

## Beef Marketplace Update – Four Weeks Ending 5/17/2026

Retail snapshot ending May 17, 2026 from the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association, a contractor to the Beef Checkoff, highlights beef continuing to see record retail sales and intent to consume beef at the same level or more in the future.

Beef continues to lead the fresh meat case on value, over the latest four weeks, beef generated **\$3.56 billion** in retail dollar sales, up **7.1%** versus a year ago, outpacing chicken at 4.0% and pork at 1.7%. Over 52 weeks, beef reached **\$46.6 billion** in dollar sales, up **10.5%**, reinforcing that consumer demand is still translating into strong retail revenue even in a higher-price environment. Beef is still fueling the highest-value protein category in the meat department and maintaining pricing power that competitors have not matched.

Beef’s value story is being driven more by price strength than by volume expansion. In the latest four weeks, total beef volume increased just **0.7%**, while average retail price per pound climbed **6.3%** to **\$7.65**. That same pattern holds across longer periods: 52-week beef volume was up **2.9%**, while price per pound was up **7.4%**. Recent data would suggest the market is still willing to pay higher beef prices in the meat case. As retail shoppers may be buying more selectively, they are still willing to pay for beef.

**Fresh ground beef** remains a major engine of growth, with four-week dollar sales up **12.1%**, supported by a **0.5%** volume gain and an **11.5%** increase in price per pound to **\$6.20**. **Roasts** and **value add** also posted positive four-week dollar gains of **5.5%** and **4.9%**, respectively, with both cuts showing positive volume trends. By contrast, **steaks** are still generating large dollars, but the trend is softer: four-week steak dollar sales rose only **1.4%** as volume declined **3.6%**, meaning higher prices are carrying the category. As prices increase, consumers are leaning toward versatile, everyday beef items while being more cautious with premium steak purchases.

Beef is still outperforming other proteins where it matters most—retail value. Beef is leading its premium position because shoppers continue to prioritize the category, but the momentum is centered in cuts that fit weeknight meals, convenience, and value perception, especially ground beef. The market is rewarding both the broad strength of beef and the cuts that align with everyday consumption occasions. If steak demand remains more pressured while ground, roast, and value add trends stay constructive, producers and industry partners can position beef not only as a premium product, but as a dependable staple that continues to win share in the consumer basket.

## Marketplace Overview

### Total Value - Fresh Meat

Legacy Sub-Category	52-Week Dollar Sales		13-Week Dollar Sales		4-Week Dollar Sales	
	Current	% Change vs YA	Current	% Change vs YA	Current	% Change vs YA
<b>AISLE-FRESH MEAT</b>	\$81,587,403,696	8.0%	\$20,205,622,256	5.9%	\$6,198,968,540	5.5%
<b>BEEF</b>	\$46,626,932,175	10.5%	\$11,693,356,540	7.8%	\$3,561,051,774	7.1%
BEEF STEAKS	\$16,026,804,886	5.3%	\$4,008,438,310	1.9%	\$1,309,956,665	1.4%
BEEF FRESH GROUND	\$17,239,565,353	13.9%	\$4,326,612,329	11.6%	\$1,352,082,460	12.1%
BEEF ROAST	\$4,813,000,461	10.4%	\$1,064,450,672	4.8%	\$279,350,777	5.5%
BEEF VALUE ADD	\$4,324,228,698	10.1%	\$1,223,652,963	6.2%	\$302,776,722	4.9%
BEEF BRISKET	\$690,237,792	9.8%	\$170,409,299	19.3%	\$46,618,296	6.3%
<b>CHICKEN</b>	\$21,016,484,838	5.8%	\$5,239,456,866	3.7%	\$1,628,590,448	4.0%
<b>TURKEY</b>	\$3,425,477,840	5.1%	\$696,350,243	6.9%	\$206,814,706	7.5%
<b>PORK</b>	\$8,798,145,189	2.7%	\$2,104,694,443	1.0%	\$667,948,515	1.7%

Source: Circana Multi-Market retail performance, period ending 5/17/2026

Analysis: National Cattlemen's Beef Association, a contractor to the Beef Checkoff.

### Total Volume - Fresh Meat

Legacy Sub-Category	52-Week Volume Sales		13-Week Volume Sales		4-Week Volume Sales	
	Current	% Change vs YA	Current	% Change vs YA	Current	% Change vs YA
<b>AISLE-FRESH MEAT</b>	17,319,958,566	2.6%	4,130,517,590	1.4%	1,260,182,290	1.7%
<b>BEEF</b>	6,335,998,787	2.9%	1,578,866,305	1.8%	465,244,910	0.7%
BEEF STEAKS	1,427,467,326	-2.0%	353,495,107	-3.0%	114,274,363	-3.6%
BEEF FRESH GROUND	2,918,961,072	2.5%	712,599,844	1.2%	218,246,182	0.5%
BEEF ROAST	706,992,411	5.7%	158,115,813	1.1%	42,470,141	3.6%
BEEF VALUE ADD	653,498,902	7.1%	196,148,438	3.5%	44,026,220	4.4%
BEEF BRISKET	143,817,661	-2.3%	35,649,709	15.8%	9,060,980	-6.0%
<b>CHICKEN</b>	6,780,895,346	3.5%	1,681,163,890	2.3%	526,301,188	3.9%
<b>TURKEY</b>	1,241,521,782	-1.3%	151,583,904	-7.8%	43,515,463	-3.1%
<b>PORK</b>	2,715,928,539	1.0%	647,173,748	-0.7%	204,191,994	-1.2%

Source: Circana Multi-Market retail performance, period ending 4/19/2026

Analysis: National Cattlemen's Beef Association, a contractor to the Beef Checkoff.

## Average Price Per Pound - Fresh Meat

Legacy Sub-Category	52-Week Price per Volume		13-Week Price per Volume		4-Week Price per Volume	
	Current	% Change vs YA	Current	% Change vs YA	Current	% Change vs YA
<b>AISLE-FRESH MEAT</b>	\$4.71	5.3%	\$4.89	4.3%	\$4.92	3.7%
<b>BEEF</b>	\$7.36	7.4%	\$7.41	5.9%	\$7.65	6.3%
BEEF STEAKS	\$11.23	7.4%	\$11.34	5.1%	\$11.46	5.3%
BEEF FRESH GROUND	\$5.91	11.1%	\$6.07	10.3%	\$6.20	11.5%
BEEF ROAST	\$6.81	4.5%	\$6.73	3.6%	\$6.58	1.9%
BEEF VALUE ADD	\$6.62	2.9%	\$6.24	2.5%	\$6.88	0.4%
BEEF BRISKET	\$4.80	12.3%	\$4.78	3.0%	\$5.14	13.1%
<b>CHICKEN</b>	\$3.10	2.2%	\$3.12	1.3%	<b>\$3.09</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
<b>TURKEY</b>	\$2.76	6.5%	\$4.59	16.0%	<b>\$4.75</b>	<b>10.9%</b>
<b>PORK</b>	\$3.24	1.7%	\$3.25	1.7%	<b>\$3.27</b>	<b>2.9%</b>

*Source: Circana Multi-Market retail performance, period ending 4/19/2026*

*Analysis: National Cattlemen's Beef Association, a contractor to the Beef Checkoff.*

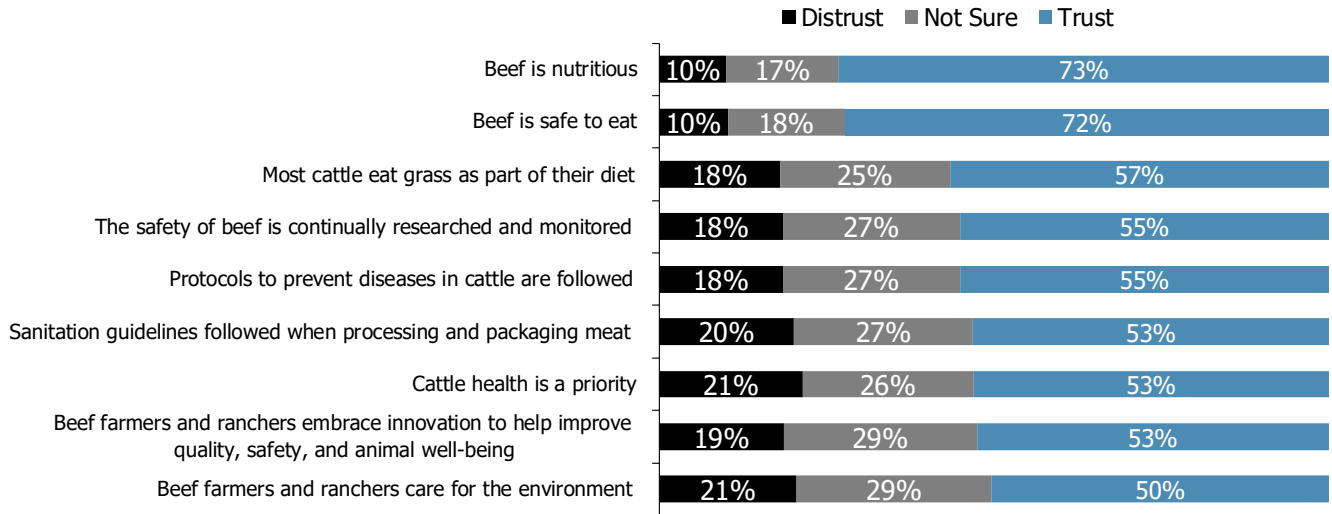
### Consumer Trust Metrics

Consumer trust in how cattle are raised for food is closely tied to stronger beef demand and sales resilience. When shoppers believe cattle are raised responsibly, they are more likely to view beef as a product worth purchasing, even at a premium. That trust helps reinforce beef's value position at retail, supporting the broader trends: beef continues to lead fresh meat in dollar sales, with four-week sales up 7.1% and 52-week sales up 10.5%. Consumer trust may be viewed as a bellwether for retail performance, not just a reputation metric — it helps underpin willingness to buy.

The chart below suggests that trust plays an important role in helping consumers stay committed to beef even as prices rise. That matters because current beef performance is being driven largely by higher prices rather than large volume gains, which means shoppers are continuing to pay for beef because they still see it as a product they can feel good about serving. This reinforces the importance of building and maintaining confidence in cattle care, stewardship, and raising practices: stronger trust can help sustain both consumer loyalty and the premium value beef commands in the marketplace.

## Trust Metrics: How Cattle are Raised for Food

Cattle producers are providing a nutritious and safe to eat product.



Source: Consumer Beef Tracker January– December 2025. CR4: "Thinking about how cattle are raised for food in the U.S., please tell us how much you trust each of the following statements."  
 Analysis: National Cattlemen's Beef Association, a contractor to the Beef Checkoff.