in higher than a year ago by about 2.4% (280,500 head). Animals placed into feedlots are pegged to be slightly above a year earlier. Head marketed during January should be about 1% above 2019's. Note that the number of slaughter days was the same in January of 2020 and for the same month in 2019.

Of the 11 analysts included in this survey, all of them expect the on-feed inventory to be above a year ago. One analyst had placements below 2019's. Regarding head marketed, only one expects a year-over-year decline.

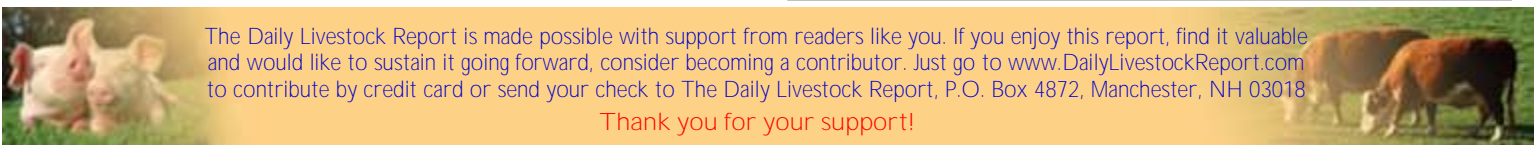
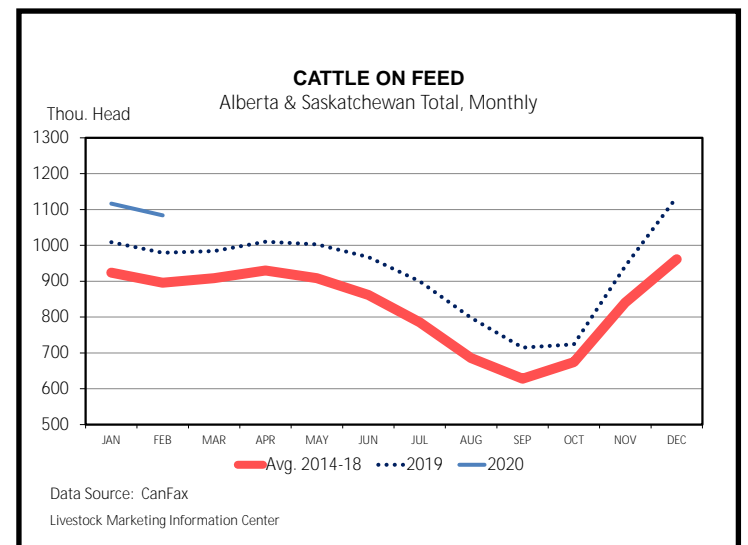
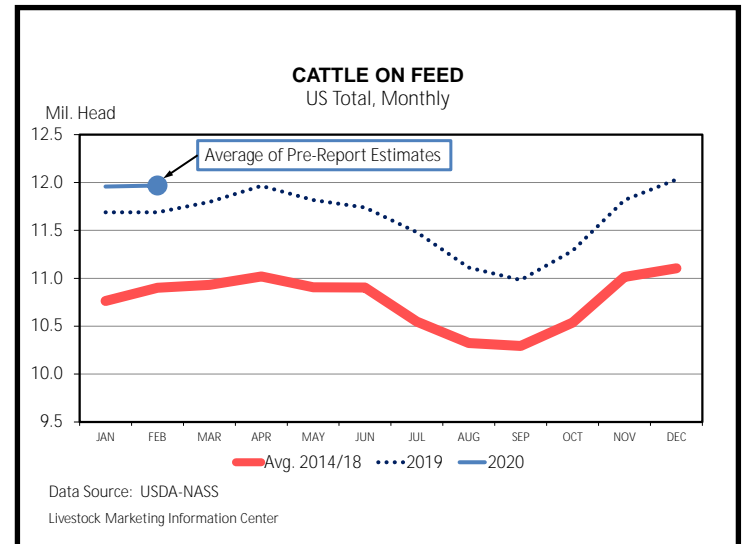
If the average of the on-feed estimates materializes, that will make four straight months of an increase compared to a year earlier (back to the October 1, 2019 count). Further, depending on where the number actually comes in at, it would be the largest for February 1 since either 2008 (11.966 million head) or 2006 (12.110 million head).

After the U.S., Canada has the second-largest commercial cattle feeding sector in the world (that is our assessment, most countries collect no data on this). CanFax is the only source of monthly data on the number of animals in Canadian feedlots (see their website [here](http://www.canfax.com)). Feedlots in two key provinces are surveyed by CanFax, Alberta and Saskatchewan. Like the U.S. is expected to reveal, the latest Canadian data (as of February 1), showed a year-over-year rise in the number on-feed (up 10.6%). Looking back at previous February 1 counts, 2020's (1083.7 thousand head) was the biggest on that date in 18 years.

During January of this year, CanFax reported that the number of animals placed was above a year earlier (up 6.5%). Year-over-year increases have occurred each month since September 2019. Prior to September 2019, placements had been below the prior year's level for each month back to April 2019.

	Pre-Report Average	Pre-Report Range
On-Feed February 1	102.4	101.8 - 103.0
Placed in January	101.9	97.8 - 103.5
Marketed in January	101.0	97.6 - 101.6

Pre-Report Source: Urner Barry (used with permission)



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