

Beef prices sizzling in the U.S.

By David Pierson and Tiffany Hsu, Los Angeles Times

Come grilling season, expect your sirloin steak to come with a hearty side of sticker shock.

Beef prices have reached all-time highs in the U.S. and aren't expected to come down any time soon.

Extreme weather has thinned the nation's beef cattle herds to levels last seen in 1951, when there were about half as many mouths to feed in America.

The retail value of "all-fresh" USDA choice-grade beef jumped to a record \$5.28 a pound in February, up from \$4.91 the same time a year ago. The same grade of beef cost \$3.97 as recently as 2008.

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