

A few thoughts by Michael Sheats/Chief of AMS Agricultural Analytics Division:

Breast meat continues to be the primary chicken cut featured at retail and this is reflected across all types including regular and value pack conventional, ABF, organic, and IQF. Fresh wings seem to be back on the menu and rose in frequency while their frozen counterparts dropped a few notches. Average ad prices are up from 2012. They didn't fare as well in the deli. Interestingly, leg quarters were either unchanged or down from 2012. Could this signal a trend away from whole legs and towards more value added forms like the bnls/sknl thighs? Don't know but it is something to watch and is positive news for the industry as demand rises for dark meat.

As for dark meat, we continue to see the diversion of thighs into bnls/sknl form and away from bone-in. Drums and thighs used to move in lock step but bone-in thighs are dropping in frequency while their boneless form increases. ABF dark parts are increasing in offer with all types moving up in the ranking. This is true for the white meat as well.

In the organic sector, organic bnls/sknl breasts are the top organic items in store ads and growing. Drumsticks and whole bagged fryers moved up in offering as well.

Whole fryers slipped a notch as their ABF counterparts rise in availability. Roasters took a hit dropping 4 places with all but the Northeast contributing to the decline.

Prepared chicken continues to be a consumer favorite. The January 2014 edition of "Progressive Grocer" has the results of a survey they took where they asked, "What are the deli/prepared food items you most frequently purchase at your local supermarket?"

Rotisserie and/or fried chicken was ranked second at 60%, surpassed only by sliced cold cuts at 77%. The third highest item, side dishes was a distant third at 27%. This is supported by the fact that both fried and rotisserie chicken moved up on our list this year. Only deli-prepared wings saw less advertising in 2013.