



Urner Barry's  
**Reporter**

the newsmagazine for the food industry professional

VOLUME 18 | NUMBER 1 | WINTER 2023 | QUARTERLY

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## From the Editor's Desk...

The times we are in continue to fascinate me, not only from a professional perspective, but as an observant global citizen. In this business, nearly everyday, industry-rooted dialogue transitions into a captivating topic du jour. Often that subject involves money. It might be about inflation, the housing market, the volatile state of the commodity markets, the down-trodden path on which the stock market has been traveling, interest rates—and the list goes on.

Money is a funny thing. We have all lived our lives being bombarded by everyday expressions, centered on what some call the root of all evil. Certainly, it can seem that way.

At times a familiarity rings loudly in the food business. We've heard the expression "time is money," and being a human dependent industry, today there is a tendency to equate time and money with labor and the work force. Has there been a more confounding topic as businesses throughout the world struggle with a new norm? One filled with post-pandemic expectations of existing employees and new hires, that only a few short years ago would have been unthinkable.

Another common phrase, "health is better than wealth," has taken on a whole new meaning for the turkey and egg industries. High-path avian influenza has devastated egg laying flocks and turned the tables on the turkey industry, while the less impacted but still affected chicken industry looks on with great concern. Yes, the monetary losses have been significant, but what about the other losses? Those that are not necessarily quantified in dollars and cents. Consumers turning up their nose at high prices, lost marketing opportunities, strained business relationships, and so much more. Certainly, healthy flocks are far preferred than the ultra-volatile, yet at times highly profitable, market values that are associated with these difficult times.

They say money doesn't grow on trees. We live in an environment where it is a popular trend to point the finger at the food industry as if, indeed, money grows on trees. Well maybe not the trees, but the farms, pastures and feed lots where farmers and cattlemen tend to their resources, treating them with a caring dignity. Yet politicians and vocal disruptors somehow have popularized a "cash cow" identity, a falsehood conveniently ignoring the steep, highly regulated and expensive heartache, tribulations, and turmoil that manufacturers must endure to deliver affordable, wholesome, and healthy food to citizens around the globe.

In the end and inarguably, a good name is better than riches. While it's true, as in any business, that the entirety of the food supply chain— from sellers, buyers and middlemen to the veterinarians, academia, scientists, and millions of hard-working individuals which make up its backbone—are ultimately in it for the money, I would argue that there are few that deserve it more.

Stay in touch.



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# Urner Barry's Reporter

THE NEWSMAGAZINE FOR THE  
FOOD INDUSTRY PROFESSIONAL

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AGRI BRIEFING

# Is the future of self-checkout in limbo?

The days may be numbered for self-checkout in retail stores. The problems are getting bigger, the losses are increasing, and retailers are frustrated.

Wegmans Food Markets decided to eliminate their scan and go self-checkout in September 2022 due to several losses from theft. Will other retailers follow suit?

An email was sent to the users of the Wegmans SCAN app that said:

“Early in the pandemic, we quickly rolled out our SCAN app to provide a contactless in-store shopping option. SCAN users have told us they love the app and the convenience it offers. We love it too and have tried many adjustments to keep it. Unfortunately, the losses we are experiencing from this program prevent us from continuing to make it available in its current state.”

There has been an increase in people forgetting (or purposely) not scanning a few items while in self-checkout lanes and walking out of the store with “free” items.

There is a conflicting relationship between customers and retailers on the self-checkout offering. Shoppers are in favor of having the self-checkout option. Meanwhile, retailers are not too thrilled about it. Hence, why Wegmans had decided to discontinue their self-checkout. However, self-checkout is a major preference for shoppers. Retail Customer Experience reported that 77% of shoppers will most likely choose stores that have the scan-and-go option available.

The purpose of self-checkout was to enhance the customer's shopping experience and help make the checkout process easier and quicker. CNN Business says that shoppers enjoy the “speed” of self-checkout, even though there is barely any evidence to prove that it is faster than standard cashiers. Customers also enjoy



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**“Despite the issues, self-checkout is still expanding to more stores...”**

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not having to wait in lines and being able to do it on their own.

Self-checkout was also meant to help the retailer by lowering labor costs. But retailers found that the self-checkout machines need to be regularly supervised and have maintenance done often too.

Despite the issues, self-checkout is still expanding to more stores, including Dollar General, Walmart, and Kroger. In fact, self-checkout is expected to triple by 2027, according to *Retail Dive*. The company reported that scan-and-go checkout locations will reach 160,000, which is up from 46,000 in 2021.

Wegmans customers were not happy with the announcement canceling their self-checkout offerings. And while Wegmans said that they understand that customers enjoyed the scan-and-go option and found it to be beneficial to their shopping

experience, the company is not currently thinking about bringing back the scan-and-go offer. Instead, they stated that they plan on introducing new digital solutions to streamline shopping experiences in the future.

Theft seems to be a common theme amongst all self-checkout, but customer preferences for the offering have a heavy say on the matter. For now, it seems that self-checkout stations are not going anywhere anytime soon. [UB](#)

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# Is culling birds a sustainable answer to avian influenza?

They say the best offense is a good defense. But what happens when your defense is, well, perhaps a little offensive? Since February of this year, more than 50 million birds in the U.S. have died as a result of the bird flu—and a similar amount have perished in Europe. But that's not to say that 50.3 million U.S. birds have contracted the virus. A great many of those lost were simply collateral damage—i.e., culled because of their exposure to infected birds. This type of “defense” has generally been effective in the past, lowering the viral load in the environment and slowing the spread until warmer weather arrives, which has, historically, made it impossible for the virus to survive.

But the Eurasian H5N1 strain affecting birds this year is not like any other witnessed before. Foremost, it's incredibly virulent. By one estimate, a single dropping from an infected bird can contain 100,000 infectious doses. The breadth of this year's spread

through November, and the number of outbreaks, especially among growing turkeys and backyard farms, suggest that HPAI, if not seasonally endemic, is de facto an endemic disease.”

This begs the question: from both a financial and ethical standpoint, is depopulating commercial flocks a sustainable solution to what appears to be an interminable problem?

“I don't think that it's tenable to continue culling millions of birds every year just for economic reasons,” Professor Thijs Kuiken, a veterinary pathologist at Erasmus Medical Centre in Rotterdam, Netherlands, told *Sky News*. “I think it's ethically not acceptable to do so.”

But while most industry stakeholders would agree that culling is not the answer, few seem to agree on whether the alternative—



certainly speaks to that virulence. It's been detected in more than 2,000 wild birds this year, compared with just 99 during the bird flu outbreak of 2015—the deadliest to date. And while the number of birds impacted this year is nearly on par with the 50.5 million that died in 2015, the number of states affected has more than doubled—even though biosecurity measures are far superior to those employed in 2015.

This year's strain of the bird flu is not only highly virulent, but also exceptionally tenacious. Infections both here and abroad slowed but never stopped throughout the summer months, dashing hopes that high temperatures would eradicate the virus as it had in the past.

“Perhaps the most significant difference between the 2015 and 2022 outbreaks is the growing realization that HPAI may no longer be regarded as an exotic infection,” says Dr. Simon Shane, a Consultant Poultry Veterinarian and Professor of Veterinary Medicine at North Carolina State University. “The occurrence of outbreaks in 46 states, persistence of the infection from January

vaccination—is a viable path forward. Opinions on the matter tend to vary primarily by industry. The broiler segment, which exports roughly 18% of its production, has expressed strong opposition to vaccinating, under the premise that it would likely serve as an international trade barrier. Some foreign nations, they assert—most notably China—would seize upon the opportunity to disqualify U.S. products for import, delivering a financial blow to the industry.

However, Dr. Shane isn't so certain. He believes it is speculative as to whether China would refuse to import chicken if the U.S. adopted a policy of vaccinating its flocks, given limited world availability, their strong demand, and the fact that HPAI is also endemic in China.

“With the extent of HPAI in North America, Europe, Asia and Africa, the infection is no longer regarded as a national problem. Extensive bans are both scientifically unjustified and contrary to World Trade Organization regulations,” Shane says. “If nations wish to use HPAI to protect their industries from

competition, the application of vaccine by U.S. exporters is an irrelevant consideration.”

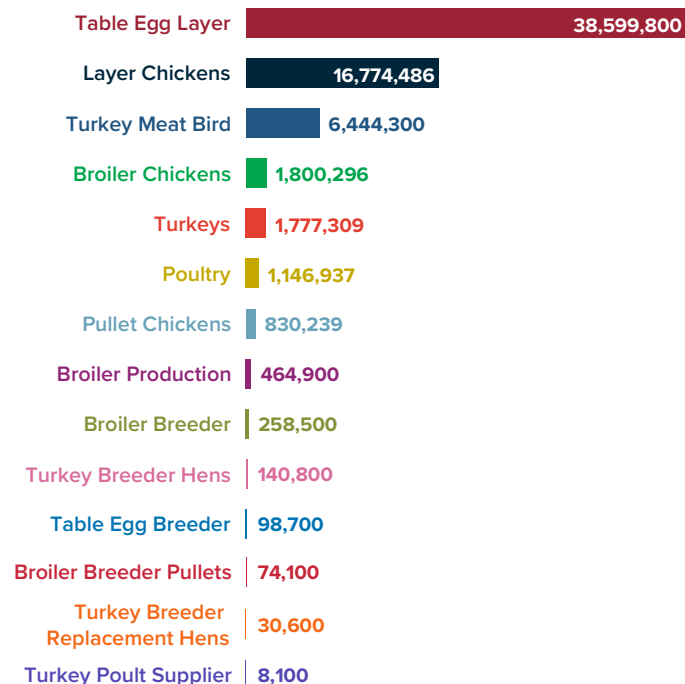
The majority of those in the egg-production sector—which accounts for nearly 75% of the birds culled this year—seem to support vaccination, or at the very least, further exploration of its feasibility and efficacy as a means of combating the virus. Many of the nation’s layer farms house millions of birds, whereas broiler and turkey farms tend to number in the thousands. So, when an egg-laying farm tests positive for the virus, the loss of production can be catastrophic. In two separate instances this year, more than 5 million layers needed to be culled as a result of the bird flu. The loss is not only financially devastating for the farmers, but also for the U.S. government, which indemnifies owners for the loss of birds destroyed as a result of an animal health emergency. So far this year, the USDA has distributed more than \$336 million to commercial producers who’ve been impacted by the bird flu.

While the egg industry does not have an official position on vaccination, Chad Gregory, President and CEO of United Egg Producers, told Urner Barry they hope to arrive at one soon, adding that “egg farmers have good energy and a sense of urgency to explore vaccination as an option.” However, that same level of energy is not yet evident at the government level, he says. “Once those converge, I think we’ll see some progress. It comes down to money. Layer farms are huge, and those

## Commercial Birds Affected

As of November 29, 2022

Source: USDA, UBC



indemnity checks add up. Once they realize these outbreaks aren’t stopping, they’ll say ‘enough is enough.’ It just hasn’t happened yet.” <sup>UB</sup>

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# Moo-ving through tighter cattle supplies in 2023 and beyond

“Beef. It’s What’s For Dinner.” But it might come at a higher cost to consumers in 2023 as the nation’s cattle herd continues to shrink.

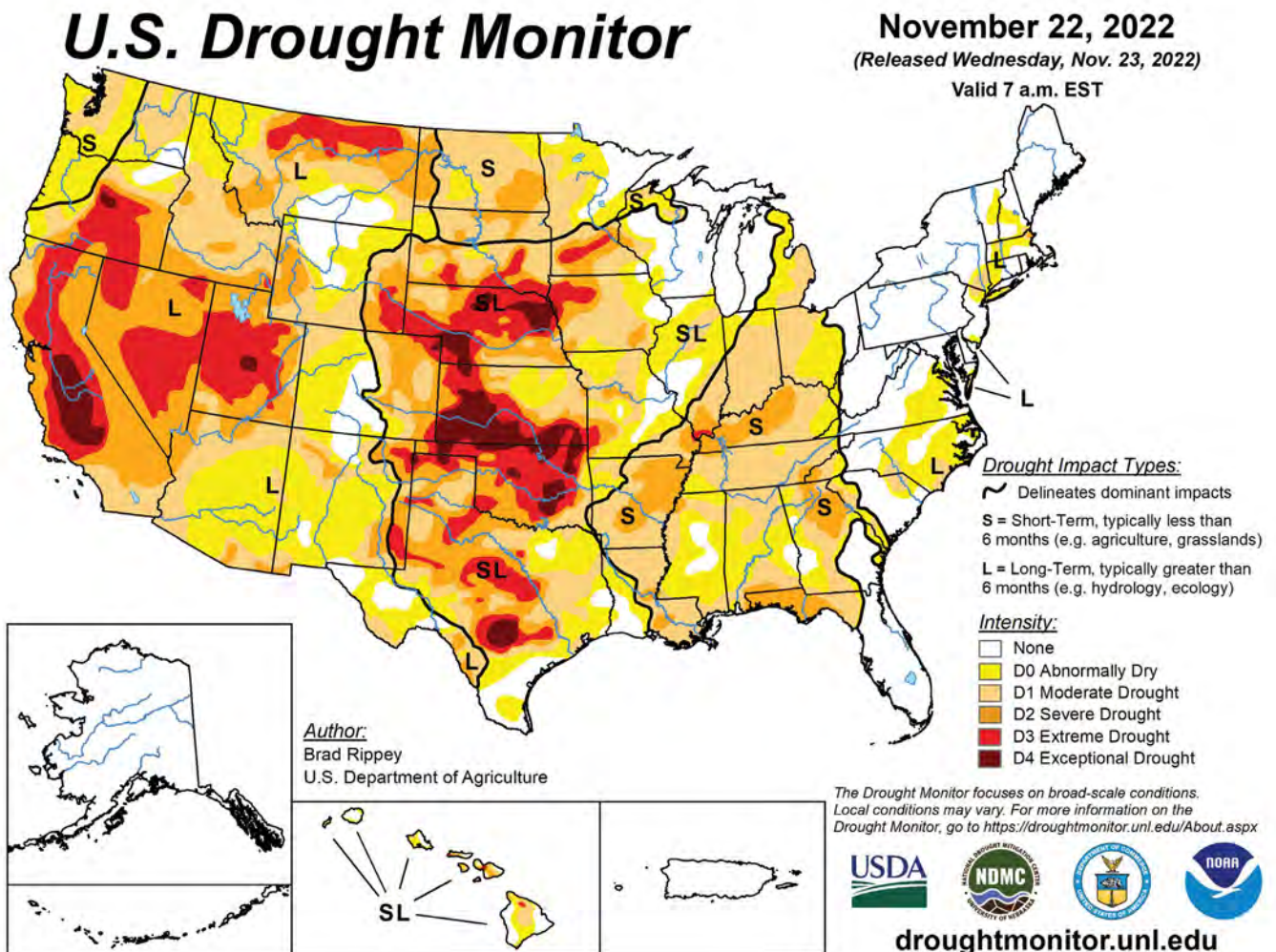
The current contraction phase in cattle cycle is expected to continue over the next two to three years. To recap, the cattle cycle typically averages between eight to 10 years and refers to cyclical increases and decreases in the herd over time. The cycle is determined by a variety of factors including cattle prices and climate.

How long the nation’s herd continues to shrink will be influenced by drought conditions, which had engulfed about 85% of the country by early November. Through November 8, nearly three-quarters of the nation’s cattle inventory was experiencing some degree of drought.

Limited forage availability due to the drought has pushed more cattle to slaughter, contributing to increased harvest levels. Through November 5, total year-to-date cattle harvest was 1.6% above the year prior.

Robust slaughter levels throughout much of 2022 have helped feedyards maintain relatively current marketings, considered supportive for cash cattle prices.

Negotiated cattle prices have generally been on an uptrend this year. USDA’s five-area weighed average live steer price in October averaged about \$148/cwt, a near seasonal all-time high and second only to the drought-induced record levels of 2014.



About 85% of the country was experiencing abnormal dryness or drought by early November. Source: CPC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP



This upward momentum in the cash cattle market is expected to continue into next year and beyond as fewer cattle supplies become available to packers.

In September, placements were 3.8% below 2021 and total on-feed inventories were about 1% under last year. Some analysts project the tightest cattle numbers to arrive 2024 or 2025, meaning beef prices could remain elevated until then.

While bargaining leverage in the spot market has improved for cattle owners, high grain costs and limited feed availability are threatening margins for producers. The grain markets continue to be impacted by domestic and global headwinds, including transportation issues stateside and the ongoing war in Ukraine.

Near record low water levels in the Mississippi River have substantially slowed grain transportation by barge, contributing to record basis levels for corn and soybeans. The Mississippi River is a major shipping route for much of the grain grown in the central U.S.

Industry participants are closely eyeing domestic beef demand in 2023 as fears of a recession have raised concerns about consumer spending. Red hot inflation could dampen beef demand as households grapple with increased living expenses.

There are also concerns that global demand, which has been strong throughout much of 2022, could taper off in the fourth quarter of 2022 and into next year due to a strengthening U.S. dollar.

“Demand for U.S. beef has been extremely resilient, but inflationary pressure on consumers and weakened currencies in key markets have definitely created a more challenging environment,” explained U.S. Meat Export Federation President and CEO Dan Halstrom.

“Exports also continue to face logistical challenges, lockdowns in China and mounting inventories in some destinations. Still, it’s hard to view September sales of nearly \$900 million as a disappointment, when this would have been an all-time record just 18 months ago. That really drives home what a remarkable year this has been for U.S. beef exports,” added Halstrom.

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**“The current contraction phase in cattle cycle is expected to continue over the next two to three years.”**

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As we ring in a new year, those in the protein trade will have no shortage of challenges to navigate through. Faced with natural disruptions, including drought and animal disease, along with volatile macroeconomic conditions, supporting our nation’s farmers is more crucial than ever. [UB](#)

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# Food trends in focus in 2023

If anything, the food industry is resilient. After spending much of the last three years battling the COVID-19 pandemic, the focus has shifted to record inflation and a potential recession heading into 2023.

With questions about rising food prices and the impact it will have on consumer food spending habits, industry experts are expecting social media, classic menu items and sustainable protein options to play a key role in the new year.

## RECESSION ON THE MIND

Technomic said the “specter of recession” will loom over the restaurant and foodservice industry in 2023. The recession comes as food prices continue to rise.

As of October, the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Economic Research Service (ERS) food prices were predicted to jump between 9.5% and 10.5% in 2022. While inflation isn’t expected to hit food quite as hard as it did last year, the ERS still expects a 3.0% and 4.0% jump in 2023.

Despite the challenges and roadblocks, Technomic believes the latter part of the year could provide much needed rays of sunshine, particularly for foodservice operators.

As grocery bills begin to level out with a night out to eat, Technomic sees consumers deciding to head to a restaurant for dinner instead. Although they see orders and visits to restaurants remaining flat, the group said consumers’ desire to make the most out of each stop at a restaurant will be a lifeline for eateries.

## AI DIALED IN ON SEAFOOD

Spoonshot, a food and beverage intelligence company, shared its 2023 food trends, which included a heavy focus on seafood and seafood alternatives. The company’s trends are unique in that they are delivered with the help of AI and machine learning.

Data from Spoonshot indicated that pescatarian diets are all the rage, up 117% since 2016, also growing by 9% in the 12 months to April 2022.

The trend was linked back to the health benefits of seafood. Spoonshot indicated that 20% of consumers linked protein as the top nutrient associated with fish and health together.

Not only is the pescatarian diet on the rise, but fish consumption is also up. Spoonshot cited Stanford University research that found consumers have doubled their intake of fish since 1998 across the globe and that number is expected to increase by another 80% in 2050.

Although increased fish consumption is a welcomed piece of information for the seafood industry, Spoonshot also believes there is both an opportunity and need for seafood alternatives. The group cited concerns like overfishing and warming waters as a need for other fish options.

“...alternative fish and seafood is where we expect to see the next big growth spurt in terms of innovation—not because it’s sort of obvious, but more importantly, because there is greater urgency for fish alternatives than meat alternatives,” Spoonshot wrote.

## WHOLE FOODS EXPECTS ‘A POULTRY REVOLUTION’

Looking towards 2023, Whole Foods Market predicts a poultry “revolution” as consumers focus on animal welfare. The retailer expects a growing focus on cage-free and pasture-raised products.

Whole Foods highlighted The Better Chicken Project, developed by the Global Animal Partnership (G.A.P.), in hopes of improving the welfare of birds.

“Egg producers in the dairy case at Whole Foods Market are stretching beyond our better-than-cage-free Animal Welfare Standards for Laying Hens, with even more focus on outdoor time,” the company wrote.

## TIKTOK...TIKTOK...TIKTOK

TikTok is making quite the impression on not only Gen Z and Millennials, but all the other age groups on the platform.

According to MGH, a full-service marketing communications agency, 38% of TikTok users in the U.S. across all generations have visited or ordered food from a restaurant after seeing a TikTok video about it. That represents about 51.8 million Americans.

“TikTok truly is a restaurant marketer’s dream-come-true. There aren’t many other tools we have left in our marketing toolbox that can drive the sort of impact promised by TikTok through this survey,” Ryan Goff, EVP, Social Media Marketing Director at MGH said.

## WHAT’S OLD IS NEW

For years, McDonald’s has brought back and taken away its cult classic McRib menu item. Taco Bell made waves on social media with the return of its Mexican Pizza in 2022 and don’t forget about the Choco Taco saga.

Sometimes, classic menu items are a great way to spark interest and provide a sales boost. *Food Technology Magazine*, after asking industry experts for their thoughts, expects nostalgia to play a part in new product development in 2023. As does Bidfood, a foodservice provider in the UK.

“Retailers have reported an increase in demand for retro foods and desserts but we’re also seeing excitement in the out of home market,” Bidfood wrote. “We’re seeing bakeries and dessert shops creating cakes around old confectionary, milkshakes and cocktails featuring childhood favorite flavors or sweets and restaurants serving good old hearty grub that takes you right back to your school days.” [UB](#)

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**“..there is both an opportunity and need for seafood alternatives.”**

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# PROTEIN PRICES DURING TIMES OF RECESSION

Talks of a possible recession began earlier this year. Given the current economic climate, recognizing this time as a recession is a bit more complex than one would think. This year the job market has been strong, with low unemployment levels. Inflation for both producers and consumers has been hovering around multi-decade highs. As of press time, evidence suggests that consumers were still willing to spend even with rising prices. Despite some positives in the economy, public sentiment on the future of the economy remains somewhat gloomy.

For many, a recession is considered as a period with two consecutive quarters of negative GDP growth. However, this “textbook” definition doesn’t always hold true. It is, in fact, the responsibility of the Business Cycle Dating Committee at the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) to define whether the U.S. economy is in recession. This committee is comprised of a group of academic economists who use a wide variety of economic indicators to measure the overall health of the U.S. economy.

Every recession is unique, each a different creature with different characteristics. The last two recessions, the Great Recession from 2007 to 2009 and the COVID-19 Recession from February 2020 to April 2020, are somewhat outliers—something essential to realize. The Great Recession was the longest recession post the Great Depression, lasting 18 months. More recently, the COVID-19 Recession only lasted two months, the shortest recession in our nation’s history. Like most recessions, the effects of these recessions have been long-lasting. Two years after the COVID-19 Recession, the economy continues dealing with the disruptions caused by the pandemic shutdown. Consumers increased savings and shifted spending from services to goods. Producers scrambled to meet increased consumer demand causing an inflationary environment; in other words, too many dollars chasing too few goods. For many, the increased costs of goods and services have been difficult to deal with, especially for low-income earners, despite the excess saving built up during the pandemic. Many say that if these problems are not solved, the economy may enter into recession and possibly stagflation.

Such a statement leads us to the following question—how will protein prices react to a possible recession?

Unfortunately, the answer is a bit more complicated, and a complete analysis is needed to dissect the question. But to begin this process, we will look at the overall trends in the protein markets during times of recession. The quick analysis we developed for this article adjusted for each commodity’s overall trend and seasonal behavior. Empirically, we would suspect consumers typically switch to inferior goods in times of economic hardship—an inferior good being a good where demand increases

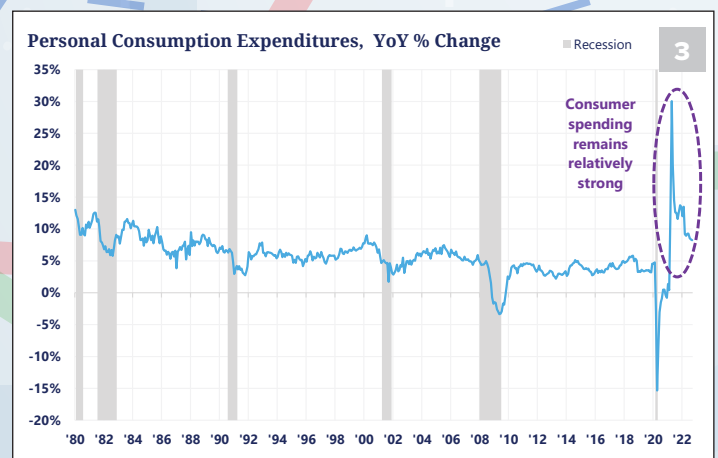
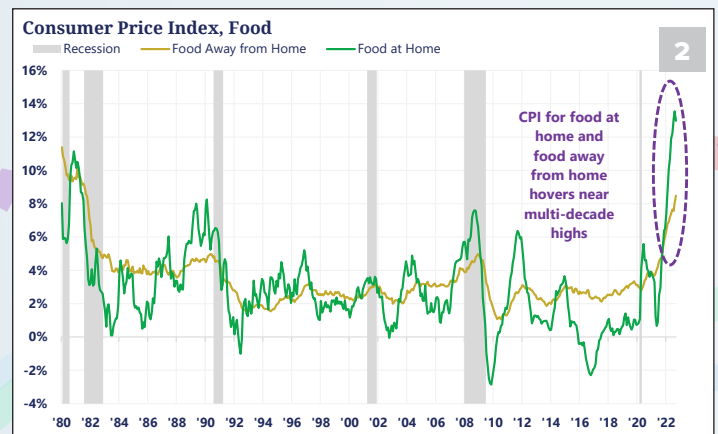
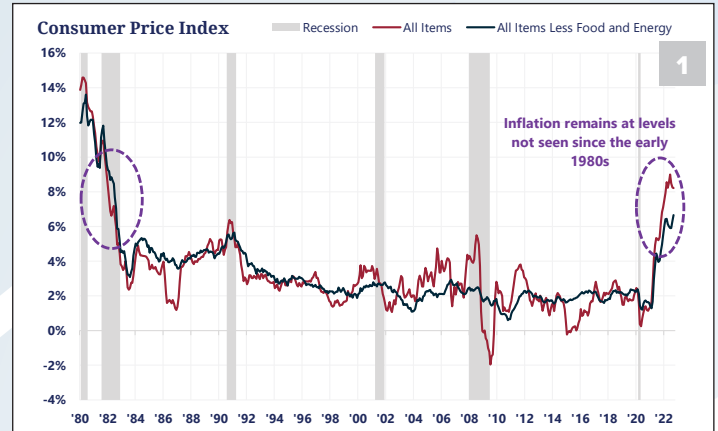


Figure 1. Consumer Price Index Year-over-Year Percent Change, All Items vs All Items less Food and Energy 1980-2022 YTD

Figure 2. Consumer Price Index Year-over-Year Percent Change, Food Away from Home vs Food at Home 1980-2022 YTD

Figure 3. Personal Consumption Expenditures Year-over-Year Percent Change, 1980-2022 YTD

Source: Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Urner Barry Consulting

when incomes decrease. Regarding the protein market, many would agree that eggs and chicken can sometimes be considered inferior goods.

During the early '90's recession, protein prices remained relatively flat compared to the other recessions examined within this piece. Ribeye prices decreased as expected, with demand likely shrinking due to economic hardships; naturally, if we assume a ribeye to be a relatively high-priced item. Boneless pork loins saw significant month-over-month increases compared to the other commodities analyzed. The largest month-over-month increase was 2.4% from November 1990 to December 1990. For boneless chicken breasts, prices saw negative month-over-month declines throughout the recession. However, the degree to which prices declined dwindled as the recession progressed.

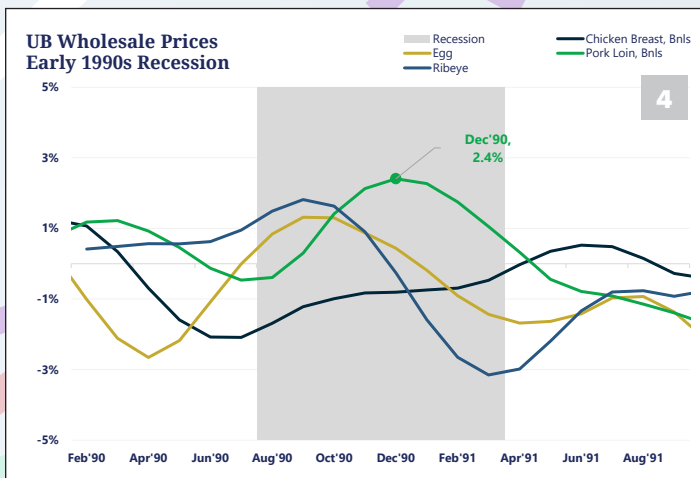


Figure 4. UB Wholesale Prices during the Early 1990s Recession, Month-Over-Month Percentage Change, February 1990 – September 1991.  
Source: Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, Uerner Barry, Uerner Barry Consulting

Many protein prices reacted differently during the early 2000s recession compared to the early 1990s recession. Chicken breasts saw month-over-month increases from July 2001 to November 2001, with the largest jump recorded in September 2001. Interestingly, ribeye and egg prices decreased month-over-month throughout the recession. However, during the last month of the recession, November 2001, egg prices increased slightly month-over-month. Most notably, shrimp prices declined the sharpest. September 2001 and October 2001 recorded the largest month-over-month declines.

During the Great Recession, egg prices reacted similarly to other recessions examined within this analysis, decreasing month-over-month for a large portion of the recession. Shrimp prices—like the early 1990s recession—decreased the most on a month-over-month basis. During the first half of the Great Recession, boneless pork loin prices increased every month. Boneless chicken breast prices increased month-over-month for eight consecutive months, from October 2008 to May 2009.

Continued on page 14

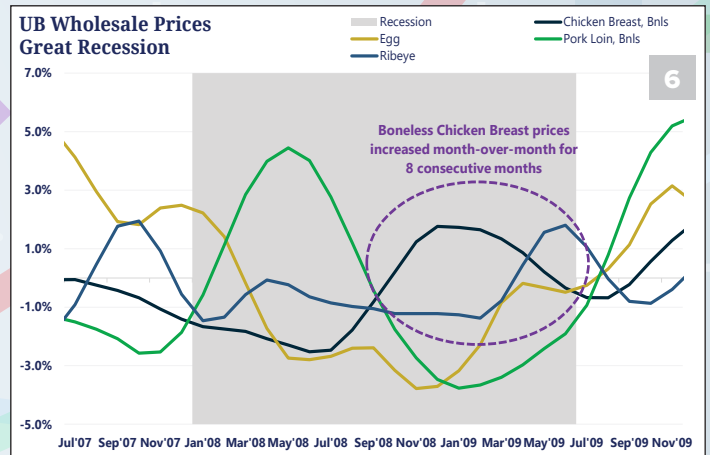
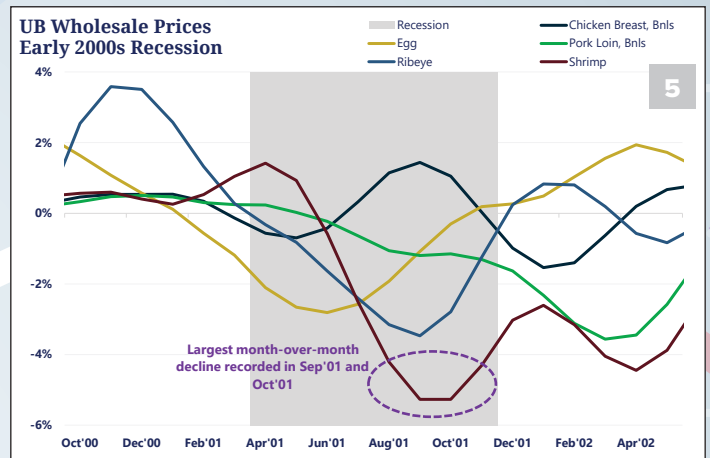


Figure 5. UB Wholesale Prices during the Early 2000s Recession, Month-Over-Month Percentage Change, October 2000 – May 2001

Figure 6. UB Wholesale Prices during the Great Recession, Month-Over-Month Percentage Change, July 2007 – November 2009

Figure 7. UB Seafood Wholesale Prices during the Great Recession, Month-Over-Month Percentage Change, July 2007 – November 2009

Source: Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, Uerner Barry, Uerner Barry Consulting

# PROTEIN PRICES Continued from page 13

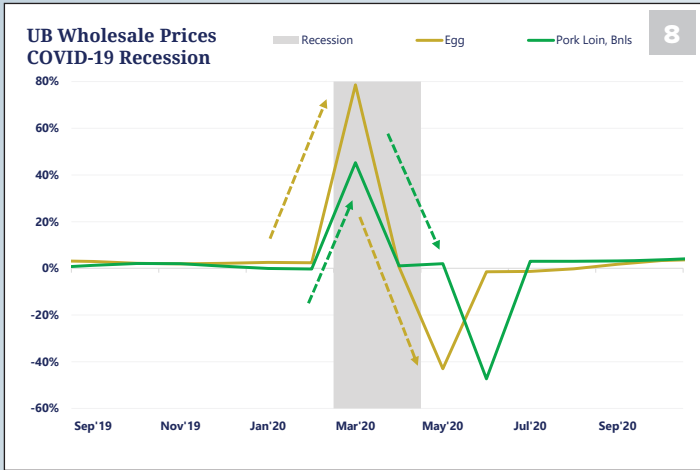


Figure 8. UB Wholesale Prices during the COVID-19 Recession, Month-Over-Month Percentage Change, September 2019 – November 2020

Source: Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, Urner Barry, Urner Barry Consulting

During the short COVID-19 Recession, the economy experienced a significant consumer shift from dining out to eating at home. Egg wholesale prices increased significantly, as did boneless pork loin prices, correcting downward during the months after the recession. Shrimp prices continued to decrease from a month-over-

month perspective. Post-recession, salmon prices fell drastically.

This quick exercise shows that protein price behavior varied from recession to recession. In addition, supply dynamics in each sector faced different challenges in each recession and changes in consumer

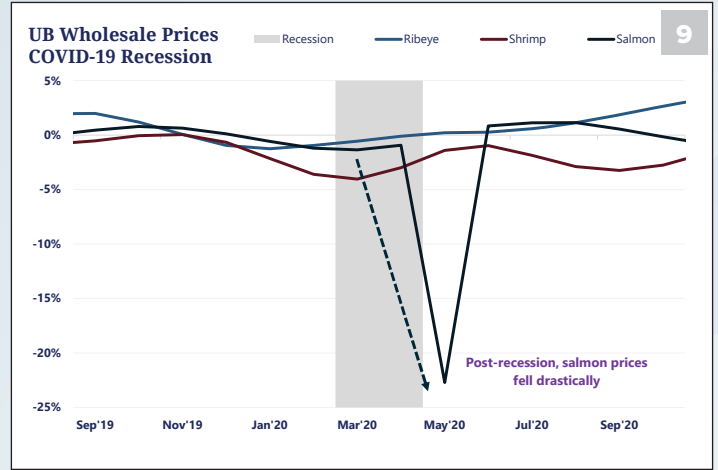


Figure 9. UB Wholesale Prices during the COVID-19 Recession, Month-Over-Month Percentage Change, September 2019 – November 2020

Source: Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, Urner Barry, Urner Barry Consulting

habits due to changes in incomes. For example, the Great Recession saw incomes fall drastically, while corn price—an essential input in animal protein production—increased significantly due to policy changes. In the 2001 recession, we experienced a temporary shock caused by the events of September 11, likely causing changes in consumer habits, at least temporarily. Thus, an in-depth analysis would be required by protein since our premise is that every recession is unique.

As we move into Q4 '22 and Q1 '23, protein prices continue to hover around record highs. Our quick hypothesis suggests that the pandemic expanded the palette of many consumers, introducing new foods to diets with increased buying power. Food expenses remain a relatively small portion of many consumers' income. On a speculative level, protein prices for many cuts and trimmings may remain elevated compared to historical norms even if a recession takes place soon. Of course, many may switch to lower-priced proteins—especially lower-income individuals who spend a larger proportion of their income on food. With HPAI still affecting poultry prices, making this claim through pricing data may be challenging. As we advance, just as any business should, it will be imperative for protein producers to pay close attention to the economic situation and be prepared for any state of economic decline. UB

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# Global uncertainty leads to changes in food sourcing

Where do you turn when food costs are rising due to inflation, supply chain issues, the pandemic, natural disasters, and war? More and more people are getting involved in homesteading so that they can have more control over their food supply and costs. Whether it is a single family working in their backyard, multiple families working together, or community gardens or farms, the desire for self-reliance is growing stronger.

According to the American Pet Product Association's 2021-2022 National Pet Owners Survey, ownership of backyard chickens increased from 8% in 2018 to 13% in 2020. The main reason that homesteaders want to raise chickens is for fresh eggs, while others plan to raise broilers for the meat. Once grocery stores started placing limits on eggs, the interest in raising chicken for eggs started to accelerate over fears of supply shortages. A backyard chicken that is well taken care of can lay 200 to 300 eggs a year, with most people owning multiple hens.



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Homesteading is a lot of work and there is a lot to learn to do it properly. Since growing in popularity, more resources on how to homestead are popping up, from TikTok and social media influencers, to colleges offering monthly webinars on different homesteading topics, such as planning a garden, bee keeping, raising animals and how to properly care for them to prevent diseases. Younger generations are also getting more concerned about where their food comes from, as well as the topic of sustainability. They want to make a smaller imprint on the planet by living off the land.

Canning is another popular topic as preppers want to stock food away in case of food shortages like we experienced during the pandemic. They can create stockpiles in case of another pandemic-like situation where food is not readily available. Preppers often keep quiet about their stock, so that other people don't find out and come looking for theirs if food becomes scarce. Sales in the survival food industry have been increasing as well. Even non-preppers are stocking up on nonperishable food for fears of prices increasing even more in 2023.

Urban community gardens are also gaining popularity, and the USDA is investing \$14.2 million in 52 grants that support urban agriculture, which renews the People's Garden initiative. These gardens are in 17 urban hubs across the country and bring communities together to educate and provide better nutrition through vegetables and fresh fruit in rural areas. Community gardens are a place where people who live in apartments or have no land to garden can come together to bring fresh produce into their communities. Having produce grown in the area will cut back on emissions used to transport these items, which is better for the environment and saves money on transportation costs.

Homesteading has seen upticks in the past when times were uncertain, and people were looking to make changes to their lifestyles to survive those hard times. How long this uptick will last is unknown. For now, it seems that trying to get ahead of potential pitfalls is driving people to seek out new food sources. [UB](#)

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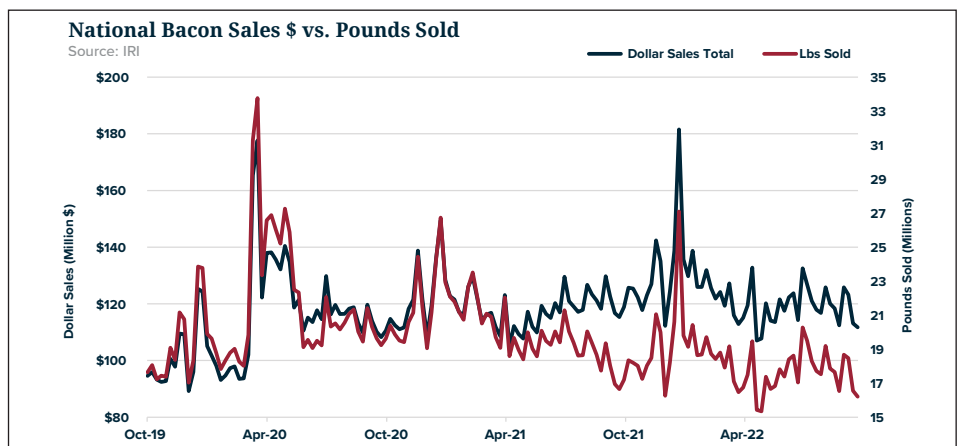
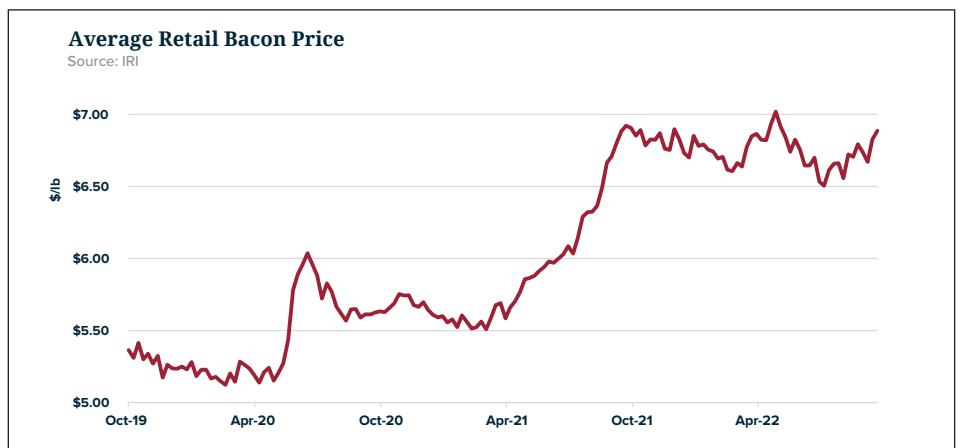
# TO BRING HOME THE BACON OR NOT; THAT IS THE QUESTION

Let's cut to the chase—bacon, on average, is historically expensive at retail and has been for over a year now. The category is hardly alone in that measure, with most other proteins, and for that matter most other expenses in general, also stretching the consumer's wallet as the world contends with multi-decade highs in inflation. In this article we will examine what impact bacon prices have had on sales and take a quick look at wholesale belly prices and inventories for a view into what to expect in 2023.

Bacon usually enjoys a unique standing in the protein space due to its flavor, lack of substitutes, and its diversity in use cases. However, even bacon is not impervious to a more conservative consumer mindset in the wake of expanding inflation. According to data from IRI, the average retail price

of bacon hovered between \$5.50 and \$5.75/lb for much of the latter half of 2020 through mid-2021. However, as protein prices rose and broader inflation picked up pace, the average bacon price ascended to a range of \$6.50 to \$7.00/lb by August 2021 and has remained in that channel since.

It is during that period of rising prices in which we saw an interesting phenomenon take form. While the overall dollar expenditure on bacon appeared to remain largely consistent with the pre-inflation period, the pounds sold slipped notably. Again, utilizing data from IRI, we can see exactly where these two lines—dollar sales and pounds sold—diverge. Specifically, for the span between Memorial Day and the end of September, we saw the poundage of bacon sold at retail decline by 5.4%



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between 2020 and 2021. Meanwhile, that same period in 2022 equated to a 5.6% decline from 2021.

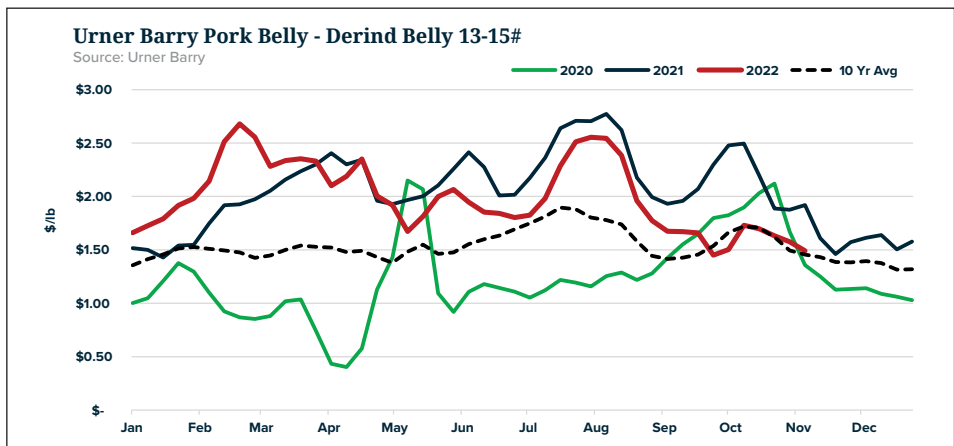
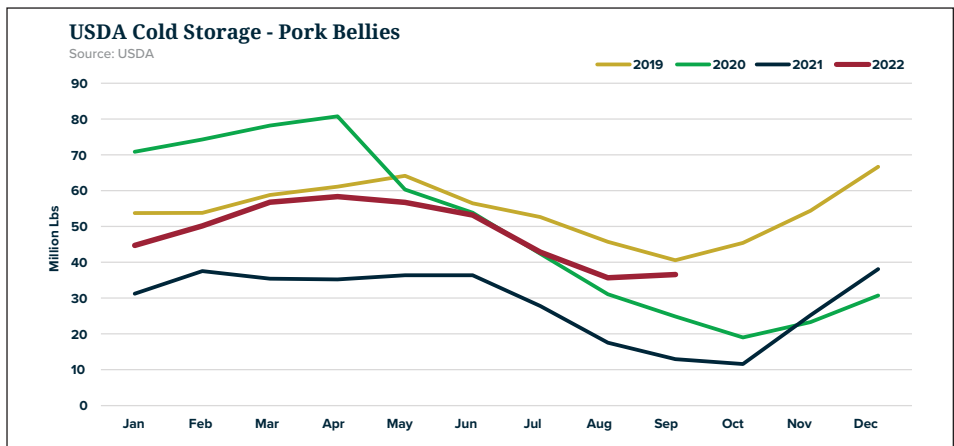
While maintaining sales dollars is a positive for some participants, the slowdown in pounds sold has had an adverse effect on the belly market. A look at bellies in cold storage reveals that due in part to the more sluggish demand, the industry experienced a fraction of the normal net frozen withdrawals between April and September, leaving the September figure at its second highest year-over-year inventory level in at least a decade. Specifically, over the last 10 years, frozen belly inventories have declined by an average of 60% between April and September. In 2022, that withdrawal was 37%.

As for wholesale belly prices, while not historically low, values have consistently underperformed those of last year since April. At the time of writing they have declined to levels that are at or near the 10-year average. Where retail has fallen short, we have seen foodservice pick up the slack during several periods, which

has helped to stem the losses from being even deeper.

Moving forward, the future of the belly and bacon markets will be dependent on a number of factors, some of which the industry can anticipate and plan for. But some, like the health of the economy, are beyond our control. Robust frozen inventories may act as a restraint to gains, while the possibility of a tighter hog supply may provide a layer of support. Inflation could continue to impact consumers' propensity to spend money on an item like bacon, which although delicious, doesn't tend to fall into the same food-necessity category the way that eggs, chicken, and grain products do when money gets tight. QSR may help move product and dampen the blow of sub-par retail sales, but retail will continue to play a vital role in the health of the overall belly market. Ultimately, with the many variables at play, volatility appears to be a given as we cross into 2023 and will likely remain the case for some time. [UB](#)

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# TIF-accredited plants prop open door to Mexico amid HPAI outbreak



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The past year has been anything but routine for players within the poultry industry. This is particularly true for those who reside in the chillier turkey-producing states where highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) continues to pose a major hurdle towards production efforts. With disease-related commercial flock losses now rivaling that of the previous outbreak back in 2015, it almost goes without saying that spot availability of turkey remains at a premium, as do asked prices.

While stateside demand for whole birds, white meat, and the related trim lines far outpaces spot availability, outward movement of turkey parts into major export destinations such as Mexico has seemingly come to a standstill, at least when compared to historic seasonal expectations. This is evidenced by the USDA's export data which shows that between January and September, outward volume of U.S.-produced turkey to our southerly neighbor resides at just 220.2 million lbs. This represents a significant 63.1 million pound, or 28.7%, reduction in tonnage when compared to the 10-year average. While the aforementioned downturn in this year's headcount figures have undoubtedly skewed the export volume lower, HPAI-related country, and sometimes state-based, trade restrictions are also posing a major stumbling stone for the U.S. turkey industry. However, for processors with a heavy reliance on export demand patterns, all hope is not lost. Establishments with "Federally Inspected Type" (TIF) accreditation continue to enjoy open trade with buyers in Mexico, at the expense of additional safety and regulatory scrutiny.

TIF-accredited establishments are defined as harvesting, processing, further processing, and storage facilities which are subject to oversight, supervision, and sanitary inspections by Mexico's Service of Health, Food Safety and Food Quality (SENASICA)-authorized veterinarians. SENASICA works hand-in-hand with other organizations such as the Secretariat of Agriculture,

Livestock Rural Development, Fisheries, and Food (SAGARPA) in order to ensure that TIF-accredited establishments and their processes meet the proper safety regulations. Although recent events have propelled TIF plants into the limelight, the TIF quality seal is nothing new and has been around for over half a century.

So, what does this mean for the U.S. poultry industry? While direct trade with Mexico continues to hinge heavily on the area in which the product originated and the HPAI cases associated with this region, some processors have found an alternative route into Mexico. The option of moving production into further processing plants which adhere to Mexico's rigorous TIF standards has helped to facilitate international trade during these uncertain times. While some processors have enjoyed a modest rebound in trade volume to Mexico thanks in large part to a TIF-certified intermediary, others struggle to secure the proper buying channels. Although the TIF watermark has been growing in popularity in recent years, as has the number of TIF-poultry plants, certification remains a costly endeavor. Establishments who maintain TIF accreditation are required to invest in compliant equipment, follow TIF-specified processing and temperature control guidelines, manage a Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) system, and fund the certified veterinarians.

As we turn to the road ahead, all eyes remain glued to the skies as players and industry observers monitor HPAI. With flock loss numbers continuing to add up, and in light of numerous disease-related trade bans on the export side, processors are longing for better days ahead. But as the saying goes "it could always be worse." Thankfully, Mexico's TIF standards have helped to crack open a once-closed door, while at the same time helping to bolster consumer confidence. [UB](#)

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# Convenience stores could be the new quick-service restaurant



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**Step aside fast-food restaurants, convenience stores are taking the spotlight. With hot and ready-to-eat meals, they are offering cheaper alternatives than what you may find at your local quick-service chain.**

Convenience stores are the typical go-to store to get a pack of gum or bag of chips when stopping at the gas station, or even during a road trip to grab a quick bite. But now they are seemingly entering the fast-food category.

Convenience stores have seen the demand increase for ready-to-eat, quick meals, so they are now offering more hot meals like the typical quick-service restaurants. These items include burgers, fries, pizzas, sandwiches, and much more.

The Bluedot Convenience Experience Report has found that 59% of people consider buying a meal at the convenience store when stopping to get gas. Of those surveyed, 29% would visit a convenience store for fast food, 27% for grab-n-go items, 25% for hot food, and 20% for grocery items.

*CNN Business* talked with President and CEO of Arko Corp (convenience store operator), Arie Kotler, who said that their company has adjusted promotions and offerings to provide cheaper food options with inflation running rampant.

Arko Corporation's most popular purchases are the grab-n-go sandwiches, frozen pizza, and the self-serve coffee. Kotler reported that their frozen family sized pizzas are priced for \$5.69 to \$9.59, which is cheaper than the typical full-sized pizza at restaurants.

So, convenience stores are including more discounts and hot, ready-to-eat meals at their stores, and consumers seem to really enjoy it. But the real question is, why have convenience stores not taken over the quick-service restaurant category yet?

Well, most still do not have the typical fast-food chain setup, such as mobile app orders, curbside pickup, and drive-thru

concepts that consumers prefer to have. The Bluedot Report found that 89% of consumers would download an app for convenience stores to get discounts on food items and gas.

Curbside pickup is another fan favorite and a main consumer preference when ordering food now. *The National Retail Federation* has found that consumers plan to keep using curbside pickup, even with the COVID-19 pandemic in the rearview mirror.

Drive-thru is a major source of sales for fast-food restaurants, and several customers prefer ordering their food through this method. About 60% to 70% of quick-service restaurant sales come from the drive-thru, according to Quantum's QSR® Drive-Thru Sector Report. The report surveyed 1000 consumers in 2022, and 78% of them said they prefer ordering from the drive-thru for its convenience, and 42% said for its speed of service.

With fast-food chains housing most drive-thru stations, this causes the divide between QSR and convenience stores. According to the Bluedot Convenience Experience Report, 62% of respondents would visit convenience stores more if there was curbside pickup and drive-thru available.

Consumers are looking for drive-thru and curbside options to come to more convenience stores. If this happens, then convenience stores may soon be on par with quick-service restaurants. [UB](#)

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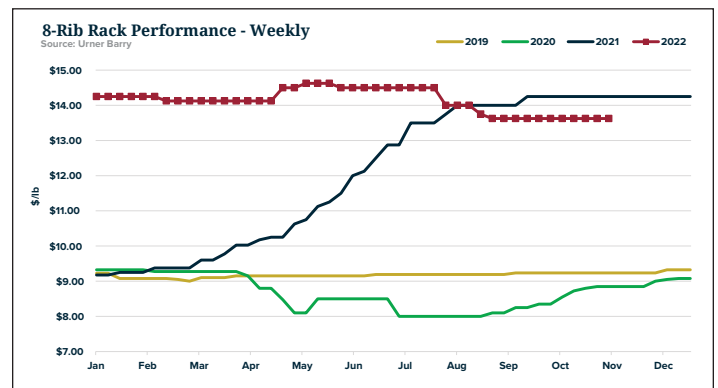
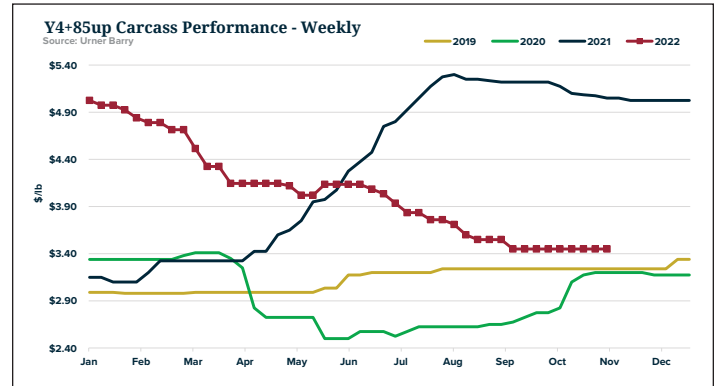
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# Despite renewed interest, recession concerns impact lamb

Some may be shocked when they view the Urner Barry Lamb Report and see nearly 90% of the price quotes with a red outlined boxed, indicating 52-week lows. In a normal year this would be concerning, but considering the record-breaking performances we saw in 2021, a drop in price levels was not completely unexpected.

Ever since the early days of the pandemic, lamb has seen renewed interest at the retail level with a modest increase in the share of the meat case, on an average basis. Foodservice channels have largely reported similar, with white tablecloth dining establishments reporting stronger interest for various items for November and December than we saw throughout the summer. Holiday parties, now that we can have large gatherings again, make great use of items such as lamb lollipops. So, the question that begs to be answered is: How can demand be good if nearly all prices are at 52-week lows?

Using the Y4+85up carcass as a benchmark gauge for raw lamb material we can see generally steady price performance over the past few years, until we hit the pandemic which gave significant rise to price levels. Price levels for the heavy carcass increased by 59% from the week of April 5, 2021, to the week of August 9, 2021, on strong consumer demand amid a robust economy. Production figures, which were nearly even with 2020 but under 2019 levels also added a layer of support to prices. This pushed price levels for racks, breast, loins, legs, and a myriad of other cuts to all-time highs during the fourth quarter of 2021.



Then came the concerns over a recession in 2022. Rising interest rates, major declines in the stock market, and overall inflationary factors put significant pressure on the lamb market. Imported lamb product from Australia also added to the conundrum, with significantly cheaper product being imported to the U.S. These factors pushed lamb carcass and boxed cut prices downward and they now find themselves in a unique position. While the majority of these items are technically trading at 52-week lows, that designation is only made possible due to 2021's record fourth quarter performance. In fact, despite currently being at 52-week lows, when comparing 2022 prices to 2019 and 2020, we find that items like 8 rib racks are 51.10% and 61.40% higher on a yearly average basis, respectively. For Y4+85up carcasses, in 2022 they are up 37.60% over 2020 and 29.70% over 2019. The conclusion we can draw here is that current price levels appearing "cheap" are a direct result of being prisoner to 2021 levels. [UB](#)

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# EU egg product sector navigating the unknown

Market conditions in the egg product sector created unprecedented challenges across Europe, “the perfect storm,” where factors influencing winds and waves are uncontrollable. Egg processors had to navigate within a very tense market, having to deal with raw material shortages and record breaking prices to produce and deliver liquid and powder eggs to their customers.

At the heart of the problem are the costs of raw materials. Prices of eggs for breaking peaked in March 2022. They remained around 1.50€/kg instead of returning to values which historically fall below 1€/kg in the low summer season. But in 2022, raw material costs were maintained at the



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highest levels ever recorded week-after-week since Urner Barry started quoting industry eggs in the EU in 2000.

Several events coincided to trigger this unprecedented inflation in raw materials. In fall 2021, droughts raised the cost of laying hens’ feed. The latter climbed up even higher with the war in Ukraine, which nurtured fears of reduced global grain supplies. Concurrently, the volume of eggs produced contracted when leading countries like France were severely hit by avian influenza. The EU production of eggs forecasted by Eurostats for 2022 dropped 3% at 6,342kT compared to 2021. As a result, these factors drove industry egg prices to spike 37% in just two weeks. With production costs still elevated, egg farmers repopulated their farms slowly and cautiously. Some did not reopen at all, as selling prices to retail would not permit them to break even. It is believed that France lost 4.5 million layers and pullets during the spring outbreaks of bird flu, and 1.5 million not replaced due to production stoppages. Further down the line, between May and July, industry egg prices moved sideways, but remained

well above historical values until the same scenario reappeared at the end of August. Robust retail demand—boosted by inflation of other animal proteins—reduced the availability of eggs for breaking, while bird flu and spiraling output costs limited farmers to run at full capacity.

This strong imbalance between supply and demand resulted in shortages in the egg product sector. After the summer, processors were also facing an increasing demand from food manufacturers preparing year-end recipes, and from restaurants enjoying an Indian summer in Europe. Because of this it became very difficult to source raw material, as egg demand heightened across all fronts. Market players had to adapt to these challenging conditions.

Considering their soaring energy bills in the fall, most producers of liquid and powder eggs significantly dropped the volumes produced. Likewise, some displayed a preference to sell only liquid eggs. Drying eggs consume a lot of expensive energy, particularly high gel albumen (dried egg white). Managing



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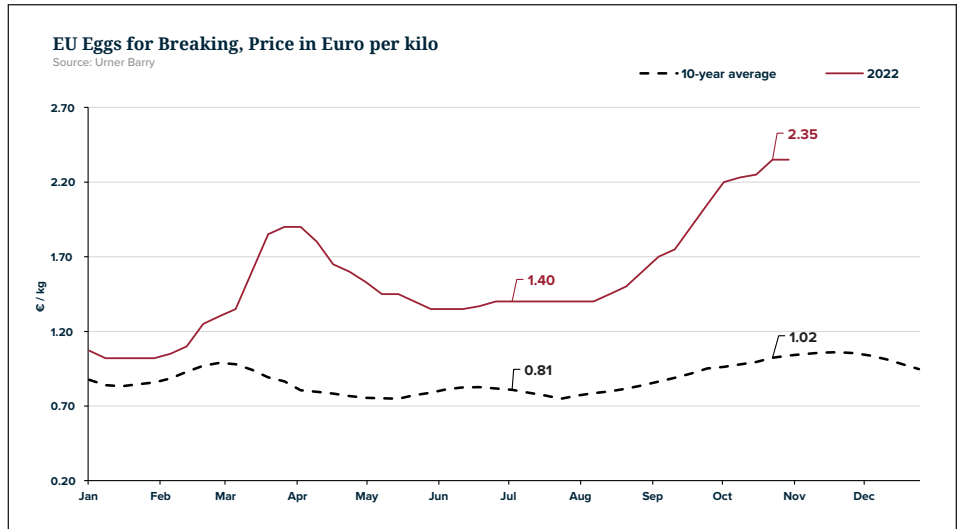
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customers represents the next challenge; contracts often tie the supplier in to specific volumes, prices, and deadlines. Most contracts are now short term to better match output costs and capacity. Also, long term relationships are being prioritized when having to choose who to deliver to. Finally, using imported eggs must become an option, so cakes with the label “Eggs from France” are occasionally replaced with “Eggs from the EU.”

During these last months of turmoil, the European egg product sector had to swiftly adopt an entire new way of undertaking business to survive. Many see next year as a continuation of this trend, so resilience and agility are key when it becomes impossible to see long term market movements. [UB](#)

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**“Robust retail demand—boosted by inflation of other animal proteins—reduced the availability of eggs for breaking, while bird flu and spiraling output costs limited farmers to run at full capacity.”**

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## A fad or a growing market trend?



# THE CRAZE FOR TINNED FISH

Tinned seafood had quite the moment this past summer. Foodies and chefs alike praised these delicacies while many restaurants and bars featured them on their menus. Intrepid eaters flocked to social media to tout their refined palates and expertise on the subject. These little, beautiful cans even earned the term “hot girl food,” a nod to the health benefits packed in a single can. Although tinned fish has had its turn in the sun, will this cult-like appreciation translate to the masses? Or will it remain a small niche food item?

The term “tinned,” or “canned” seafood refers to seafood that has been processed, sealed in an airtight container, and heated for sterilization. Nicola Appert, a 17th century professional French chef has been credited as the “father of canning.” He used the same technique that was used to preserve wine and applied it to food. A jar filled with meat was sealed with cork and wax, and then boiled to set the seal and sterilize the meat. An Englishman a few years later patented his design of a sealed, tin-lined metal container. This form of food preservation took off and spread to the fishing countries of France, Spain, and Portugal. The result was tinned seafood became a part of many cultures around the world.

European countries, especially Spain and Portugal, dominate the conservas (canned fish) industry. For centuries they have insisted on the freshest, finest ingredients and focus on additional ingredients that can enhance the flavor and texture of the fish. Whether it is sardines, mackerel, tuna, octopus, oysters, mussels or clams, the fish is cleaned, and preserved at

its freshest before it is expertly packed in tins with salted water or olive water and complimentary spices or herbs. So popular is the conservas in Europe that they have entire stores stocked with these beautiful, colorful tins of locally caught fish and shellfish.

There is little debate regarding the convenience, sustainability, and health benefits of canned seafood. Each can is packed with high levels of omega-3 fatty acids, which is important for overall health and wellbeing and has a high protein to calorie ratio. As a result of the pandemic, Americans have become more accustomed to cooking at home and trying more exotic foods. Shelf stable, easy to prepare meals, mimicking the European way of life, are a driving factor to the newfound interest in canned fish.

According to Grand View Research, the global canned seafood market share in 2021 was valued at USD 30 billion and is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 5.9% from 2022 to 2030. Tuna holds the largest market share and is expected to remain the leader for the near future. However, sardines are expected to grow by a CAGR of 7.8% from 2022 to 2030. Making this type of tinned seafood more approachable are the blogs, online stores, articles, and recipes that continue to populate. Increased awareness of sustainability, health benefits and great taste may take the conservas from a niche market to mainstream. The pretty little cans also help! [UB](#)

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# Let's **TikTok** about *food*



Food trends and recipes are nothing new to TikTok users, but how much of an impact are they really having on consumers? Is the greater food industry aware of just how much power TikTok truly holds over food trends?

Food TikTok, or also known as FoodTok, is one of the top genres on the app. In 2022 alone, the #food hashtag was visited 234.3 billion times just on TikTok alone, according to Statista.

Foodtok videos include recipes, grocery hauls, taste testing, restaurant promotions, and much more. These videos are impacting the food industry in all areas from food at home to food away from home.

With popularity resulting from food posts on TikTok, creators take advantage of the algorithms by creating content around their favorite recipes or food hacks in hopes

of viewers liking, commenting, duetting, stitching, or sharing. The real question is, why are these TikTok videos garnering so much attention?

For one, most recipes on the app have ingredients that can be found right in your pantry and only take a short amount of time to make. The demonstrations are convenient and easy, empowering even the most novice of at-home cooks to give it a try. In this digital world where consumers are increasingly ordering food for delivery, TikTok is bringing younger generations back into the kitchen.

In fact, when COVID-19 started and lockdowns began, more people were downloading TikTok and trying out the recipes they saw in the kitchen. Internet marketing service *Adlucent* reported that during the surge of COVID-19, TikTok users increased by 30.1%, reaching 28.8 million users. Food

content was among one of the popular genres on the app at the time.

The app is also influencing what people eat. By bringing the whole wide world of food destinations, cultures, and trends into the palm of your hand, TikTok has a unique power to expose its users to new foods. There are thousands, if not millions, of restaurant videos and obscure dishes on TikTok, leading viewers to seek out foods that they never had before, and at places they've never been.

Especially when foods or restaurants are "trending," people are more likely to try those foods or go to new restaurants to see what the hype is about. For example, Los Angeles restaurant brand The Red Chickz began trending on the app and now has over 1.2 million followers. Their business started booming, and *Bon Appetit* reported that several people go to The Red Chickz daily saying they came because they saw them on TikTok.



**“In this digital world where consumers are increasingly ordering food for delivery, TikTok is bringing younger generations back into the kitchen.”**

A survey from full-service communications agency *MGH* found that 38% of TikTok users in the United States (about 51.8 million people) have either ordered food from a restaurant, or visited that restaurant, after seeing it on TikTok.



People are even willing to travel much farther than they usually would to a restaurant they found on TikTok that appeals to them. *MGH* found that 30% of survey respondents have traveled longer distances than normal to go to a restaurant after seeing it on the app.

The industry is starting to harness the power of TikTok more and more. Increasingly, we're seeing food brands and restaurants join the app in an attempt to gain traction and popularity.

For example, Kroger posts videos on TikTok to engage more with consumers. Kroger's videos on TikTok feature recipes showcasing their products in an effort to boost sales. According to *ListenFirst Media*, Kroger is now the sixth most viewed food brand on TikTok and the app's #1 food and beverage retailer.



Food brands that are engaging with the app are more likely to gain more customers and recognition all over the world.

In fact, Chipotle joined TikTok back in 2018—since then, the company has gained more than 2 million followers on the app. Through engaging with the TikTok community and working with TikTok influencers to promote their company, Chipotle was able to grow their brand presence, while also appealing to new customers.

TikTok has proven a revolutionary marketing tool that allows food companies to reach consumers in a way they never have before. It is also creating a new avenue for food industry leaders, helping them connect with end-users in an authentic and enjoyable way. [UB](#)

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# Is cyber security sufficiently protecting U.S. ports?



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There has certainly been some significant logistical improvement at ports around the world and many believe we are returning to pre-pandemic levels. One example that adds credence to this point is that there are far less ships waiting to dock at the Port of Los Angeles, which is a stark difference from even a few months ago.

While import levels to the U.S. have dropped recently, they are still very high, which lends to the fact there's still a solid number of ships making their way to U.S. ports. This leads to increased vulnerability at ports not only in the U.S., but around the world, and that's where cyber security plays a vital role.

Some believe the maritime industry is especially vulnerable to cyber incidents. There are multiple stakeholders involved in the operation and chartering of a ship, which often results in a lack of accountability for the Information Technology (IT) and Operational Technology (OT) system infrastructure and the ship's networks.

Ports become vulnerable as they digitally interact with ships constantly by receiving numerous documents via email, online or other means, which can make hacking more simplified. Hackers typically embed malicious code into what appear to be innocuous files. They also have success through email phishing schemes and other ways.

So, what are ports doing to protect their day-to-day operations?

Tony Zhong, Chief Information Security Officer at the Port of Los Angeles said they are continuously focused on improving their cyber security capabilities. He noted that the Port of Los Angeles has its own Cyber Resilience Center (CRC) to protect the port ecosystem. This CRC defense solution debuted in early 2022 and was created to improve the cybersecurity readiness of the Port and enhance its threat-sharing and recovery capabilities among supply chain stakeholders. The CRC is operated by IBM.

The CRC enables stakeholders to automatically share cyber threat indicators and potential defensive measures with each other. The platform serves as a hub for the Port to receive, analyze and share information among its stakeholders who handle cargo, such as terminal operators, shipping lines, truck, rail and others, among its cross-sector stakeholders who provide essential support services, and from external intelligence sources.

One of the tools the Port of Los Angeles uses for additional transparency to its supply chain stakeholders is the Port Optimizer. This cloud-based solution helps cargo owners bring their goods to market in a more predictable and timely manner. It aids the port supply chain in monitoring and responding to conditions, which enables maximum port throughput and delivery performance.

And the government is keenly aware of the importance of cyber security as well.

"We believe federal cyber security spending is tracking to be up 20%-25% year-over-year for 2022 with consistent growth and projects into 2023 as the Biden cyber security standards and recent high-profile attacks are accelerating larger deals within federal agencies," Dan Ives, an analyst from Wedbush Securities, said in a report. "We believe federal deal flow in 3Q was a clear stand out as more government agencies (civilian and defense/ DOD) are laser focused on protecting data/endpoints/infrastructure in an increasing dangerous cyber environment with threats increasing by the day."

It's evident that the ports in the U.S. are well aware of the urgency for continued enhancements of their cyber security systems and the Port of Los Angeles, as well as others, appear to be on top of it. Hacking threats will continue to be a concern at the ports so cyber threat technology will need to keep evolving to stay one step ahead of any major attacks or disruptions. [UB](#)

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# WHAT'S BEHIND THE FAST FOOD BREAKFAST BOOM?

Has former *Saturday Night Live* cast member Pete Davidson saved breakfast?

Not quite.

However, Davidson is serving as the face of Taco Bell's latest ad push focused on their revamped breakfast menu.

Taco Bell's latest breakfast campaign comes just as The NPD Group reports improved restaurant traffic for the breakfast daypart in August. Notably, breakfast restaurant traffic jumped by 4%, according to The NPD Group, and is just 1% shy of reaching pre-pandemic traffic levels.

Quick service restaurants (QSR), like Taco Bell, are the kings of restaurant breakfast traffic, accounting for 87% of traffic. In general, QSR traffic increased by 5% when compared to August 2021.

"Breakfast at restaurants was adversely affected in the early stages of the pandemic, and it's recovering now that more consumers have returned to more out-of-the-home routines," said David Portalatin, NPD Food Industry Advisor and author of *Eating Patterns in America*.

Hannah Cleland, Foodservice Analyst for GlobalData recommended that some foodservice brands looking for a boost could opt to serve breakfast with Americans back in the office. A GlobalData

survey indicated that 44% of U.S. customers are returning to office work and could stop for a quick breakfast before starting their day.

"With such a large portion of the population regularly making a commute, it is unsurprising that breakfast sales have remained steady," Cleveland stated. "Consumer spending habits in response to the cost-of-living crisis have

been nuanced, but it is clear that a small breakfast treat is still being incorporated into many people's budgets."

Sean Tresvant, Global Chief Brand Officer with Taco Bell explained that the company has seen shifts in consumer behavior and the adjustment to its breakfast strategy "aligns with consumers' morning



Photo credit: McDonald's



Photo credit: Taco Bell



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mentality by turning up our focus on ease and familiarity.”

“Strong QSR demand had been one of the hottest topics in the pork category,” Urner Barry Market Reporter Ryan Hojnowski said. “42s, 72s, and boneless picnics have all touched weekly all-time highs throughout late October and early November on breakfast product demand.”

McDonald’s has also made a unique investment in its breakfast as well. In October, McDonald’s and Krispy Kreme partnered to sell doughnuts in select stores. The mouthwatering partnership is only available in the Louisville, Kentucky, area for now, but it proves another staple QSR brand is paying more attention to breakfast.

Now, although doughnuts appear to be a fine addition to McDonald’s offerings, breakfast sandwiches are the king of QSR breakfast, per The NPD Group. 37% of all QSR orders included a sandwich, which typically contain a combination of meat,

eggs and cheese. In August, servings of sandwiches were up 4% in the month from a year ago; representing a 14% jump from pre-pandemic August 2019.

Karyn Rispoli, Editor of Urner Barry’s Egg Price Current, explained the jump in breakfast sandwich sales underpinned the already-strong U.S. egg market, which has been bolstered this year by strong demand in the retail sector and the spread of highly pathogenic avian influenza.

“Often times, when one demand segment flourishes, it’s to the detriment of the other—but this year, that has not been the case,” Rispoli noted. “While inflationary pressure may have consumers eating more eggs at home, it has not tamped down their appetite for on-the-go breakfast sandwiches.” [UB](#)

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Photo credit: Taco Bell

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# Distribution of labor

Since the start of the COVID-19, pandemic labor has been a difficult issue to address for many in the seafood industry. The lack of labor has made it difficult to staff businesses at every step of the supply chain and we continue to hear and see this issue persist across much of the seafood complex.

One area that has been a continued headache on the labor side of things lies in the processing department. Many restaurants and retailers have had prolonged issues finding skilled workers for processing and cutting fish. Some in the sector have looked further up the supply chain to their broker and beyond to fill the void.

Both processors and distributors are reporting an increase in requests for filleting, as opposed to it being done in house at restaurants, hotels, and retailers.

"We're getting a lot more interest in value added than we have in the past," explained

M.J. Gimbar, a senior buyer with Fortune Fish & Gourmet. "We were seeing a steady increase pre-COVID. However, once the pandemic started it really picked up and there's no sign of it slowing."

Gimbar said Fortune has seen an increase of about 20-30% since the start of the pandemic for either fillets or portions cut to their buyers' needs.

Requests have focused on salmon, halibut, and even tuna, from customers who may have done filleting in house previously but are now unable to handle the workload or foot the bill themselves.

Gimbar estimated that approximately 90% of the salmon that leaves Fortune's doors have been requested to be filleted.

"It reflects an overall lack of labor, or at least lack of skilled labor," Gimbar continued. "Where we can sometimes


run into an issue is when all of a sudden, we need to fillet 500 pounds of halibut that we were not planning on cutting. It can be a strain."

That strain can cause distributors like Fortune to look even further up the supply chain to find product that has already been filleted on farms or what is called "case in case out" products.

While all of this is not new, the frequency at which it's happening is certainly increasing. Moving forward, it will be interesting to see some of the possible adaptations that may take place to accommodate customer needs and just how far up the chain it moves and how widespread it is. [UB](#)

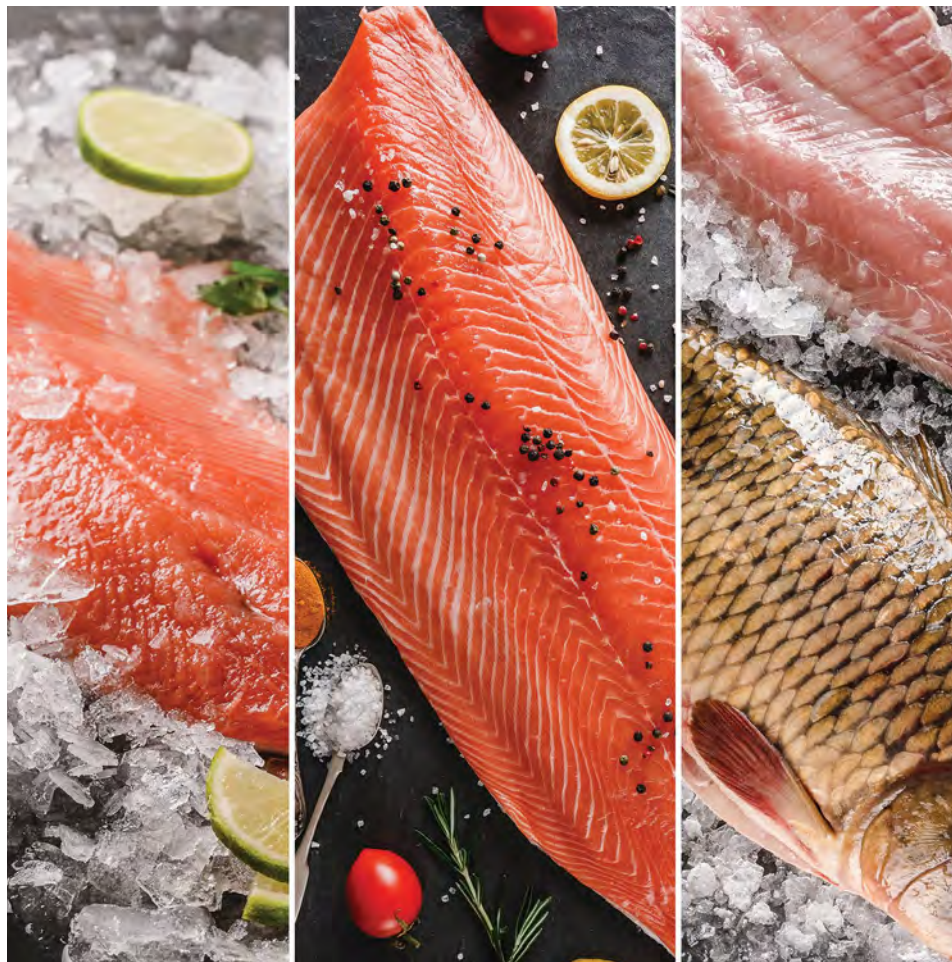
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A woman with long blonde hair and a man with glasses and a beard are shaking hands in a business meeting. The woman is on the left, smiling broadly, and the man is on the right, also smiling. They are both wearing light-colored shirts. The background is a bright, out-of-focus office setting.

# Think

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# New cuts and beef cutouts available for stakeholders in the UK beef trade

In August 2020, Urner Barry initiated market coverage for the UK beef market. Prior to then stakeholders lacked third party, unbiased and independent wholesale trading information on beef cuts and processing items. The only way to get market intelligence on cuts was to spend hours during the week calling around to other market participants to gather and analyze trading information. That all changed when Urner Barry initiated coverage within the UK wholesale beef markets. Since then, Urner Barry's goal has been to provide market assessments that are accurate representations of trading in the region so that the industry could make more informed trading decisions.

The coverage came at crucial time in the business. COVID, BREXIT, record inflation, the war in Ukraine and political changes have all impacted the price of beef. It's been a time of unprecedented market volatility and UB reports have quickly become a reference to understand market conditions in the region.

The coverage occurs under the same IOSCO guidelines that all other Urner Barry markets adhere to. This helps ensure that the reporting process and resulting coverage is robust. Markets

covered are PGI, which stands for Protected Geographical Indication. This product normally trades at premiums and is desirable for those wanting to offer beef guaranteed to come from the UK. The next category covered is UTM, or "Under Thirty Months" of age, which is from younger cattle. Finally, OTM stands for beef that comes from cattle "Over Thirty Months" of age.

In 2023, Urner Barry will be making several improvements to the coverage. This includes rebalancing the report to add focus to the most widely-traded cuts and items, along with the addition of a beef cutout, which is a measure of performance for the overall market. This will bring even more value and use cases for the market coverage.

Urner Barry's UK beef coverage is released weekly on Fridays and reflects trends for the week. For more information on the improvements please visit Urner Barry's Market Reporting and Methodology page at [www.urnerbarry.com](http://www.urnerbarry.com). [UB](http://www.urnerbarry.com)

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# HPAI continues to boost ham's popularity

Pork hams have long been a popular item during the winter holidays, and that rang true this year as well. What was different in 2022 was the abnormal price action in the ham markets. From highly pathogenic avian influenza to inflation figures that we haven't seen in decades, to the U.S. dollar strengthening against a majority of other currencies, hams have been on a wild ride over the last year.

Normally hams play second fiddle to turkey during holidays like Thanksgiving, but 2022 was different. With HPAI having ravaged the poultry world, it tightened supplies of consumer turkey product drastically. This resulted in both the U.S. and other countries such as Mexico having active demand for bone-in hams as a substitute item, in addition to regular standing business. Throughout this active demand period, there was a lack of excess product to be added to the freezer in preparation of the holidays. These factors resulted in 23/27 bone-in ham prices having averaged between \$83/cwt and \$108.70/cwt from May through November on a monthly basis, which is only rivaled by 2014 during the PEDv crisis.

For boneless hams, the story is similar, but has a few more twists and turns. Throughout 2020 and 2021, boneless hams saw record pricing due mainly to COVID-19 drastically reducing labor availability, resulting in supplies being barely adequate for nearly two years. About as soon as labor figures began improving in 2022 and boning capacity increased around the U.S., the world economy began shifting. The U.S. dollar became significantly stronger against other currencies, particularly the Yen, which resulted in Japanese demand declining notably. As this situation played out across a multitude of countries, boneless hams began to see a fully adequate supply situation in the U.S., essentially keeping a cap on price levels throughout Q3 and Q4. For 4-muscle boneless hams, prices ranged between \$149.40/cwt to \$187.40 for the period between May and November, which is considerably below the 2021 figures for that same period of \$170.70/cwt to \$222.10/cwt.



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For the reasons mentioned above, both bone-in and boneless hams saw strong demand for winter holiday purposes during late 2022. However, bone-in hams performed much stronger than boneless items in the immediate leadup to the holidays. When comparing 2022 to 2021 figures, we can see that on a monthly average basis for November, bone-in 23/27

hams are 77.80% higher this year while 4 muscle boneless hams are 14.80% lower. Moving forward into 2023, HPAI will likely continue to be a significant factor for ham availability and prices. [UB](#)

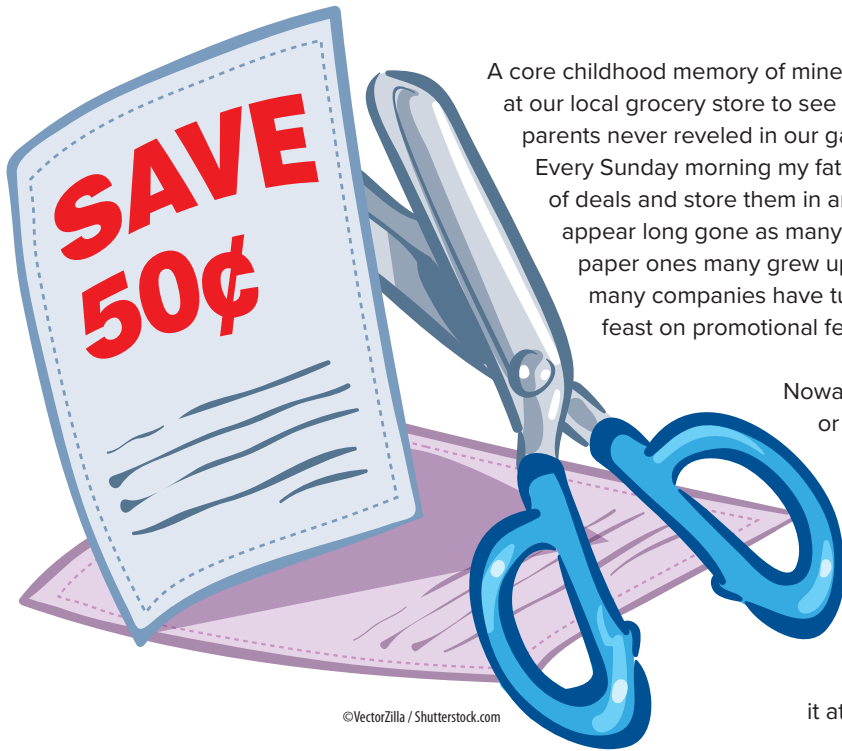
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# The evolution of couponing



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A core childhood memory of mine consists of my sister and I running up and down the aisles at our local grocery store to see who could grab coupons off the machines faster. While my parents never reveled in our games, they too were avid “couponers” in their own right. Every Sunday morning my father would go through our local newspaper, cut out a handful of deals and store them in an envelope above our microwave. Those days though, appear long gone as many coupons have moved into a digital form and away from the paper ones many grew up with. The food industry is front and center in this shift as many companies have turned to their own mobile apps as a haven for consumers to feast on promotional features.

Nowadays, it’s almost commonplace for your favorite fast-food or QSR restaurant to have its own app. In 2021, McDonald’s, Starbucks, Dominos, Chick-fil-A, and Taco Bell all were listed in the top 10 for most downloaded food or drink mobile apps. This is largely due to the savings and rewards programs they offer to entice continued usage, as well as the convenience factor they possess. Speaking as a consumer, it is much easier to go into your phone and order a meal deal for pick up or delivery rather than cutting out a coupon and physically presenting it at the time of purchase.

An advertisement for ShopUB, a website for the protein industry. The background is dark blue. In the foreground, there is a laptop displaying the ShopUB website with the text 'STOCK UP TODAY!' and 'ShopUB SHOP.URNERBARRY.COM'. A red shopping basket is filled with several cardboard boxes, one of which has a shopping cart icon. To the right, there are several spiral-bound books and wall charts. The books include 'TUNA Grading and Evaluation', 'THE MEAT BUYER'S GUIDE', 'THE PORK BOOK', 'Commercial Fish and Shellfish', 'POPULAR MEAT CUTS', 'PORK', 'POULTRY', and 'THE BEEF BOOK'. The wall charts also feature various meat cuts and are labeled with 'NAMI' and 'MEAT BUYER'S GUIDE'.

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## SHRIMP SUPPLY SOLUTIONS FROM THE SOURCE

**“Almost daily, app owners get notifications letting them know about what great savings are within their grasp.”**

The convenience aspect isn't the main attraction though—the deals are. Almost daily, app owners get notifications letting them know about what great savings are within their grasp. Whether it's a buy one get one free (BOGO), 25% off a purchase, or even just a plain old free reward, consumers continue to reap the benefits of downloading these apps. The companies themselves are also seeing their fair share of rewards as evidenced by their earnings reports. McDonald's, Burger King, and others presented strong third-quarter earnings reports recently which were no doubt influenced by robust app activity. While maintaining the apps themselves requires time and money, the savings incurred from not needing to promote or print coupons is a financial benefit all by itself.

When diving deeper into the data it becomes quite clear that while buyers of any age can appreciate a good deal, Gen X and Baby Boomers haven't been as quick to jump on the digital bandwagon as their younger counterparts. A recently released survey concludes that mobile discount conversion rates sit at 85% to

86% for Gen Z's and Millennials, while only hovering in the high 70th percentile for the older generations. It also shows that the more youthful age groups proactively seek out retailers offerings digital coupons at a more aggressive rate. According to Statista, Baby Boomers that do focus on eCommerce discounts hone-in on grocery and drug promotions at a 65% higher clip when compared to other savings such as cashback or a points-based system.

Ultimately, while the couponing of old has seemingly come to an end, a greater, more beneficial way of saving appears to have taken hold. This evolution has allowed many to skirt the never-ending battle with inflation that we all face on a daily basis and has created a more user-friendly option for all to take part in the much-needed parsimony. [UB](#)

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# Extreme temperatures and drought: What has this meant for quality grade?

Drought conditions this year are some of the worst in recent history. This has led ranchers and feedyards alike to make some tough decisions throughout the summer months this year during a time where quality grade premiums saw record spreads. This was not only amplified by consumers ever growing appetite for high quality beef both domestically and abroad, but also the high cost of gain and contracting cattle cycle.

COVID-19 disruptions during 2020 and 2021 allowed for cattle to put on significant weight and stay on feed longer which led to a pipeline of high-quality cattle. This resulted in an abundance of high-quality upper choice beef coming to market during a time when consumers were flush with cash. The pipeline started to contract towards the end of 2021 in which cattle became much more “current.”

Upon cattle becoming more “current” throughout 2022, quality grade began to slip towards pre-pandemic levels. Drought, extreme heat, and feed costs kept cattle performance well below the last three years, limiting supplies for upper choice product. This in turn saw demand spill over into lower choice, coinciding with an increase in select product coming to market. This caused the Choice to Select cutout spread widen to almost as much as \$35.00/cwt during September.

Upper 2/3rd grading appeared to hit its low back in September, but given the current market conditions it seems this could be short lived as production schedules have not seen any meaningful cutbacks. Product coming onto the market has trended lower since the beginning on the year and with the contraction seen in the cattle herd, it seems the market does not expect this to change in the near future.

La Niña is expected to return for the third consecutive winter this year and drive warmer-than-average temperatures for the Southwest and along the Gulf Coast and eastern seaboard, according to NOAA’s U.S. Winter Outlook. With outlooks remaining more of the same for the first couple months of 2023 this could have a prolonged impact on the quality grade coming to market for the boxed beef markets.

As we move into 2023 it would seem quality grade will continue to struggle as consumer demand has shifted towards high quality beef over the last couple of years and appears to be in-tact even during these inflationary times. It will be something to keep an eye on going forward into the first quarter of next year. [UB](#)

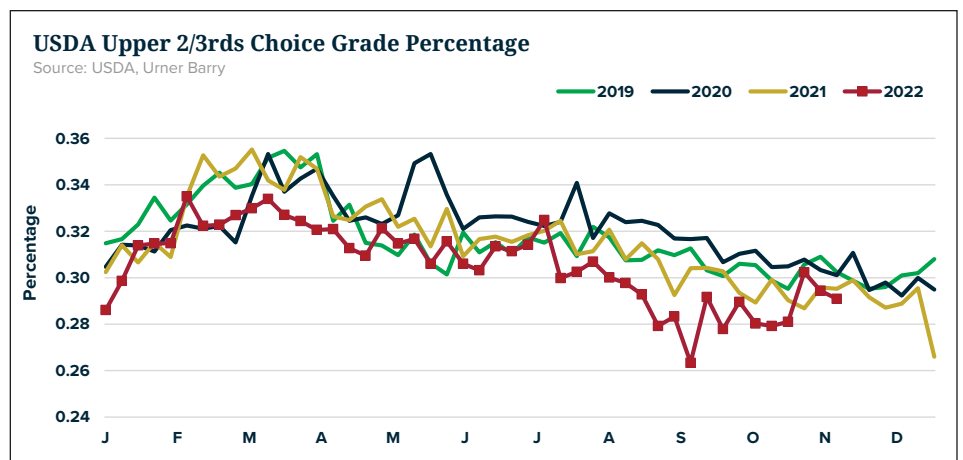
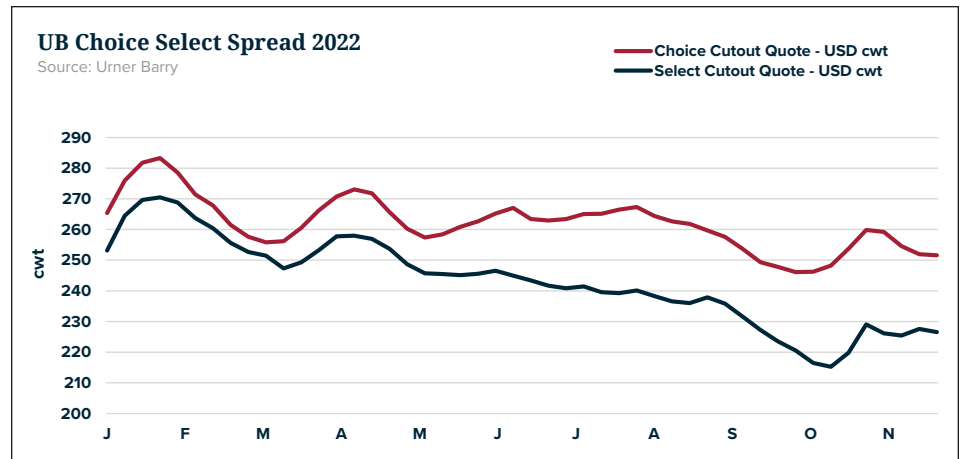
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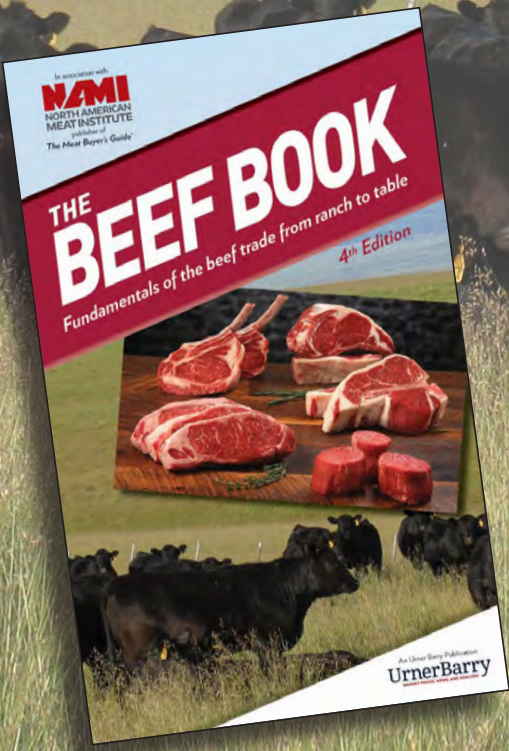
Take a break from your busy day and see if you can find all of the words hidden in this puzzle. They may be backwards, diagonal, straight up, or across. All of these terms are featured in the first chapter of *The Beef Book — Fundamentals of the beef trade from ranch to table*.

The first section of this essential resource for anyone who wants to know more about the beef industry is “a brief history of the beef packing industry.” The story begins with Christopher Columbus, and progresses through cattle drives, ranches, railroads, and refrigeration. Then continues with the advent of the modern highway system, and improved access to large tracks of rural land that is the heart of the cattle trade in the United States.

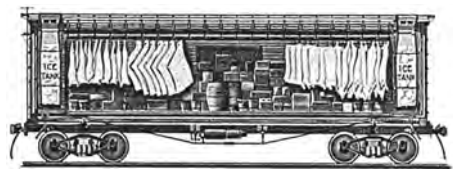
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- |           |              |               |
|-----------|--------------|---------------|
| ABILENE   | FABRICATION  | PROCESSOR     |
| ARMOUR    | GOODNIGHT    | RAILROAD      |
| CATTLEMEN | LONGHORN     | RANCH         |
| CHICAGO   | MORRIS       | REFRIGERATION |
| CHISHOLM  | PACKERS      | SHAWNEE       |
| COLUMBUS  | PACKINGHOUSE | STOCKYARD     |
| CULL      | PRIMAL       | SWIFT         |



## SWINGING BEEF TO BOXED BEEF



Eventually, refrigerated railcars were created, but not by the railroads themselves. Three private meat packers—Philip Armour, Gustavus

Swift and Nelson Morris—jumped at the opportunity to construct and lease their own cold storage cars, giving them control over much of the market.

In 1967, Iowa Beef Processors (IBP) began an initiative to introduce **boxed beef**. As opposed to shipping large carcasses, or swinging beef as it was known to customers, this new process produced and delivered conveniently sized cuts of beef that would be vacuum sealed and packaged in a box.



Photo Courtesy of Tyson Foods

Word search answers on page 65

# Are there better days ahead for the plant-based food industry?

The plant-based food arena had a tremendous run over the last couple of years, aided by a strong economy in the U.S. and of course the COVID-19 pandemic. According to forecasts, the plant-based food market is expected to have a value of \$75 billion by 2030 at a CAGR (Compound Annual Growth Rate) of 12.4% during the forecast period of 2020-2028. But that doesn't mean that everything is rosy these days.

The industry has been taking its lumps over much of 2022. One would only need to look at what is going on with one of the behemoths of the sector, Beyond Meat.

This major producer of non-GMO plant proteins including pea, brown rice, mung bean and faba bean is widely known around the world for its non-meat offerings including Beyond Burger, Beyond Sausage, Beyond Chicken Tenders, Beyond Meatballs and Beyond Jerky,

So, what has transpired during 2022 that has placed Beyond Meat into a less than favorable position? You can start with the economy and inflation.

In September 2022 inflation rose to 8.2% versus a year ago, higher than forecast, although a slight decline from August.

Inflation has been rearing its ugly head for many months and consumers are feeling it in their wallets as there has been significant increases in food, energy and housing prices, among others.

And this is not a good thing for plant-based companies such as Beyond Meat. In fact, the company reported a 22% year-over-year revenue drop during Q3, and cut its Q4 revenue forecast. Beyond's Chief Executive Officer Ethan Brown said: "The current economic climate has not been kind to plant-based meat." He recently noted that the company is executing a "full force pivot" to its operating model,



including slashing operating expenses to fortify the business. This apparently included 200 job cuts which amounted to about 19% of its workforce.

Up and coming businesses have not fared well either. Planterra Foods, who had a full line of OZO plant-based protein product offerings, was one of them.

Brazil's JBS, a massive global meat provider, announced in early October that it was closing its Planterra Foods business unit in the U.S. A statement read: "JBS USA has made the decision to discontinue operations in its U.S.-based Planterra business unit. We continue to believe in the potential of plant-based options for consumers and remain committed to the alternative-protein market."

Beyond Meat's CEO declared that the company's long-term objective is being a major protein provider within the \$1.4 trillion meat industry.

One can also look at the ever-increasing numbers of start-up companies filling conferences and expos, such as the Plant-Based World Expo in New York City or the Natural Products Expo East in Philadelphia, both of which occurred in September of this year.

Meanwhile, many participants in the industry believe what we are experiencing now could be a leveling out to more sustainable growth patterns. And one pointed to countless surveys about consumers opting more and more for a plant-based diet and being open to new innovations such as cultivated meat.

---

**"... many participants in the industry believe what we are experiencing now could be a leveling out to more sustainable growth patterns."**

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Jorge Azevedo, former Chief Growth Officer at Planterra said: "We built it [Planterra] up at a moment when the plant-based market had fantastic momentum. You couldn't look at anything without thinking plant-based meat. It was really on fire. I think gradually we built the company up to something that had a good presence in the market, it was certainly getting more and more attention and gaining market share. It was also one of two plant-based companies growing well into the double digits in the U.S. this year and had been locking in new contracts. I think it became a victim of the occasion more than anything."

Azevedo believes JBS might have felt that the traction was not there yet for the category in the U.S.

Are there any silver linings for this industry as we progress into 2023?

Ultimately, some think it could be a short-term slowdown for the plant-based food industry as food inflation settles down. Some welcoming news came on November 10 as the Consumer Price Index rose to 7.7%, less than some forecasts of an 8.0% or more rise. Included in that report was a slight percentage decline in the food items category for October versus September, which could be a good sign going forward.

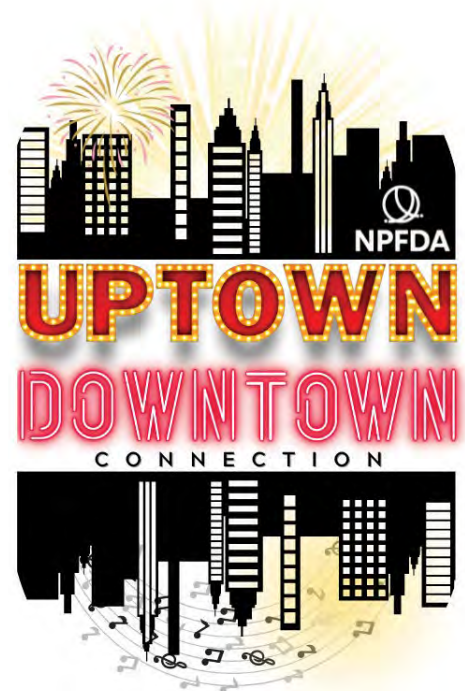
If inflation continues to lessen over the next several months versus economist forecasts, we could see the plant-based industry enticing more consumers to partake in the alt-meat category. [UB](#)

Article contributed by **Matt Morrow**  
mmorrow@urnerbarry.com



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# ALASKA'S CRAB CLOSURES GIVE NORWEGIAN PRODUCT A CHANCE TO SHINE

In mid-October the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) delivered a shocking announcement...they were canceling the snow crab season in the Bering Sea for the first time and the Bristol Bay king crab season for the second year in a row. Factor in the ban on Russian product due to the war in Ukraine and that begs an important question: Where are we getting crab from?

Enter Norway. According to consultant Les Hodges, the country is set to become an important supply source for crab moving forward into 2023. And they are already preparing. In early December the Ministry of Industry and Fisheries announced that the total 2023 quota for male crabs will be 2,375 tonnes, an increase of 530 tonnes from 2022.

"This is in line with the management objective of limiting the spread of king crab while at the same time ensuring a profitable catch," said Fisheries and Oceans Minister Bjørnar Skjæran. "King crab is a product that fetches a very high price in the market, and increased catching of king crab will contribute to more value creation in the north."

Looking at the latest data from October 2022, Norwegian seafood set a record with exports reaching NOK 15.4 billion, a 27% increase from the month prior.

"Norwegian seafood exports experienced historical growth in October," said Norwegian Seafood Council CEO Christian Chramer. "The value of NOK 15 billion is more than a solid record. It means that every day this month, we exported seafood worth just under NOK 500 million. These are enormous numbers and show how vital this industry is to Norway."

What's even more impressive is that as of October 25, Norway already exceeded the export value for the whole of 2021. Right now they're on track to pass NOK 150 billion in 2022.

The U.S. was one of Norway's top three countries for seafood exports in October, experiencing the most significant value growth. There was also an increase in export value of NOK 581 million, or 83% when compared to the same month last year.

Focusing strictly on crab, Norway exported 110 metric tons of red king crab worth NOK 77 million. The year-over-year value increase for red king crab was 49%, but the increase in volume was only 7%. The U.S., as well as Canada and the Netherlands, was one of the biggest markets for Norwegian king crab in October. And according to the Norwegian Seafood Council, the sanctions against Russian crab in the U.S. and EU has increased the supply of Russian crab in Asia.

"After the Russian catching season for red king crab started in September, the increased supply of live king crab to Asia has



Photo credit: Norwegian Seafood Council

reduced prices. In the same period, the news came that there will be no quota for red king crab in Alaska for the second year in a row," said Josefine Voraa, Manager for shellfish with the Norwegian Seafood Council.

This in turn has impacted king crab exports from Norway, with an increase of 37 million going to North America and a decrease of 4.8 million in exports to Asia.

"The most significant growth is in the export of frozen and live king crab to the USA, which increased by NOK 32 million or 562 percent. A weakened Norwegian krone against the U.S. dollar has also contributed positively to the export value in October, as prices in Norwegian krone remain high," added Voraa.

As for snow crab, Norway exported 231 metric tons worth NOK 33 million in October 2022. The value for the month increased by NOK 33 million, and the volume by 230 tonnes. The U.S. was one of the biggest markets for Norwegian snow crab in October, rounding out the top three with Canada and Denmark.

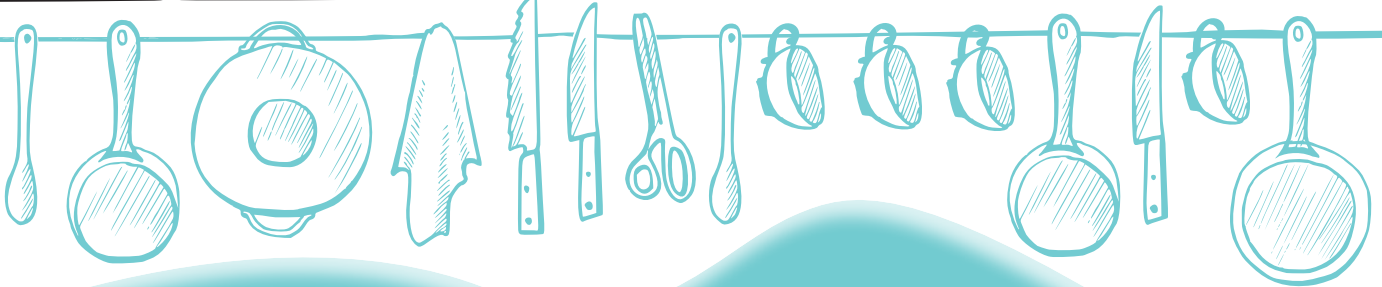
There is certainly a lot to digest between the war in Ukraine and the closure of the Alaska fisheries. The U.S. became the largest market for Norwegian frozen king crab in 2021, and data from January to August 2022 shows that the U.S. so far is also the largest market for live king crab. While the U.S. was the largest market for Norwegian snow crab in 2021, January to August 2022 data shows that exports to the U.S. were down 28%.

Norwegian product can partially fill the void left by Alaska and Russia, but Urner Barry seafood market reporter Janice Schreiber says that crab participants will continue to closely watch how things unfold. [UB](#)

Article contributed by **Amanda Buckle**  
abuckle@urnerbarry.com



# Seafood Recipe



© Marchie / Shutterstock.com

## Norwegian Red King Crab Tempura Bites

Family and friends will love the delicate, crunchy bite of red king crab in these Norwegian Red King Crab Tempura Bites from Chef John Livera and the Norwegian Seafood Council.



### NORWEGIAN RED KING CRAB LEGS PREP

Set steamer with a screen and fill with water. Bring to a boil.

Set the clusters in the steam basket in one even layer.

Steam for 5-7 minutes and remove.

Remove shell by gently cutting with scissors.

Slice removed crab into 3-inch sections and set aside.

### DIPPING SAUCE

In a small bowl, combine gochujang, gochugaru, lemon juice, finely minced green onion and mayonnaise. Mix until combined and refrigerate until ready to serve.

### TEMPURA BATTER

In a medium bowl, prepare the tempura batter by adding the potato starch and flour. Stir in the chilled carbonated water with the potato starch and flour until smooth.

### ASSEMBLY

Preheat oil to 375°F in a pan or deep fryer.

In another bowl, crack the Potato Stix in ¼ inch pieces.

Dust each section of King Crab with cornstarch then dip into the tempura batter allowing any excess batter to drip off.

Roll to coat King Crab in the cracked Potato Stix and place in hot oil. Fry for 3-5 minutes until golden and crispy. Place on paper towel to drain excess oil before serving.

Garnish the bites with sliced green onions and 2 lemon wedges for serving.

*Yields 6 servings*

Photos provided by Norwegian Seafood Council



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### INGREDIENTS

- 3 Norwegian red king crab legs
- ½ cup of cornstarch
- ½ cup of Potato Stix
- Frying oil

### Dipping Sauce

- 2 tbsp gochujang (red chili paste)
- ½ tbsp gochugaru (Korean chili powder)
- 1½ tbsp lemon juice
- 2 tbsp green onion
- ¾ cup mayonnaise

### Batter

- ⅔ cups potato starch
- 6 tbsp all-purpose flour
- 1 cup carbonated water

### Garnish

- 2 lemons
- 3 green onions

# Prop 12 could have California begging for bacon

It's been several years in the making and the outcome of California's Proposition 12 still hangs in the balance. Pork market participants and consumers remain at a standstill as we await the Supreme Court ruling, although we anticipate the outcome will become clearer in 2023.

## WHAT IS PROPOSITION 12?

More than half of Californians voted in favor of Proposition 12 in 2018. The law mandates minimum housing requirements for certain farm animals. Specifically, breeding pigs and their offspring are required to have a minimum of 24 square feet of usable floor space per animal.

Egg-laying hens must have 1.0 square foot per hen by 2020 and up to 1.5 square feet of usable floor space in one-floor housing systems. These dimensions were originally set in the United Egg Producers' 2017 cage-free housing guidelines.

The law also applies to calves raised for veal and requires a minimum of 43 square feet of usable floor space per calf.

## WHAT DOES PROPOSITION 12 MEAN FOR FARMERS AND CONSUMERS?

Since Prop 12 bans the sale of products that do not comply with law's stringent regulations, producers and farmers in other states cannot sell eggs, veal, and pork



©Mark Agnor / Shutterstock.com

products in California unless they meet the law's standards. For pork, the law applies to any uncooked product sold in California, whether it was produced there or outside its borders.

Pork producers have voiced concerns that the law will disrupt interstate commerce. California is a very small pork-producing state that relies almost entirely on out-of-state hogs to supply its needs. Structural barn changes to meet Prop 12's requirements could cost hog farmers millions of dollars. It could also potentially lead to additional industry consolidation as smaller independent producers would likely be unable to afford the restructuring efforts required to produce Prop 12 compliant pork.

Proponents of Prop 12 have argued that the costs to California consumers and producers would be minimal. However, a brief filed by agricultural and resource economics professors in June 2022 found that the law would likely cause the price of pork products in California to rise. Based on amici's model, the average farm price equivalent of compliant pork will rise by 3.5%.

During the brief period that Proposition 12 was implemented in early 2022, Urner Barry's market reporters found that some pork items that met the requirements experienced 40-50% premiums.

The brief added that because California consumes less than 9% of pork produced in the U.S., the average hog producer will choose not to become compliant. Plants that process both Prop 12 compliant and noncompliant hogs will face additional transportation and storage costs, noted the brief.



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A ruling earlier this year delayed the law for 180 days after the final rules went into effect. The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) finalized the Proposition 12 implementation rules in September 2022. The following month, the U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments from the National Pork Producers Council and American Farm Bureau. Both groups argue that the law is unconstitutional.

This statement from the October 11 Supreme Court hearing can be attributed to the National Pork Producers Council:

“This is a historic day for American farmers. National Pork Producers Council (NPPC) and American Farm Bureau Federation presented oral arguments on NPPC v. Ross before the U.S. Supreme Court challenging the constitutionality of California Proposition 12.

As we’ve contended since 2018, one state should not be able to regulate commerce in another state and set arbitrary standards

---

**“During the brief period that Proposition 12 was implemented in early 2022, some pork items that met the requirements experienced 40-50% premiums.”**

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that lack any scientific, technical, or agricultural basis. NPPC presented a strong case and is confident in its arguments presented to the Supreme Court Justices. We appreciate the support of the Biden Administration and look forward to the Court’s decision.”

**WHAT’S NEXT?**

The Supreme Court justices will consider their opinion on the case. Since the Supreme Court has until the end of its term

to decide, a final ruling may not be made until summer 2023.

If Prop 12 is upheld by the Supreme Court, California could face significant challenges in procuring enough Prop 12 compliant pork. Hog farmers across the nation could be adversely affected by the trade restrictions to California and would have to find alternative buyers for the pork previously destined for that state.

It’s likely the amount of pork that is non-compliant on the domestic market would be in ample supply, resulting in a major increase in freezer stocks and a decline in pork prices for the rest of the country, which would put further pressure on margins. [UB](#)

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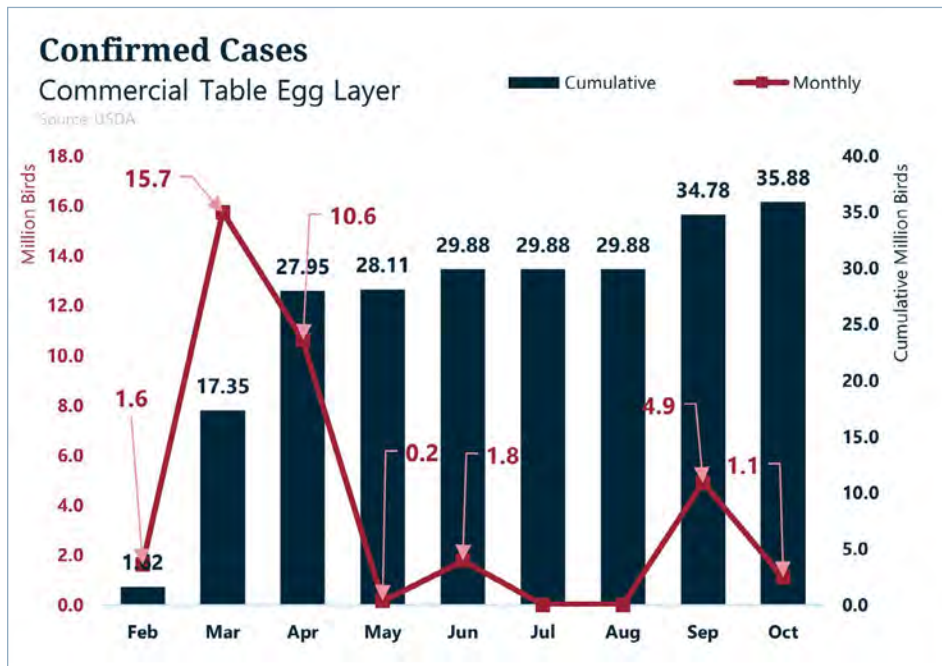


# UrnerBarry HPAI Whitepaper

MARKET PRICES, NEWS, AND ANALYSIS

Excerpt from Urner Barry's Whitepaper published on COMTELL November 2022

In the early part of the year it appeared that COVID-19 was moving into the rearview and that a return to normal—or at least a new version of it—was within reach. But for those in the egg industry, that was not to be, as there was another kind of virus waiting in the wings: highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). Though the egg industry has grappled with HPAI in the past—most recently in 2015—the circumstances surrounding this year's outbreak differ greatly from previous occurrences, with potential for greater market impacts leading into the height of demand season for the protein.



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**HPAI: THEN VS. NOW**

**LEADING INTO 2015...**

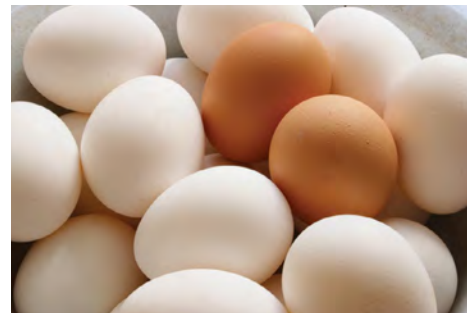
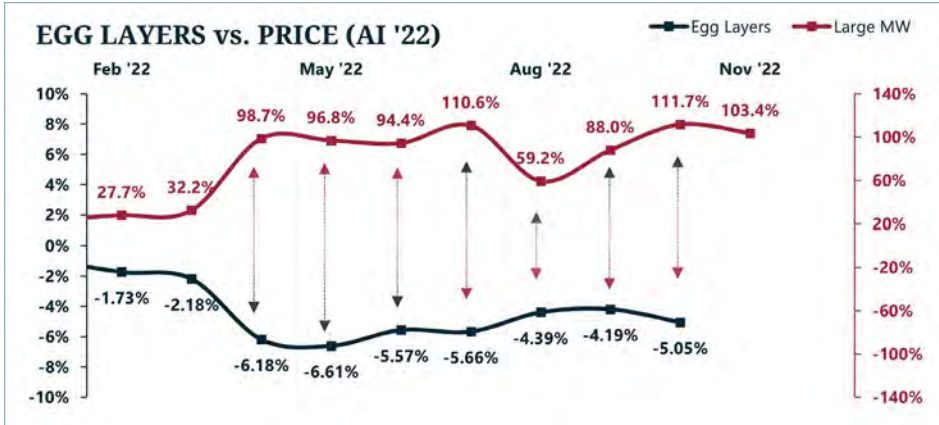
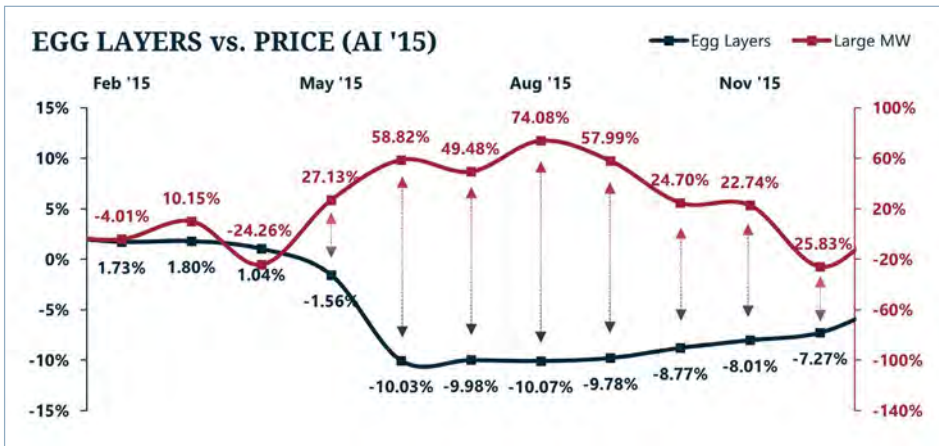
- Stable Corn Prices
- Stable Growth in Egg Layers
- No Pandemic
- No Supply Chain Disruptions
- Lower Energy Costs
- Steady Employment Costs
- No Major Market Disrupting Geo-Political Events
- Normal Rates of Inflation
- No Trade Disruptions or Tariffs
- Steady Income Growth Isolated to the U.S.
- First Case Detected: Late April

**LEADING INTO 2022...**

- High Corn Prices  
*\$5.00+ throughout 2021*
- Steady Decline in Egg Layers  
*Transition to Cage Free*
- Pandemic & Supply Chain Issues
- High Energy Costs
- Rising Employment Costs
- Major Geo-Political Disruptions  
*Russia-Ukraine*
- Multi-Decade High Rates of Inflation
- Massive Trade Disruptions and Tariffs
- Volatile Income Levels
- Spread into Europe
- First Case Detected: Late February

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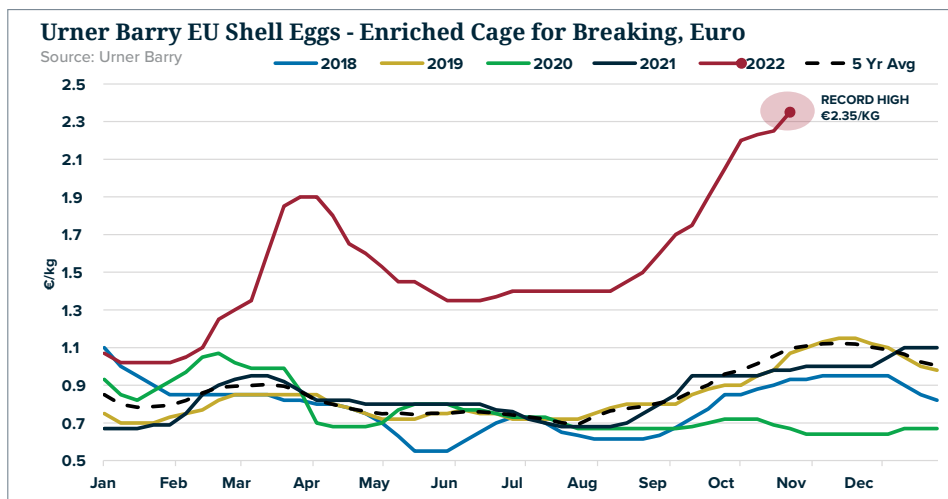
## E.U. SHELL EGGS

For four consecutive weeks, the European shell-egg market continued to climb to fresh record-high levels, as strong demand and inadequate supplies left processors with limited access to raw material. The price of caged eggs for breaking rose to €2.25/kg in the first week of October—eclipsing the previous record high of €2.15 that was set more than a decade ago—and has since tacked on an additional 8.9%. After a period of relative stability throughout May-August, prices have increased 66.7% over the past couple of months, thanks in large part to the reemergence of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI)—also known as the bird flu.

While egg supplies are in tight-to-short balance throughout the EU, the situation is especially grim in those countries where the bird flu is propagating—most notably France, the Netherlands, and even Spain, which has historically been spared from such events because of its warmer climate. Although Europe has experienced HPAI before, the European Food Safety Authority says this epidemic season is the worst on record. Between March and June of this year, there have been 5,300 detections among poultry, captive and wild birds.

Not only does this variant appear to be highly virulent, but seemingly indestructible. Previous outbreaks would typically die off in the summer with the arrival of higher temperatures, but this strain is persisting year-round, which suggests the virus may have become endemic in wild bird populations. That, of course, means commercial farms are susceptible to increased risk as migratory birds begin their winter journey—as noted in recent weeks.

Twelve cases of HPAI were reported in the Netherlands throughout October, bringing the number of birds impacted there to nearly 4 million. In France, the EU's largest egg-producing country, the agriculture ministry announced that the nationwide alert level on the bird flu had been raised from "low" to "moderate." Containment measures, which had been relaxed in June amid a lull in detections, will once again be tightened to help stem the spread. To



date, more than 19 million birds have been culled in France.

Already-low shell egg supplies are being further depleted by strong demand in the retail sector. While it's expected to see a seasonal bump in demand as summer holidays wind down and typical autumn schedules resume, suppliers have observed a larger-than-normal uptick this year—some as much as 15% above year-ago levels. Industry sources say egg sales are likely benefitting from inflationary pressure, which has prompted consumers to not only eat more of their meals at home, but also turn to more affordable sources of protein.

Consumer prices in the European Union rose at an annual rate of 10% in September—the highest level recorded since the introduction of the euro in 1999. Of the 19 nations in the eurozone, 10 are experiencing double-digit inflation rates. Skyrocketing energy prices are cited as the main culprit—and conditions there are not likely to improve any time soon. The International Energy Agency said that Europe faces "unprecedented risks" to its natural gas supplies this winter after Russia cut off most of its shipments.

The increased cost of energy—along with other inputs—has created a great deal of fear and uncertainty throughout the industry, prompting many farmers to rethink production plans. With pullet and

feed costs at very elevated levels—not to mention the ongoing threat of HPAI—many are electing not to fully repopulate their barns without a guarantee that they'll be able to recover those costs. Though it's a reasonable expectation by all accounts, it's one that has often been unmet this year, as supermarkets have been slow to pass along higher costs to consumers. The end result has been steady-to-higher demand in a period where supplies have grown increasingly scarce.

Contacts in recent weeks have noted an increased prevalence of small eggs, however, which suggests younger flocks are starting to come into production—and that there may be some measure of relief on the horizon. That said, availability does not always translate to accessibility. Stringent veterinary guidelines and containment zones around farms impacted by the virus have made it difficult—if not impossible—for some processors to bring in eggs from other regions.

With HPAI now presenting a year-round threat, many in the industry believe inoculation is the way forward. France and the Netherlands are currently working on vaccines, but they are both still in the trial phase, so their efficacy is unknown. It's also unclear whether vaccinated birds may still be able to spread the disease to unvaccinated birds.

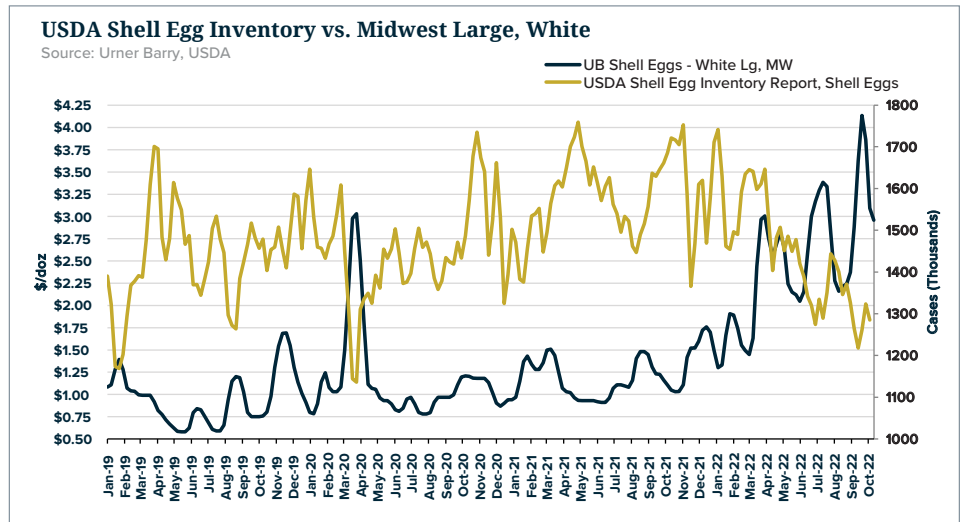
## U.S. SHELL EGGS

The U.S. shell egg market soared to all-time highs in the last week of September, as strong demand continued to chip away at already-low inventory levels, which have been curtailed by this year's bird flu outbreak. As of November 1, 23 commercial egg-laying farms have tested positive for the virus, leading to the euthanization of 31.5 million hens. It appeared as though the situation was under control to some extent, as July and August passed by without incident. But then in early September, two more farms were impacted, leading to the loss of about 5 million birds.

At the same time, heavy seasonal flock rotation was underway and imports into Canada picked up, as preparations began for their Thanksgiving holiday. The combined effect drew down shell egg inventories to just 1.2 million cases—the lowest reported since the onset of the pandemic and nearly on par with those reported in the same week of 2015 during the last bird flu outbreak. The difference though is that there were 27 million fewer hens in the national flock at that time. Industry standards put egg consumption at about one layer per person and since the U.S. census has expanded by 13.6 million since 2015, population growth can account for about half that disparity. The other half, however, speaks to some of the additional factors at play—chief among them, strength in the retail sector.

Sources throughout the country have been reporting good to very good retail orders, some coming in as much as 25% above year-ago levels. While demand has been good in regional and national chains alike, retail clearance has been especially brisk among discount grocers and hypermarkets that have been offering eggs as a loss leader in a bid to retain or expand their customer base in this inflationary environment.

Commodity egg sales may also be seeing stronger movement due to shelf shortages on other SKUs, such as branded and organic eggs. With grocery prices rising at the fastest rate in 40 years, consumers are increasingly reaching for the cheapest egg available to them, which—contrary to



conventional wisdom—is not always the conventional egg. Because specialty eggs are negotiated on a fixed contract, prices in recent weeks have often been less than those of commodities, which are subject to fluctuations in the marketplace.

Production in these categories, however, is a fraction of conventional outputs and cannot sustain the uptick in demand. USDA data shows that supplies of organic eggs, for instance, which represent only 5.5% of total production, have fallen 47.3% behind year-ago levels. That has depleted the pipeline for some specialties to the extent that many suppliers have had to short or cut orders altogether. With some SKUs now absent on the shelf, consumers in some cases have been forced to revert back to conventional eggs.

Market participants are also reporting continued strength in the foodservice sector, with no discernable shift in volumes as a result of inflation. The breakfast daypart appears to be benefitting from its relative versus lunch and dinner, as well as a broader return to pre-pandemic morning routines.

The combination of strong demand and diminished stocks generated a nearly unprecedented level of spot market buying interest in September, with bids topping more than 100 loads on most days—often countered with only a handful of offers. That led to a six-week market rally that culminated in a record high of \$4.18/dozen for Urner Barry's benchmark Midwest large quotation in the last days of September.

It wasn't long before a correction set in, however, and by mid-October values dipped back below the \$3.00 mark. But just as the calendar turned to November, yet another layer farm tested positive for the bird flu—this one in Iowa, which leads the nation in egg production with roughly 55 million layers. That adds another layer of complexity and uncertainty just as baking season arrives, laying the foundation for continued volatility throughout the fourth quarter—and potentially beyond. [UB](#)

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# Rima Kleiner

## Registered Dietitian with the National Fisheries Institute

Rima Kleiner, a registered dietitian-nutritionist, has been working with the National Fisheries Institute (NFI) for the past 10 years. Urner Barry seafood market reporter Janice Schreiber sat down with Kleiner to talk nutrition and the importance of incorporating seafood into your children's diet, as well as NFI's Dish on Fish initiative.

**URNER BARRY'S REPORTER:** Thanks so much for taking the time to chat! We have been speaking on and off for years and it's great to reconnect. Can you tell us a little bit about your main focus at NFI, Dish on Fish?

**RIMA KLEINER:** In my work with NFI, I contribute to and serve as the spokesperson for the NFI blog, Dish on Fish. I also create the recipes featured on Dish on Fish and in our e-cookbook. This blog is so much fun to work on because we really dive into not only the why you should eat more seafood, but also the nitty gritty of *how*. Many people say they enjoy seafood and want to eat more of it, they just don't know how to prepare fish and shellfish. So, we take out the guesswork by sharing simple recipes, easy hacks, pro tips and even step-by-step guides so that our readers can easily cook a delicious and nourishing seafood meal at home.

**UBR:** Dish on Fish is such an amazing resource. I know I look at it for recipe ideas for my family, which does include seafood eating kiddos! Can you tell us the history of it, growth, and what's the most used section?



**RK:** Dish on Fish is an initiative sponsored by the National Fisheries Institute to encourage Americans to eat seafood at least twice a week, as recommended by the U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans. We created this blog as a place for people to come to bookmark new seafood recipes and learn relevant, relatable, and easy-to-understand health and nutrition information about seafood.

Since the website's launch in 2016, Dish on Fish has generated over 1.2 billion impressions through over 665 blog posts! On average each month, we're seeing anywhere between 20,000 and 50,000 unique monthly viewers. And those numbers keep growing. The highest trafficked pages on the website are our downloadable and free e-cookbook, as well as our Monthly Meal Plans that come out the first of each month.

**UBR:** What was the usage like during the pandemic? I know one of the more popular topics that has come up at conferences when speaking to seafood's success during the pandemic is that people learned how to cook seafood. Did you see increased activity during that time?

**RK:** Dish on Fish was a ready resource to showcase easy, healthy seafood recipes for consumers during the height of the pandemic. Regular features, such as our cook along series, "The Seafood Supper Club," were key to demystifying cooking seafood at home.



During the peak of the pandemic, we were seeing incredibly high usage and traffic on the website from people coming to learn how to cook. We adapted the content we shared to feed into the "work from home" lifestyle and all that it entails, and are continuing to shift our content accordingly.

**UBR:** So I have kids, my girls are 7 and 5 and my little man is 8 months. My girls are seafood lovers—salmon, crab, cod, mahi, shrimp—they pretty much love it all. My girls happen to attend a Catholic school and they do not offer fish on Fridays—not even during Lent! What are your thoughts on seafood for school lunch programs?

**RK:** Yes, getting more seafood on school lunch menus would be a step in the right direction for helping more children have access to this nutrient-rich protein! Other federal programs, like Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) and WIC, recognize the need for increased seafood consumption. One reason is because Americans eat far too little seafood. The average American eats one seafood serving per week even though the DGA recommend that all Americans—including children—eat at least 2-3 servings of seafood each week. And, school lunches present a great opportunity to increase access to, and familiarity with, this heart and brain-healthy food.

When it comes to introducing and serving seafood to children at home, we have a lot of tips and resources at Dish on Fish! Some

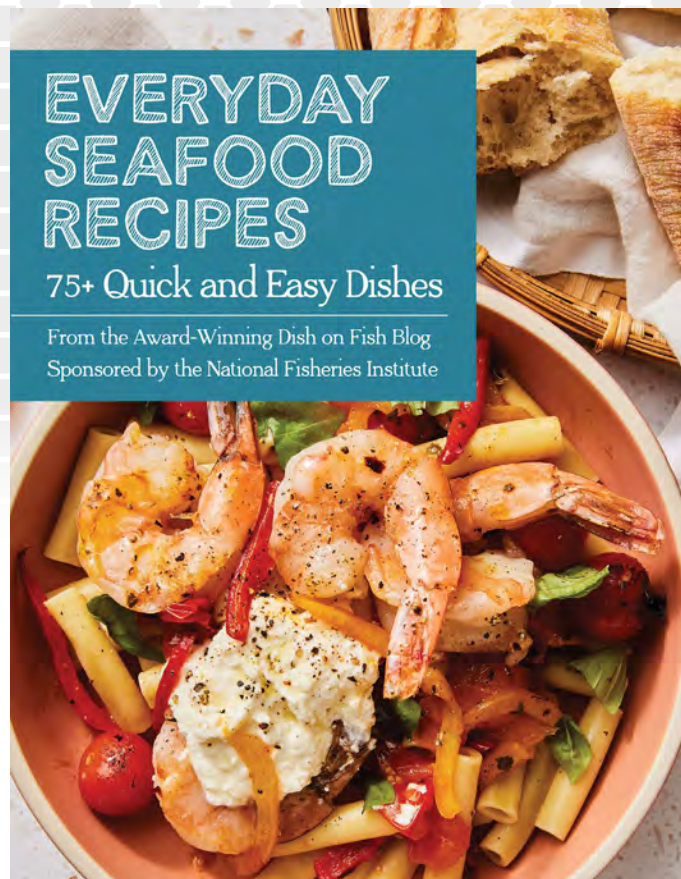
of my favorite tips for parents of young kids include pairing fish and shellfish with some of your kids' favorite foods. For example, if your child loves mac-n-cheese, trying adding a little canned tuna to it next time like in our Mac-n-Cheese Tuna Bites recipe. If they love noodles, add some sauteed shrimp to the bowl like our shrimp scampi recipe. Or, if they love burgers, try a salmon burger instead of a hamburger. And I know I mentioned parents of young children, but it's never too late to introduce seafood to kids. No matter how old your children are, it is always a good time to help them create healthy habits like getting most of their calories from nutrient-rich foods, like seafood.

Another favorite tip I share with parents is to get your kids involved. Ask them to flip through Pinterest or a cookbook to find a seafood recipe they want to try. Get them in the kitchen to help with age-appropriate prep and cooking tasks, even if it's just measuring ingredients or setting the table. Research shows that kids are more likely to eat food when they have a stake in it.

Lastly, parents are their children's best role model. I encourage parents to make sure they're eating their 2-3 weekly servings of seafood, especially if they're trying to get their kids to eat more fish or try new foods. There are so many reasons to love seafood, and the nutrients in seafood—like protein, B vitamins, selenium, vitamin D and heart-healthy omega-3s—are beneficial for kids and adults alike.

Find seafood recipes, tips and more by visiting [dishonfish.com](http://dishonfish.com) [UB](#)

Article contributed by **Janice Schreiber** | [janice@urnerbarry.com](mailto:janice@urnerbarry.com)



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# INDUSTRY WISDOM IN THE WINDY CITY

Chi-town was once again home to the annual Urner Barry Global Protein Summit this October, as buyers and sellers gathered from all across the country to gain intel on the protein markets, network with colleagues, and enjoy what the historic Gold Coast neighborhood of Chicago has to offer.

Those that joined us at the iconic Drake Hotel were shown detailed presentations from experts throughout the industry. Annual chair of the Global Protein Summit and Director of Editorial at Urner Barry, Jamie Chadwick, kicked off the conference with exciting opening remarks on the state of the industry, issues affecting the sector and a summary of all the great content we had planned for the weekend. We began our first day with World Bank Senior Economist John Baffes unpacking the macroeconomic trends affecting the protein industry. This was followed by a virtual presentation from Elizabeth Fastiggi, the Head of Worldwide Agriculture at Amazon Web Services, on the advancement of technology in the sector and what Amazon is doing to innovate the space. Later in the day, Denton Cinquegrana from OPIS gave a detailed look at the oil and gas markets, with a forecast of what is expected. Our sister companies from the AgriBriefing tree, Stratégie Grains and Feedinfo collaborated on a presentation about feed and grain prices. And finally, our first day concluded with the Urner Barry Consulting team forecasting protein demand and pricing for Q4 and 2023.

Not only is the Global Protein Summit jam-packed with educational sessions, but attendees are presented with high-quality networking sessions where they can build relationships with other buyers and sellers from the poultry, seafood, pork and beef industries. This year's evening networking session was held at Carmine's in Chicago. This old-school, Italian eatery provided a warm atmosphere for our attendees after a long day of education.



Jamie Chadwick, Director of Editorial at Urner Barry and annual GPS Conference Chair, giving her opening statements at this year's Summit.

Our second-day presentations kicked off with Chris Dubois, EVP and Practice Leader at IRI's Protein Practice, giving a detailed look at current consumer trends and how they have been impacted by inflation in the country. Marika Azoff, the Corporate Engagement Specialist at the Good Food Institute, concluded the conference with her expertise on the current state of the alternative protein industry.

Both days of content featured panels with innovators and experts from the industry giving their analysis on major topics in protein. Panel topics for this year's conference included the transportation crisis, the effects of animal disease on the sector, buying trends from big-time retailers and restaurants, the state of labor in the sector, and updates on sustainability from companies in the thick of it.



*It was extremely beneficial to be surrounded by so many different participants from every corner of the protein industry.*

**Peter Murray, Livestock Commodity Solutions, Marex Solutions**

A unique aspect of the Global Protein Summit is the breakout sessions, where poultry, beef, pork and seafood professionals separate into granular and specific content based on the protein they work directly with. In each breakout, attendees were treated to sessions on the import and export trends currently in their protein, risk management intel, consumer demand trends, transportation insights and updates from our market reporters on pricing trends.

One of the common themes that continued to come up during the Global Protein Summit was preparing your business for volatility and risk. Risk management came up in the conference during pre-conference workshops from Stable and StoneX, as well as protein-specific risk-management breakouts from Stable, StoneX, Foa & Son, and Marex Solutions.

"The participants (of our session) were all faced with an increasingly volatile marketplace, as well as underlying inflationary pressures on inputs," said Ben Parks from StoneX. "Hopefully the attendees came away with a better understanding of the tools available and the mechanics of managing price risk."

2022 was the first year of its tenure that the Global Protein Summit expanded its audience to buyers and sellers in the seafood sector. Those that joined us were able to get a glimpse at what the other competing proteins are dealing with, as well as seafood representatives on main stage panels and breakout sessions catered towards seafood-specific issues and markets.



The Urner Barry Global Protein Summit offers a platform for stakeholders in the protein space to share best practices, network and build a broader understanding of current industry dynamics to inform go-forward strategies vital to the success of our businesses.

Thomas McQuillan, Chief Sales Officer, Do Good Foods



As a sponsor of the Global Protein Summit, we received great brand exposure at the conference. The networking opportunities during breaks and evening events were excellent for seeing a number of existing clients, prospective customers, and industry colleagues alike.

Ben Parks, Risk Management Consultant, StoneX Financial Inc - FCM Division



Director of Sales at Urner Barry, Laura Zinger, hosting a panel on labor in the food and agriculture space.

One of these speakers was Director of Programs at the National Fisheries Institute, Richard Barry. Barry spoke on import and export trends in the seafood space during the breakout sessions.

"I use Urner Barry data daily, but mostly for seafood inquiries," said Barry. "It was eye-opening to attend and speak at the Global Protein Summit and gain further insight into land-based proteins and where seafood fits into the center-of-the-plate discussion. I was excited to attend during seafood's inaugural year on the GPS program and look forward to coming again." [UB](#)

Article contributed by Chris Fastiggi  
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The Executive Conference is next for Urner Barry, returning to Las Vegas April 30-May 2 at the Palazzo at the Venetian Resort. For the most up-to-date info on the Executive Conference and next year's Global Protein Summit check out [urnerbarry.com/events](http://urnerbarry.com/events). For sponsorship opportunities regarding any Urner Barry conference please reach out to Bill Lynskey at [blynskey@urnerbarry.com](mailto:blynskey@urnerbarry.com).

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# CUSTOMER OUTREACH



Article contributed by  
Emily Metz,  
President & CEO,  
American Egg Board



Feedback is rarely a neutral thing. Receiving feedback can elicit feelings of joy and accomplishment and send “warm and fuzzies” tingling down your spine. Feedback can also cripple you with fear and fill you with self-doubt, momentarily paralyzing you as your shortcomings are laid out in front of you. It presents itself in both personal and professional environments and is vital to growth in both realms. We seek it to better understand our place in the world.

At the American Egg Board (AEB), we are no different. We yearn for honest, unfiltered

feedback so that we can better facilitate the needs of our customers, our producers, and our consumers and be of service to the broader egg industry. How does one go about obtaining feedback on a particular subject or project? Simple....just ask.

Seems easy enough, but that outreach requires a concerted effort by us, the AEB, to seek out our partners where they are and engage them in thoughtful and, hopefully, impactful dialogue. The business world is everchanging, and to best serve America's egg farmers, we need to be sure that we are turning over every stone that we can. It was with that in mind that AEB brought in Dana Lawnzak earlier this year to serve as our Director of food chain outreach and international development. There is a good chance that some of you reading this had the pleasure of running into Dana at one of the countless

trade shows or conferences that she has attended on AEB's behalf since coming on board this spring.

Dana's calendar, I'm sure, looks more like a starting Scrabble hand than anything else. Attendance at a veritable cornucopia of conferences and tradeshows such as IFT First (International Food Technology), NRA (National Restaurant Show), FMI Fresh Forward, among others, have littered her agenda since she started with us. At each stop, Dana is working to network and connect with our channel partners to help AEB—and the broader industry—better understand challenges and opportunities for eggs in the marketplace.

As Dana noted at a recent all-staff meeting, data and insights, while invaluable, can only tell so much. It's boots on the ground and having real-life conversations with

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our stakeholders that can fill in the blind spots or present new opportunities to action against.

And that outreach goes both ways. While she is out learning how we can better serve our channel partners, she, in turn, is spreading the gospel about what AEB is capable of and how we can be of service to those same contacts and their businesses. Whether it's informing partners on the latest nutritional messaging around eggs and what consumers are thinking, or touting the benefits of AEB's newly launched insights and innovation hub, The Eggcelerator Lab, it is key in our outreach that the flow of communication is not one sided. We want to know what our partners are doing, and we want to keep them abreast of how we can partner with them to help them meet their own corporate goals and initiatives.

As one can imagine, not every conference or trade show is centered around the same topic or theme. Dana has brought back to AEB's staff and the industry first-hand insights gained on her journeys on topics such as sustainability, innovation, the future of retail, and nutrition concerns, among others topics. These are all areas that we believe we can be of service to our partners, but it takes someone to gain those first-hand accounts to either reinforce our belief in something, or, perhaps, encourage us to look at something in a different light.

We see ourselves and this role within food chain outreach as the conduit between AEB, our egg farmers, our industry stakeholders and the customer base. Because we are an impartial party (notice I didn't say unbiased—we are and will forever be Team Egg!) we can enter conversations with ease and really get to the heart of a potential opportunity. By seeking first to understand, we can bring the right parties to the table to address a challenge, or better yet, seize on an opening for growth and building something bigger, through collaboration. By connecting the proverbial "dots" gathered through countless conversations, we're able to look towards the future in new, impactful ways—all geared towards our core mission: building demand for eggs and egg products.



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**“... to best serve America's egg farmers, we need to be sure that we are turning over every stone that we can.”**

This outreach presents us with an opportunity to grow as an organization and provides us with a chance to find a better way to meet the needs that the customer may have. By being an active partner and reaching out on a regular basis, we position ourselves as an organization that has our partners best interests at heart and one that welcomes their input, positive or negative, in order to be of service.

Outreach doesn't happen in a vacuum. It takes a concerted effort—and the desire to be a little bit of a nomadic “road warrior,” like Dana, to engage our stakeholders in a way that will benefit everyone. We look forward to continued conversations and identifying opportunities for future growth, not just for AEB, but for the egg industry as a whole. [UB](#)



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# Magic 8 Ball: Turkey edition

Article contributed by Beth Breeding, National Turkey Federation



The odds are good that at some point in the past you shook a Magic 8 Ball and asked a question about the future. With all of the uncertainty the past three years have brought, a little insight on what the future holds would be helpful. From COVID to the highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) outbreak, supply chain disruptions have kept the turkey industry on its toes. As we approach 2023, the National Turkey Federation (NTF) team decided to dust off the old Magic 8 Ball. Instead of the cliched questions of our youth, we have a few about what the turkey industry may face in the new year...

## Will turkey producers have to continue to deal with avian influenza?

IT IS CERTAIN.

Unfortunately, the continuous flow of HPAI detections and the virus load present in the wild bird population clearly indicate we are experiencing a different situation than during past outbreaks. Unlike 2015, HPAI did not go away with the arrival of hot, dry weather this summer. Instead, the virus has doubled the challenge, contributing to the loss of more than 8 million turkeys by the end of November.

The future of the turkey industry is intrinsically linked to the ability of producers to respond to avian influenza and other potential animal health challenges. It is clear we must identify ways to continue reducing the impact of the virus. In early 2022, NTF formed an HPAI Task Force to evaluate virus response and identify areas for improvement. The group of industry leaders has also urged the initiation of international conversations around the use of vaccines to eliminate an outbreak, development of additional biosecurity enhancements and expansion of indemnity coverage for growers.



There's no doubt that it has been a challenging year for the turkey industry, and for producers impacted by avian influenza it has been particularly difficult. However, as APHIS leaders have acknowledged, there has been far less lateral transmission of the virus. This is a testament to the hard work of the men and women of the turkey industry and—while HPAI will be an ongoing threat—a hopeful sign for a less difficult future.

## Will new USDA Salmonella regulations decrease foodborne illness?

ASK AGAIN LATER.

The turkey industry has seen numerous revisions of USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) Salmonella policy over the years and has always supported using science and data to reduce the risk from this naturally occurring, ubiquitous pathogen. NTF members have been innovating and sharing best practices for more than 25 years. What we have clearly learned is that there is no singular fix. Producers must be able to adjust their Salmonella reduction programs as needed for the unique situations facilities face every day, not boxed into a “one-size doesn't fit all” idea. The latest proposed Salmonella Framework released by FSIS outlines the Agency's current thinking on potential Salmonella regulations in three components: requiring incoming flocks be tested for Salmonella before entering an establishment, requiring additional sampling and testing at the re-hang processing step and implementing final product standards. FSIS has acknowledged there are significant data gaps and much research needed to understand if these components will initiate meaningful change.



## Will Congress reinforce support for animal disease prevention and response?

GOOD OUTLOOK.

Given HPAI's impact on the turkey industry, it is critically important that there is robust federal support for HPAI response and research and science to help better understand the virus.

As Congress considers the 2023 Farm Bill, NTF's top priority will focus on the National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program and opportunities for enhancing animal disease prevention, detection and response. NTF has also voiced support for an expanded wild bird surveillance program across all major flyways, which serves as an early warning indicator of HPAI in the environment.

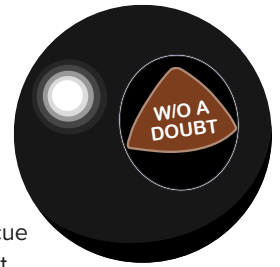


## Will turkey continue to grow in the barbecue space?

WITHOUT A DOUBT.

NTF's Turkey Smoke and Tailgate with Turkey marketing programs have shined a spotlight on turkey's versatility in the barbecue space. From competition barbecue to the backyard, turkey is having a moment on the grill! NTF looks forward to building on the 2022 programs and growing consumer reach by incorporating turkey into more barbecue festivals nationwide and partnering with respected influencers to help spread the word about our favorite bird.

While a number of questions may be on the table, we don't need a Magic 8 Ball to understand how the turkey industry's resiliency has carried it through every challenge faced. Leadership and innovative thinking of turkey producers has been instrumental in mitigating the effects of avian influenza. They've continued to meet the demand for protein by supplying safe, nutritious products to consumers. We know that focus and commitment to delivering the products consumers love will continue into 2023 – no questions asked. [UB](#)



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**"The future of the turkey industry is intrinsically linked to the ability of producers to respond to avian influenza and other potential animal health challenges."**

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# 5 new flavorful PLANT-BASED products to try in the new year

The plant protein market may not be booming as it was pre-pandemic, but more plant-based products are popping up in grocery aisles from several food brands. Check out five new mouthwatering plant-based products to try in 2023!



Photo credit: Wicked Kitchen

## Wicked Kitchen — 100% Plant-Based Artisan Frozen Pizzas

Wicked Kitchen's pizza offering can be found in the frozen aisle at Kroger stores and 6,500 other retail locations. Selling for \$9.99 each, these frozen artisan pizzas are cheaper than ordering out. Made with hand-stretched dough, the pizzas are then wood fired to make their crust stand out from other frozen options. There are three different plant-based pizzas to choose from: The Wicked Meaty Pizza, The Saucy Motz Pizza, and Rulebreakin' Rustic Veg Pizza.



Photo credit: Del Monte Foods

## Del Monte Foods — veggieful™ Pocket Pies

Another frozen aisle find, these pocket pies from Del Monte Foods come in seven flavors, including: Plant-Based Pepperoni Pizza, Plant-Based Philly Cheesesteak, and Garlic & Herb Plant-Based Chicken & Real Cheese. This product comes from a partnership with Nicole Keshishian Modic of food site and social page KaleJunkie. "Working with Del Monte's® Veggieful™ allows me to create recipes that encourage home cooks to eat more vegetarian recipes & products," said Nicole Keshishian Modic of the collaboration.



Photo credit: Current Foods

## Current Foods — Current Salmon

Current Foods has launched sliced and ready-to-eat plant-based smoked salmon that is made entirely from plants and earthy ingredients such as potato, bamboo, and algae. The first retail partners to be launching Current Salmon include Fairway Market, Showfields, and Gourmet Garage in NYC. The product also includes substantial nutrients such as iron, vitamin B12, fiber, protein, and omega-3 DHAs.



Photo credit: Impossible Foods

## Impossible™ Foods — Impossible™ Bowls

These plant-based bowls can be found in the frozen section at the grocery store and can be heated up and ready to eat in minutes. There are eight different bowls to choose from, such as Burrito Bowl with Impossible™ Beef, Spaghetti & Impossible™ Meatballs, and Sweet & Sour Impossible™ Pork. These products are also good for the planet due to less land use, water consumption, and greenhouse gas emissions.

## Unreal Deli — Plant-Based deli meat

Unreal Deli announced the launch of their plant-based deli meats into 125 Hannaford Supermarket locations. What makes their plant-based deli meats different from the rest is that they can be found at the store's service deli counters. The products include Unreal Corn'd Beef, Unreal Steak Slices, and Unreal Roasted Turkey. They retail for \$12.99 per pound. [UB](http://UB)

Article contributed by Georgeanne Nigro  
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Photo credit: Unreal Deli

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# QUICK BITES

## TIKTOK MADE ME DO IT

Forget about the beauty trends and hair tutorials. TikTok is influencing the dining behavior of their users. Marketing communications agency MGH conducted a study that found 28% of TikTok users have visited a restaurant and/or ordered food from a restaurant after seeing a TikTok video about it. What's really surprising though is that of those surveyed, 30% said that they have traveled longer than they normally do to visit a restaurant after seeing it on TikTok. And 28% said that they have visited a restaurant that was slightly more expensive than the ones they usually visit after seeing it on TikTok. As for what's driving these figures? The videos show appetizing-looking food, a unique menu item, or just a cool atmosphere.



Photo credit: McDonald's

## FAREWELL TO THE M<sup>CRIB</sup>

This isn't "goodbye"... It's "see you later." While most of us are still mourning the Choco Taco, McDonald's dropped a bombshell in our laps. "Get one while you can because this is the McRib Farewell Tour," McDonald's teased on their website.

The McRib, seasoned boneless pork dipped in tangy BBQ sauce and topped with slivered onions and dill pickles served on a toasted homestyle bun, was first introduced in 1981. Since then it's been pulled from the menu and added again, drumming up excitement for the limited time offering. The sandwich has always returned. But this time around McDonald's is warning that "you never know when—or if—the McRib is coming back." Could this just be a publicity stunt? Sure, but we're still buying the nostalgic McRib merch line that's accompanying the latest (and possibly final) sandwich release.

## "THE HOUSE THAT BILL BUILT"

Former White Castle president and CEO Bill Ingram may have retired in 2015, but his legacy lives on with the chain's newly expanded retail food manufacturing facility in Vandalia, Ohio. The company announced in late October that they finished construction on the \$27 million expansion on the facility nicknamed "The House That Bill Built." Now at 150,000-square-feet, the facility was designed to serve the growing retail demand for White Castle's sliders. And boy is that demand growing. At the end of 2021 the family-owned business celebrated the sale of its 6th billion retail slider sold. Of that historic sales figure, a whopping 20% of those sales were done in the past three years. Let's see what 2023 brings for the iconic slider. [UB](#)

Article contributed by **Amanda Buckle**  
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Photo credit: White Castle



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# Rigorous audit provides even more confidence in Urner Barry's market assessments

Last year Urner Barry went through a process to receive Type 1 assurance for its adherence to IOSCO guidelines. IOSCO is the worldwide body of securities regulators that recommends guidelines, processes and systems that price reporting agencies adhere to for best practices.

Urner Barry has always had a robust process by which it collects market data and provides market assessments. This is one reason that so many industries and companies benchmark Urner Barry markets for their transactions and make crucial business decisions with the information.

The audit provides users of UB data with another level of confidence that information is researched in accordance with posted methodologies and that internal and external systems exist to provide a market assessment that is an accurate indication of the items under coverage. Specifically, auditors review assessments from Urner Barry's coverage of the U.S. imported beef market, Urner Barry's chicken market, turkey market and Urner Barry's seafood market assessments.



Earlier this year, Urner Barry applied for Type 2 assurance for those same assessments. Type 2 assurance is a deeper level of review. A successful audit will provide users of Urner Barry market assessments with yet another level of confidence for the robustness of that information.

Urner Barry has also applied for Type 1 assurance on a whole new group of quotations which include items in its coverage for Brazilian imported beef, shell eggs, and more.

We are committed to providing clients with the best market information and these audits against IOSCO standards are important so that people can know they have the most robust information available.

For more information on IOSCO guidelines and Urner Barry's reporting visit our methodology page at: [www.urnerbarry.com/Markets/Methodologies](http://www.urnerbarry.com/Markets/Methodologies). **UB**

Article contributed by **Joe Muldowney**  
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I. Percent Paid ( <i>15c divided by 15f times 100</i> )	83.72%	93.54%

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Joseph Muldowney, Publisher



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## Year in review:

# 2022 COMTELL

## developments

2022 marked the completion of several key elements from the COMTELL product roadmap and various performance enhancements. Urner Barry is dedicated to providing COMTELL subscribers with an all-encompassing platform that continues to grow and improve. Here are just a few of the highlights throughout the year:

- Access COMTELL's larger than ever data set with the addition of **over 100 new historical market items**.
- Improve planning and boost confidence now that OBSONO and UB Consulting **forecasts have been integrated into the history charts** within COMTELL!
- Stay abreast of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) developments with COMTELL's **new HPAI dashboard** located within the Trending Now section of the News tab.
- Quickly identify key market trends with **more vibrant colors on charts** for enhanced readability and easier differentiation between data sets.
- Gain transparency to a continuously volatile market with the **new refrigerated truck rates & availability tables**, plus transportation related news added to Pricing > Energy/Freight.
- Reduce uncertainty with 30/60/90 day **U.S. drought forecasting** added to News > Weather.

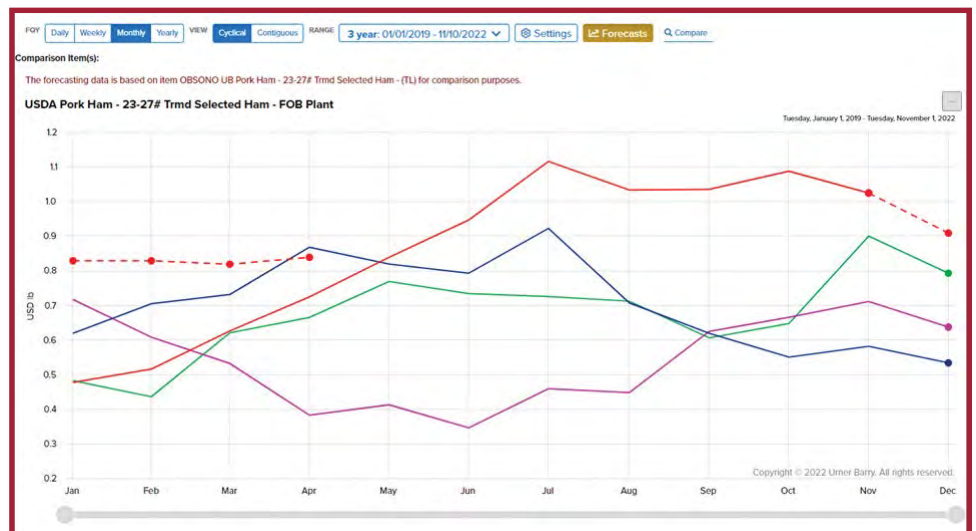
The COMTELL product roadmap includes projects that are influenced and requested by the customer, as the focus of Urner Barry resources should be prioritized by where they find the most value. Following customer feedback, we have prioritized the following features for 2023 development:

- At the time of writing this article we are deep in development of a more intuitive user experience and an expanded data set within the **Retail Features** section on COMTELL to bring more value and utility.
- Faster access to relevant news headlines with **News Alerts**.
- **Share critical data**, reports, or news content between users (within same organization) directly through COMTELL.



Urner Barry welcomes any feedback and suggestions on how to provide the most value to our customers and improving the user experience on COMTELL and all other services. E-mail us at [sales@urnerbarry.com](mailto:sales@urnerbarry.com) or call 732-240-5330. [UB](https://www.urnerbarry.com)

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Forecasting has been integrated into history charts on COMTELL.

# COMTELL<sup>®</sup>

# Product Enhancements

**15,824**  
data points and counting

## 3<sup>RD</sup> PARTY ASSURANCE

IOSCO compliant key benchmark assessments backed by type one assurance



## Retail Dashboard

A comprehensive retail experience gives subscribers access to retailer-based IRI scanner data with an in-depth and accurate view of the buying process, offering a more intimate understanding of consumer spending habits.

### ACCESS TO:

- ✓ Store
- ✓ Location
- ✓ Week Ending
- ✓ Discounted Price
- ✓ Non-Discounted Price
- ✓ Discounted Sales
- ✓ Total Sales

### DEDICATED WIDGETS:

- Top Retail Movers
- Retail News



- + 33 New Beef Items
- + Mexican 90% Bnls Beef
- + Mexican 80% Bnls Beef
- + 100% Brazilian Lean
  - Insides
  - Flats/Eyes
  - SPB
- + Imported Lamb
- + Mexican Boxed Beef
  - Domestic
  - Export
- + Beef & Veal
  - Imports
  - Exports



- + 6 New Egg Items
- + National Cage Free Coverage
- + Bi-Weekly Egg Forecast
- + West Coast Graded Loose Index

✓ Revised UK beef markets with coverage on 45 new items and the creation of a UK beef cutout



- + 13 New Seafood Items
- + Vietnam Shrimp Farmgate Cost
- + EU Frozen Whitefish
- + Peruvian Scallops
- + Asian 8-12ct Shrimp

✓ Added seafood coverage expanding into new origins



- + 4 New Reports
  - Plant Proteins
  - Weekly Bean, Pea, & Lentil Market
  - Bean Market News
  - Central Illinois 48% Soybean Meal
- + 3 New Monthly Insiders
  - Pulse Protein
  - Soy & Wheat
  - Emerging Plant

**API and Excel** add-in upgrade options

- ✓ Larger carcass weights on US domestic lamb coverage
- ✓ New market coverage initiated for pork ribs and trimmed pork loins in combos



HPAI Dashboard



Refrigerated Truck Rates



Drought Map



Transportation News

## 2023 Developments COMING SOON

Faster News Alerts

Customizable Widgets

No Antibiotics Ever Chicken Table

Type 2 IOSCO assurance

FORECASTING INTEGRATION = **75** future price predictions available across Red Meat, Poultry, & Egg

## FUNCTIONALITY

- Faster Loading Times
- Enhanced Data Export
- Improved Search Features
- Intuitive Charting Capabilities

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