

One of the dominant annual trends in livestock and poultry industries is heavier slaughter weight. Regarding cattle (steers), annual Federally Inspected (FI) carcass (dressed) weight increased over 130 pounds (17%) in the 24-years from 1992-2016. That is an annual average gain of 5.5 pounds (0.7%). In 2017, FI steer carcass weight is projected to drop year-over-year by 13-14 pounds. As we have said in the newsletter before, throughout 2017, the year-over-year declines in fed cattle weight have been caused by the market structure, which has pulled animals through the feedlot phase rather quickly. That is unusual.

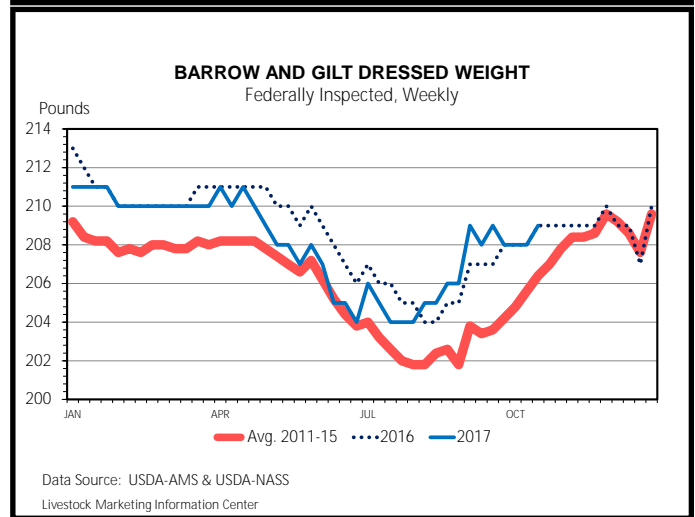
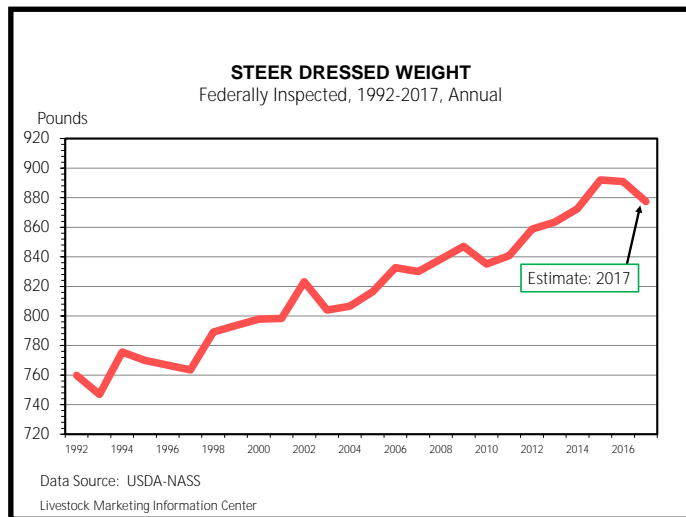
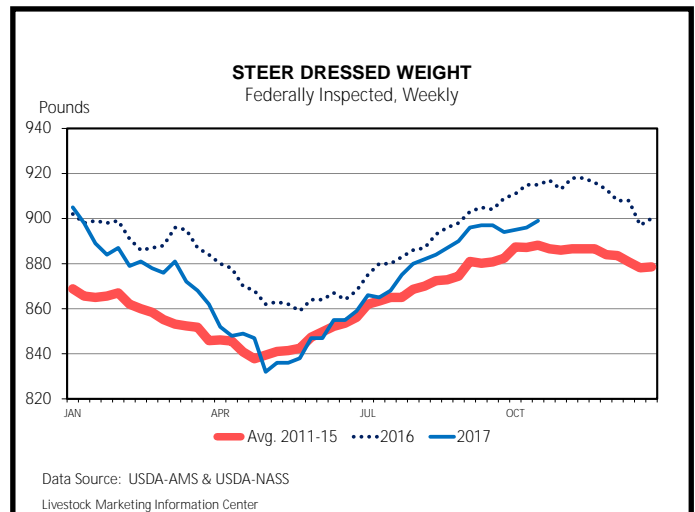
From 1992 until 2016, FI barrow and gilt dressed weight increased by just over 32-pounds (up 18%), or by 1.33 pounds per year. Hog slaughter weights are forecast to increase some year-over-year for the balance of 2017. If that happens, hog carcass weight in 2017 will be nearly unchanged compared to 2016's.

On Thursday, the actual weekly data (reported by USDA-AMS and compiled by USDA-NASS from all FI packing plants), was released for the week ending October 21st. The latest report is available [here](#). Based on the data available so far, October's cattle dressed weights for the month will be lower than expected. For the latest week of data, the dressed steer weight was 899-pounds, down 16-pounds from a year ago. Overall, cattle (steer, heifer, cow, and bull) slaughter weight declined 15 pounds compared to 2016's.

During the last four weeks of data, FI barrow and gilt dressed weight have been unchanged from 2016's. The three-pound

weekly jump up in weight (from 206 to 209 pounds on a dressed basis) that occurred in early September was a concern at the time, but from that point, the rise was dampened. Still, given the large number of hogs being harvested, weights during the next few weeks deserve close attention.

Returning to the longer-term, don't assume the decades-long trend of heavier slaughter weights has ended. However, the rate of growth could moderate. Over the years, economic forces, genetic improvements, and modern management systems have all contributed to bigger carcasses.



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