



Sterling Beef Profit Tracker

"Monitoring Free Market Beef Industry Profits"

Sterling Marketing, Inc.

	Week Ending	Week Ago	Month Ago	Year Ago
January 3, 2026				
Feedlot Margin - Unhedged (\$ / head)	\$293.04	\$237.80	\$109.82	\$220.46
Choice Steers (5-Area Direct, \$ / cwt)	231.73	229.39	221.06	199.48
Feeder Steer (Ok City 750-800 lb, \$ / cwt)				
For this Week's Feedlot Placement	350.50	350.50	337.49	265.11
Against this Week's Marketing	309.85	312.59	312.65	256.09
Feed Cost (\$ / head)				
For this Week's Feedlot Placement	397.21	407.37	403.10	456.73
Against this Week's Marketing	425.65	426.87	438.04	455.10
Total Cost (feeder steer, processing cost, vet med, feed, yardage, interest, death loss)(\$ / head)				
For this Week's Feedlot Placement	3,402.45	3,412.87	3,305.69	2,775.01
Against this Week's Marketing	3,109.28	3,132.96	3,144.93	2,710.05
Calculated Breakeven Price (\$ / cwt)				
For this Week's Feedlot Placement	230.67	231.38	224.11	188.14
Against this Week's Marketing	210.80	212.40	213.22	183.73
Packer Margin (\$ / head)	(\$360.17)	(\$221.41)	\$92.50	(\$144.68)
Choice Steers (5-Area Direct, \$ cwt)	231.73	229.39	221.06	199.48
Beef Cutout¹ (\$ / cwt)	342.15	354.52	370.27	319.22
Drop Credit ² (\$/hd)	186.75	187.11	184.31	101.09
	January 3, 2026	Week Ago	Month Ago	Year Ago
Cattle Slaughter	474,000	426,000	602,929	504,893
Steer & Heifer	384,888	345,912	490,784	414,012
Fed Plant Capacity Utilization	65.3%	58.6%	83.2%	71.0%
Cows	82,476	74,124	103,101	86,337
Cow Plant Capacity Utilization	55.0%	49.4%	68.7%	59.3%
Beef Production	423.7	381.2	541.4	444.0
(federally inspected, mil. lbs.)				
Carcass Weight - average - all cattle (lbs.)	896	897	900	881
Relative Feeding Cost (against current Placement week)				
Feeder Steer	79.84%	79.59%	79.12%	74.04%
Feed	12.78%	13.00%	12.82%	16.85%
Annual Projections - December 12, 2025	2026*	2025*	2024	2023
Cow-Calf Margin³(\$ / cow)	1078.00	989.00	404.79	320.65
Estimated annual revenue - annual variable costs				
Feedlot Margin (\$ / head)	179.98	489.30	114.00	213.97
Packer Margin (\$ / head)	(\$107.56)	(\$141.17)	(\$75)	98.08

¹ Comprehensive Cutout which includes Prime, Choice, Select grade, branded, & ungraded cattle. Starting Jan. 1, 2024.

³ Based on Sterling Marketing revenue and cost of production projections.



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