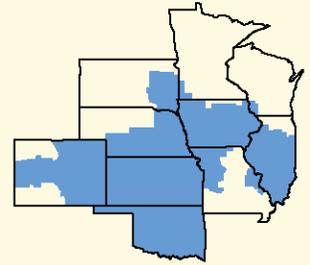


MARCH 2017

Marketing Service

# Bulletin

Facilitating the efficient marketing of milk and dairy products.



**CENTRAL MARKETING AREA**

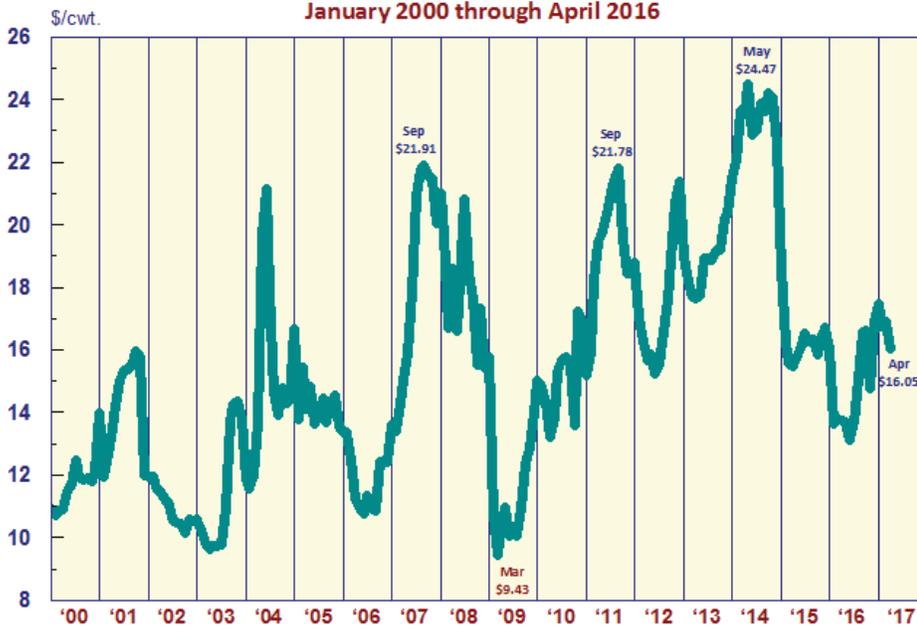


## Federal Milk Order Class I Prices: Record Highs and 30-Year Lows ... plus, Central Order Retail Milk Price Survey Update

Cyclical price fluctuation is a phenomenon common to most segments of production agriculture in the United States, including the dairy industry. “Normal” cyclical price fluctuation, however, may not adequately describe dairy price volatility over the past decade. An examination of Federal order prices indicates an eye-opening \$15.04 per hundredweight spread between the highest and lowest Class I base prices during the last 8 full calendar years. Moreover, extreme peaks and valleys in this price series have occurred over relatively short time spans, as indicated by the graph on this page. For example, the all-time high price (prior to 2014) was \$21.91 recorded for September 2007, but prices plummeted \$12.48 (-57.0%) over the following 18 months, falling to \$9.43 in March 2009. The Class I base price reached near-record highs again just thirty months later, increasing to \$21.78 in September 2011. As indicated by the accompanying graph, a new record high of \$24.47 was reached in May 2014, before prices plummeted over the next two years, falling by nearly 47% to \$13.14 in June 2016. Since last June, the Class I base price rebounded to \$17.45 in January – an increase of nearly 33% -- but has since fallen by \$1.40 to \$16.05 for April.

### Federal Milk Order Class I Base Prices

January 2000 through April 2016



Since last June, the Class I base price rebounded to \$17.45 in January – an increase of nearly 33% -- but has since fallen by \$1.40 to \$16.05 for April.

Federal order Class I prices hit a 30-year low in March 2009 when the base price declined to \$9.43. Prior to this, the lowest post-reform Class I base prices occurred in 2002 and 2003. The most recent month with a price lower than March 2009 was more than 30 years earlier in September 1978 with a Class I base price of \$9.33 per hundredweight.

The “benchmark year” for Federal milk order Class I prices was 2014, with the 11 highest base prices on record occurring during the year. During 2014, the Class I base price averaged \$23.29, or nearly 22% more than the next highest yearly average of \$19.13 recorded in 2011. The average

price in 2015 decreased by nearly 30% compared with 2014, falling to \$16.34. Class I base prices experienced a downturn in early 2016 before rebounding, and have increased during 8 of the last 10 months. The 2016 price averaged \$14.80, which was \$1.54 (-9.4%) less than the previous year.

Dairy producers, processors, and retailers are all affected by Federal order Class I prices. The graphics contained in this bulletin depict monthly Federal order minimum Class I prices along with surveyed\* retail homogenized milk prices for four cities in the Central Order from January 2000 through December 2016.

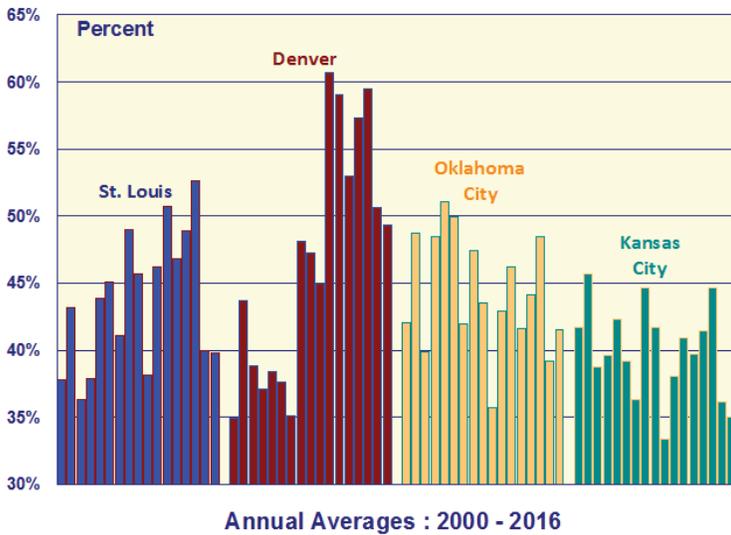
\* The methodology used for the monthly survey of retail prices is detailed on the following page.

Retail fluid dairy prices are surveyed monthly in St. Louis (MO), Denver (CO), Kansas City (MO), and Oklahoma City (OK). The retail prices illustrated in this bulletin are averages for the two largest retail grocery chains and the largest convenience chain. Prices are obtained between the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month, excluding Fridays and weekends, and represent the most common brand in each retail outlet.

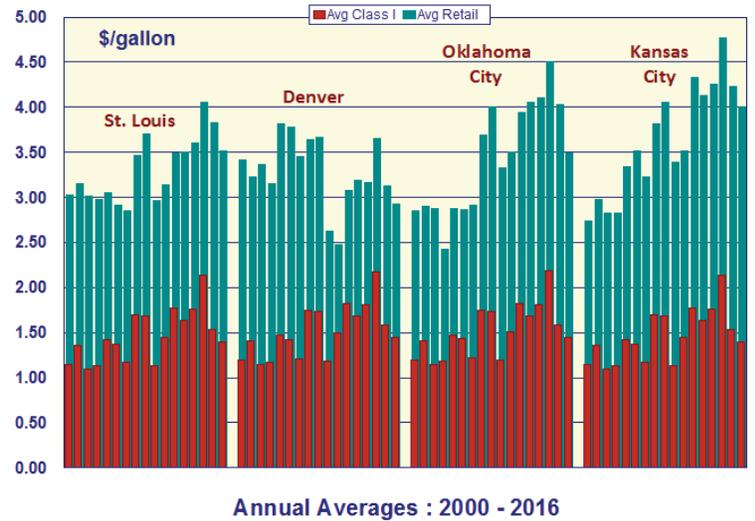
Federal milk order Class I prices represent the minimum dairy producers' share of the retail price. The Class I price in all Federal milk orders is the minimum amount processors must pay for milk utilized in fluid bottling. All Class I prices in this bulletin have been adjusted to a 3.25% butterfat content to correspond with the average butterfat content of homogenized (whole) milk.

The Federal order Class I price does not represent a processor's total milk cost. Additional items associated with fluid milk marketing also need to be considered when calculating the total cost of Class I dairy products. These include items such as: over-order premiums charged by raw milk suppliers; costs associated with processing, packaging, marketing, and sales; profit margins; etc.

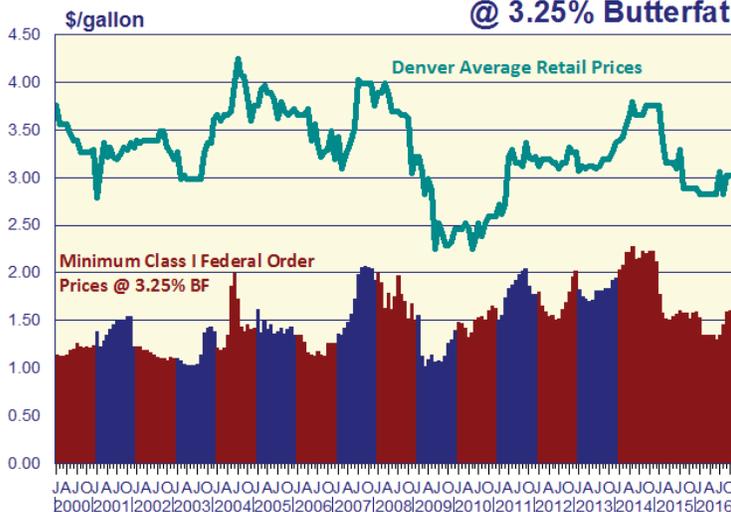
**Minimum Federal Order Class I Price @ 3.25 BF  
As % Of Average Retail Homogenized Milk Price**



**Minimum Federal Order Class I Prices @ 3.25 BF  
versus Retail Homogenized Milk Prices**



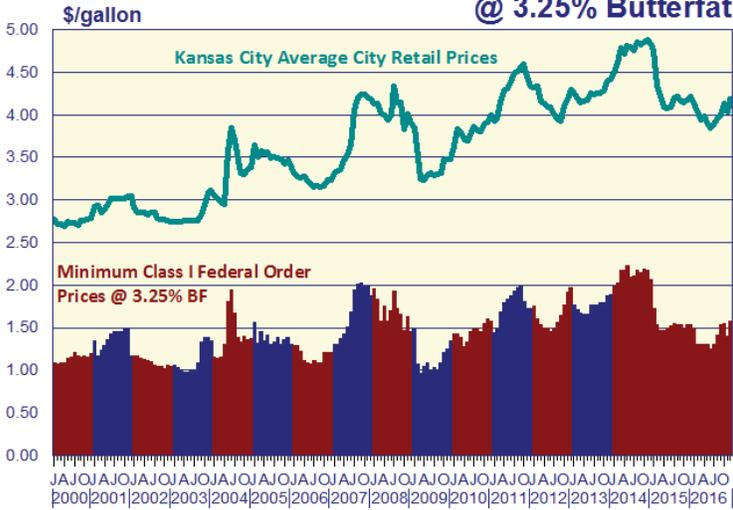
**Denver Homogenized Milk Prices  
@ 3.25% Butterfat**



**Denver Homogenized Milk Prices  
@ 3.25% Butterfat**



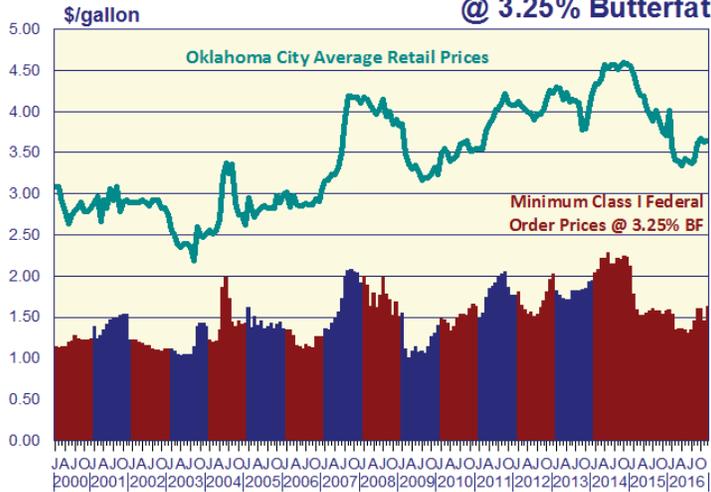
### Kansas City Homogenized Milk Prices @ 3.25% Butterfat



### Kansas City Homogenized Milk Prices @ 3.25% Butterfat



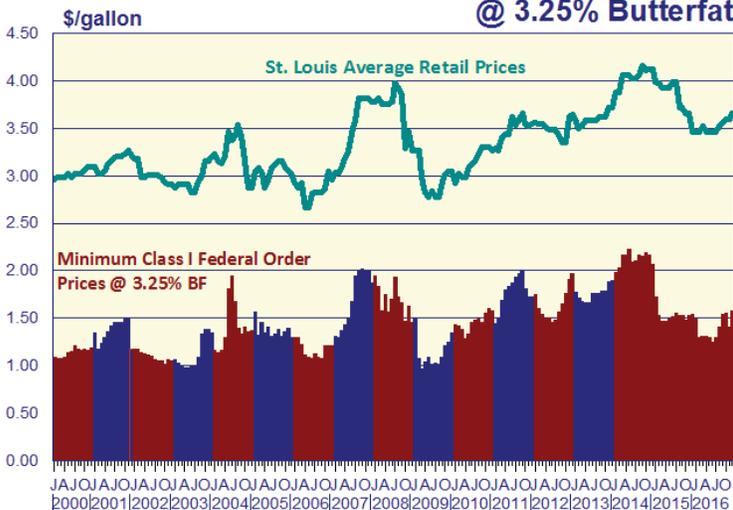
### Oklahoma City Homogenized Milk Prices @ 3.25% Butterfat



### Oklahoma City Homogenized Milk Prices @ 3.25% Butterfat



### St. Louis Homogenized Milk Prices @ 3.25% Butterfat



### St. Louis Homogenized Milk Prices @ 3.25% Butterfat





**United States  
Department of  
Agriculture**

FIRST CLASS  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
OLATHE, KS  
PERMIT NO. 377

**FEDERAL MILK MARKET ADMINISTRATOR**  
P.O. BOX 14650  
SHAWNEE MISSION, KANSAS 66285-4650

**FIRST CLASS**

Website: [www.fmmacentral.com](http://www.fmmacentral.com)  
E-mail: [market.administrator@fmmacentral.com](mailto:market.administrator@fmmacentral.com)  
Phone: 913-495-9300

	Statistical Uniform Price		Producer Price Differential		Class I Utilization	
	<u>Feb '17</u>	<u>Jan '17</u>	<u>Feb '17</u>	<u>Jan '17</u>	<u>Feb '17</u>	<u>Jan '17</u>
Northeast	17.77	18.21	0.89	1.44	31.50	32.57
Appalachian	19.09	20.06	-----	-----	71.16	72.89
Florida	21.07	22.22	-----	-----	83.44	85.71
Southeast	19.36	20.27	-----	-----	68.48	69.76
Upper Midwest	16.94	16.99	0.06	0.22	11.48	11.44
<b>Central</b>	<b>16.83</b>	<b>17.32</b>	<b>-0.05</b>	<b>0.55</b>	<b>31.32</b>	<b>33.97</b>
Mideast	16.92	17.35	0.04	0.58	31.72	32.09
Pacific Northwest	16.58	17.03	-0.30	0.26	26.82	27.89
Southwest	17.57	17.97	0.69	1.20	38.65	27.84
Arizona	16.73	17.36	-----	-----	25.54	24.85

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex (including gender identity and expression), marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs, genetic information, reprisal, or because all or a part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Stop 9410, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410. Or call toll-free at (866) 632-9992 (English) or (800) 877-8339 (TDD) or (866) 377-8642 (English Federal-relay) or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish Federal-relay). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.