

Last week was another with a series of wild changes to prices in the wholesale meat markets. Middle meats continued to struggle while many end cuts that are traditionally consumed at home did well. Tenderloins, ribeye, and round cuts of beef showed large price moves lower week-over-week. Chuck prices continued to soar, nearing \$1.00 per pound above a year ago. Loin strip prices have also been holding up well and have maintained their normal seasonal pattern this year despite widespread volatility. Lean 90% ground beef was briefly sputtering in March but has since climbed back to \$2.40 per pound in the first weeks of April.

Many of these cuts mirror the volatility in the boxed beef cutout. The weekly choice cutout value has been as low as \$205.71 and as

high as \$255.07 per cwt in the first 15 weeks of this year. Last week averaged \$225.37 per cwt, a \$13 decline from the previous week.

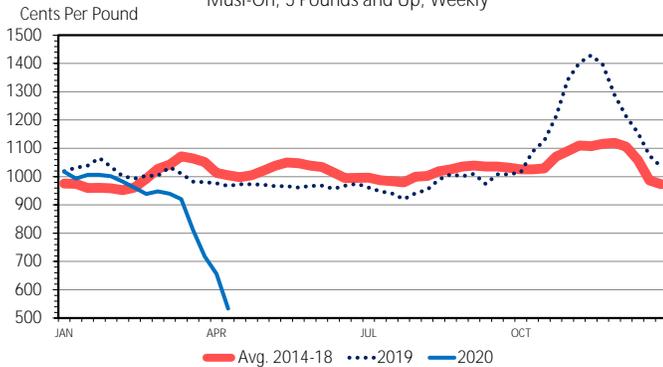
Pork cuts have struggled too. Wholesale ham prices last week hovered near 30 cents per pound. Bellies are approaching 50 cents per pound, and pork trimming are below 40 cents per pound. Some bright spots in previous weeks also had softer wholesale prices. Pork spareribs fell 18 cents per pound from last week, more than a 10% move. Pork loins have been well above last year for the month of March topping \$1.34 per pound. Last week prices pulled back to \$1.20 per pound.

Weekly national pork cutout for negotiated sales was \$53.55 per cwt., a 15% decline from last week. The pork cutout has ranged from \$53.55 to \$79.20 per cwt so far this year. Last week was not a positive sign taking out the previous low by \$9 per cwt.

**Reporting of individual plant closures are changing and updated frequently based on a variety of circumstances, which makes it difficult to assess impacts.** Decreases to slaughter capacity are expected to cause bottlenecks in the supply chain and is expected to continue shaking these markets. That will alter cuts available or may change packaging quantities to reduce the level of labor needed. Already locally, vacuum sealed primals are available at certain grocery stores. This is likely a signpost of labor and pandemic related strategy changes at slaughter plants. Extreme bottlenecks could lead to shortages at the grocery store of specific items. It seems unlikely we will stop slaughtering animals completely. A key point to remember is from animal harvest to grocery store is roughly about a 2-3 week lag. We do not expect to see the brunt of the plant closure impacts to hit grocery stores for several more weeks.

### WHOLESALE BEEF FULL TENDER PRICES

Musl-On, 5 Pounds and Up, Weekly

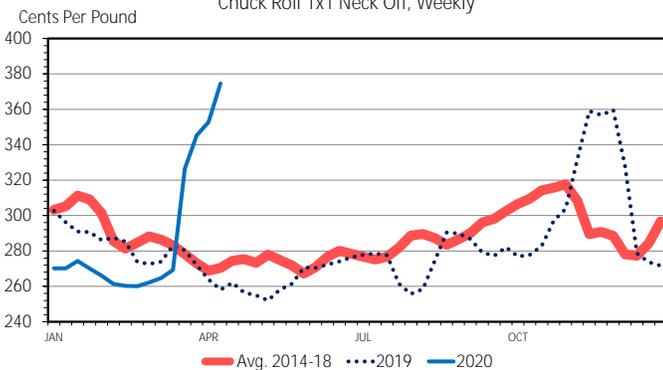


Data Source: USDA-AMS  
Livestock Marketing Information Center

M-P-23  
04/10/20

### WHOLESALE BEEF CHUCK PRICES

Chuck Roll 1x1 Neck Off, Weekly

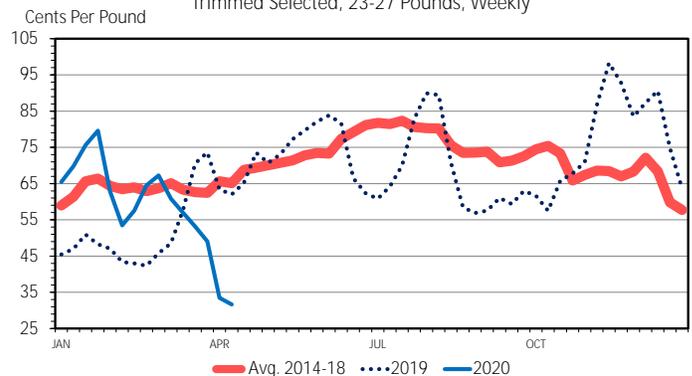


Data Source: USDA-AMS  
Livestock Marketing Information Center

04/10/20

### WHOLESALE HAM PRICES

Trimmed Selected, 23-27 Pounds, Weekly



Data Source: USDA-AMS  
Livestock Marketing Information Center

M-P-27  
04/10/20

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