

The development of the slaughtering of selected food animals

Antonín Kozák

Municipal Veterinary Administration in Prague
State Veterinary Administration
Prague, Czech Republic

Abstract

The development of the number of slaughtered heads of selected species of animals for slaughter has shown a steady decline in the case of cattle (including calves) and pigs since 1989. In contrast, the years 1989 to 1991 showed a very sharp drop in the case of sheep, and the latest years of the reference period demonstrate a slight increase. With the slaughter of chickens, first there was a decrease – the least amount of chickens slaughtered during the studied period was in 1994. This decrease was reversed with an increase which reached its peak in 2002. In 2007 the number of slaughtered chickens again began to decline.

Slaughter, cattle, pigs, sheep, chickens

Introduction

Statistics on the slaughter of animals is stark for those working in agriculture – breeders and butchers – as well as for the staff of the Regional Veterinary Administrations involved in the inspection of slaughter animals and meat, it shows continuously plunging numbers of animals being slaughtered in slaughterhouses in the Czech Republic. If we take into account, e.g., the costs of adjustments to, or reconstructions of the slaughterhouse premises, the cost of the actual slaughterhouse operations, of providing employment in areas which are often problematic in this respect, we may, when considering the current situation, be lead to a number of fairly unflattering conclusions, which I will, however, leave up to the individual readers to make.

Materials and Methods

Veterinary inspectors recorded total numbers of animals slaughtered. These data were collected in selected species, production and age groups of food animals at slaughterhouses in the Czech Republic. These data were entered into a computer system and sent for processing to the information center of the State Veterinary Administration and consequently were used in this article.

Results and Discussion

In 1989, 1 170 730 heads of cattle were slaughtered in the Czech Republic (including calves). A level of no less than 1 million slaughtered heads of cattle was maintained till 1993 when the slaughter count fell to 913 702 heads. In 1998, 557 791 heads were slaughtered and in the following year, 1999, the total number of slaughtered cattle sunk below the level of half a million (in fact it was 495 103 heads). In 2004, 369 480 heads of cattle were slaughtered and this was the first year when the total number of slaughtered cattle (including calves) went below the level of 400 000 heads. The year 2007 marked a further drop to under 300 000 slaughtered heads of cattle for the annual total (295 784 heads) and this trend has continued – in 2011 only 266 920 heads of cattle were slaughtered (including calves).

The slaughter of pigs, in terms of the total number of slaughtered heads, has undergone a slightly different development. In 1989, 5 267 724 heads were slaughtered and soon afterwards, in 1991, the figure dropped to 4 714 753 heads. The year 1995 marked the largest decline in the total number of slaughtered pigs of the 1990s, down to 4 224 109 heads. In the following years there was an increase in the total number

Address for correspondence:

Doc. MVDr. Antonín Kozák, Ph.D.
Municipal Veterinary Administration in Prague
State Veterinary Administration
Na Kozačce 3, 120 00 Prague 2, Czech Republic

Phone: +420 222 522 126
Fax: +420 224 254 134
E-mail: a.kozak.kvsa@svscr.cz
www.maso-international.cz

Slaughter of cattle, including calves

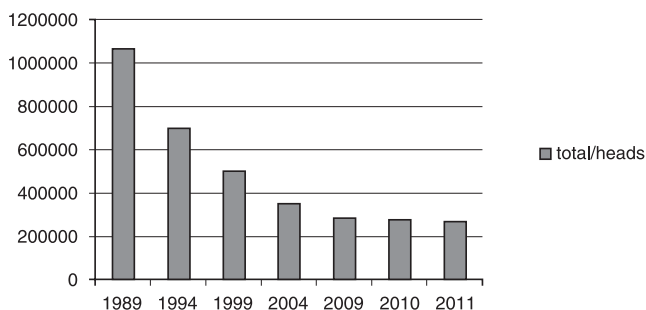


Fig. 1. Total number of slaughtered cattle including calves (period of 1989-2011)

Slaughter of pigs

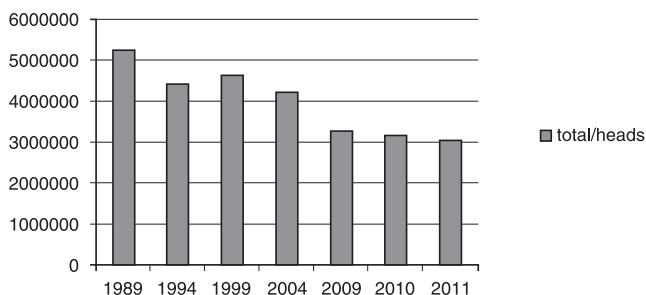


Fig. 2. Total number of pigs (period of 1989-2011)

of slaughtered pigs and this increase peaked in 1998 at 4 720 939 pigs slaughtered. During the period of 2000 to 2003, the total number of pigs slaughtered held at a level of 4.5 million heads per year. In 2004, however, there was a further decline to 4 228 961 heads and in 2005 to 3 804 268 heads. The year 2009 marked a decrease in the number of slaughtered pigs to under 3.5 million (3 289 761 heads). This trend continued into the following years, with a total number of 3 053 433 slaughtered pigs in 2011.

The slaughter of sheep reflects the demand for mutton and its popularity among Czech consumers. In 1989, the total number of slaughtered sheep was 234 806 heads, which was followed by a decline in subsequent years. In 1990 the number of sheep slaughtered dropped to just 156 003 heads, and to 53 670 heads in 1991. The largest decrease in the total number of sheep slaughtered was in 1998, when only 7 101 heads were slaughtered. The following years saw a moderate increase in slaughtered sheep with a peak at 15 624 total slaughtered sheep in 2005. In 2011, there were 12 643 heads of sheep slaughtered.

Slaughter of sheep

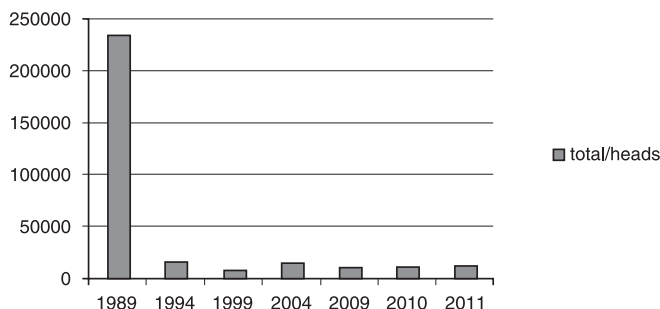


Fig. 3. Total number of slaughtered sheep (period of 1989-2011)

Slaughter of chickens

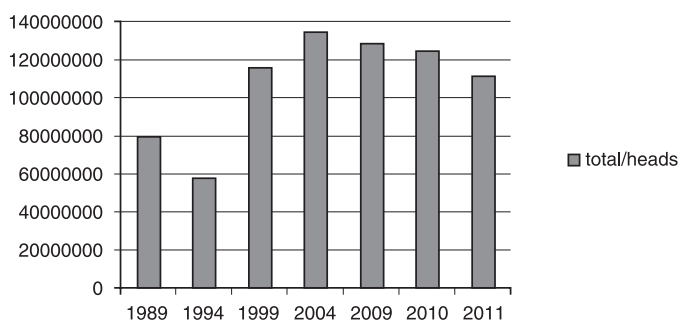


Fig. 4. Total number of slaughtered chickens (period of 1989-2011)

In 1989, there were 79 856 293 chickens slaughtered in the Czech Republic. A smallest amount of chickens slaughtered during the studied period was 58 142 024 in 1994. This was followed in subsequent years by an increased number of slaughtered chickens which peaked in 2002 when 141 777 870 were slaughtered and was the highest number slaughtered in the reference period. The years 2003 to 2005 brought a slight decrease, when the numbers of slaughtered chickens were around 135 000 000 per year. In 2006, the number of slaughtered chickens again climbed to 141 452 119 and has since gradually declined to 111 481 389 slaughtered chickens in 2011. Among other influences on the decline in the slaughter of chickens are imports of poultry meat from other countries, especially Poland. This is meat, however, which may not always meet the highest quality parameters. It is a known fact that poultry in the Czech Republic is air-chilled individually. In Poland, however, many poultry slaughter houses have the obsolete mass water cooling system, where secondary contamination of chilled poultry carcasses after slaughter cannot be eliminated.

Acknowledgement

The data used in the article are taken from the information system of the Central Veterinary Administration of the State Veterinary Administration in Prague.

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