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Fewer cattle placed on feed than expected in August: USDA

By [Rita Jane Gabbett](#) on 9/24/2012

Cattle and calves placed on feed during August totaled 2 million, down 11 percent from this time last year and the second lowest August placements since the series began in 1996, USDA reported. Analysts, on average, were expecting placements to be down about 7 percent, according to a Dow Jones survey.

Reduced placements are in part due to the lack of feeder cattle available, given last year's smaller calf crop, according to the CME Group's Daily Livestock Report, which also noted year ago comparisons are somewhat skewed by last year's drought that pushed a lot of lightweight calves onto feedlots a year ago.

Cattle and calves on feed for slaughter market in the United States for feedlots with capacity of 1,000 or more head totaled 10.6 million head on Sept. 1, down 1 percent from Sept. 1, 2011, according to USDA's monthly Cattle on Feed report.

During August, placements of cattle and calves weighing less than 600 pounds were 482,000, compared to 715,000 during August 2011. Placements at 600-699 pounds were 385,000, compared to 365,000 a year ago. Placements at 700-799 pounds were 475,000, compared to 476,000 last August and placements at 800 pounds and greater were 660,000, compared to 690,000 a year ago.

Marketings of fed cattle during August totaled 1.96 million, 5 percent below 2011. On average, analysts were expecting only a 2.5 percent decline.