

USDA report shows turkey supplies in wake of avian influenza

By [Rita Jane Gabbett](#) on 5/26/2015

Total frozen poultry supplies on April 30, 2015, were up 6 percent from the previous month and up 21 percent from a year ago, according to USDA's monthly Cold Storage report.

Total stocks of chicken were up 2 percent from the previous month and up 31 percent from last year. Total pounds of turkey in freezers were up 14 percent from last month and up 5 percent from April 30, 2014.

Avian influenza and turkey supplies

National Turkey Federation Communications and Marketing Vice President Keith Williams offered some perspective on turkey supplies in the wake of the outbreak of avian influenza (HPAI) that has hit the turkey industry this year.

"For whole turkeys in all regions, frozen birds in cold storage comparisons show flash frozen whole turkeys are well-stocked. Several regions are stocked above last year at this time," he told **Meatingplace**. "Keep in mind also, growers in various regions may employ considerable flexibility in production of numbers as well as growing even a week longer on corn and soybean feed to increase the meat from each bird."

Specific to Thanksgiving, he noted that the whole bird bought for the family gathering is the smaller hen, which have been less

affected by HPAI than the larger toms, which are grown in separate barns.

Noting that consumers often buy frozen turkeys for Thanksgiving, Williams said most of those for the Thanksgiving supply had already been grown prior to the HPAI cases and are in good supply. "The USDA cold storage report continues to prove-up those supplies of Thanksgiving hens," he said.

Red meat

Total red meat supplies in freezers were up 2 percent from the previous month and up 20 percent from last year.

Total pounds of beef in freezers were down 1 percent from the previous month but up 18 percent from last year.

Frozen pork supplies were up 4 percent from the previous month and up 20 percent from last year. Stocks of pork bellies were up 3 percent from last month but down 16 percent from last year.