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## LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION IN SALINE COUNTY

Last year, Donis Petersan, an economist with NPPD, completed a report on the importance of livestock to the Saline County economy. The agricultural census data indicates the market value of agricultural products sold in Saline County totaled \$65.7 million in 2002. Considering the per farm value of agricultural products sold, Saline County's average of \$90,268 ranked 83rd among the counties and was less than half the Nebraska per farm average of \$196,609.

Saline County has a value of \$190.62 per acre or ranks 48th among the Nebraska counties in terms of the market value of agriculture products per acre, with \$54.10 of that amount accounted for by livestock and livestock products. Saline County's per acre average for all agricultural products is 9.8 percent less than the Nebraska per acre average of \$211.40.

Cuming County is number one in Nebraska with a value \$1,587 per acre of agricultural products sold. Livestock (mainly cattle and hogs) represented \$1,434 of the total value. Data in the NPPD report indicate that livestock and livestock products are not as important as a source of income for Saline County farmers as is true for Nebraska as a whole. The per farm market value of livestock and livestock products averaged \$25,618 (28.4 percent of the total market value of all agricultural products sold) for Saline County, ranking the county 84th among the Nebraska counties in terms of this measure. The average Saline County per farm value (for livestock and livestock products) was 80 percent less than the average per farm value of \$127,959 for Nebraska as a whole.

The value-added multiplier of 2.58 used in the study indicates for each dollar of value-added in the livestock and livestock products sector in Saline County, we would expect to see an additional \$1.58 of value-added in other sectors of the Saline County economy.

There are an estimated 251 individuals employed in the Saline County livestock products sector producing the output dedicated to sales to final demand (\$29.7 million). When the indirect and induced employment effects are included, employment in the livestock sector is estimated to be 283 workers (and proprietors).

Saline County is not that much different than other counties in SE Nebraska with low livestock economic numbers. Since 1992, the number of hogs on Nebraska farms has dropped from 4 million head to around 2.9 million. That loss in pig numbers represents a lost market of 37 million bushels of corn and 10 million bushels of soybeans, every year. Most significantly, we've lost nearly 76% of our pork producers since 1992. Though we've done no worse than other states in retaining producers, we need to do better at keeping small and mid-size producers. The inventory of 21,000 head of cattle in Saline County is small compared to top counties in livestock output with plus 200,000 head inventories of all cattle.

When livestock facilities are taken out of production, the business activity for selling energy suffers. That is one reason why NPPD is highlighting the importance of livestock to local economies at <http://sites.nppd.com/aglive.htm> The recently released Jefferson County report is now online and is very similar to Saline County's in many respects.



The bottom line is Saline County needs to work hard on retaining existing family farm livestock enterprises by permitting expansion and encouraging new family farm livestock facilities in agriculture because it does matter to our local economy, schools, business and tax base.

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