



7<sup>th</sup> May, 2015

# Media Release

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## Grain fed cattle numbers hold steady

Cattle numbers in Australian feedlots maintained their near record levels for the March 2015 quarter, falling less than 1% to 959,141.

Australian Lot Feeders' Association (ALFA) President, Don Mackay, stated that "the result reflected the ongoing dry conditions in many areas (which made it difficult for grass fed cattle operators to sustain numbers) as well as continued strong demand for Australian beef overseas."

"Small declines in feedlot cattle numbers in the large feedlot states of Queensland and NSW were largely offset by increases in South Australia and Western Australia, whilst capacity utilisation remained at the record level of 84%."

The Eastern Young Cattle Indicator reached an average of 437¢/kg cwt during the March quarter, up 24% from the December quarter and 46% year-on-year, becoming the highest nominal quarterly average on record.

Importantly, despite high feeder cattle prices, strong export demand continued to encourage lot feeders to maintain cattle numbers on feed.

The March quarter saw Darling Downs grain prices fall by up to 12% year-on-year, yet prices remained reasonably similar when compared to the previous quarter. Darling Downs wheat averaged \$312/tonne, back 10% year-on-year. Sorghum averaged \$292/tonne, back 12% year-on-year, while barley averaged \$303/tonne, back 9%.

Meat & Livestock Australia's Manager, Market Information and NLRS, Ben Thomas, stated that during the March quarter, 60,394 tonnes swt of grain fed beef was exported, back 7% on the December quarter but up 15% year-on-year.

Grain fed beef export results for individual export markets were again mixed with Japan, Europe and the US up 32%, 5% and 114% year-on-year (to 35,704, 3,802 and 3,550 swt respectively) while Korea, China and the Middle East were down 6%, 48% and 22% (to 8,101, 3,030 and 2,158).

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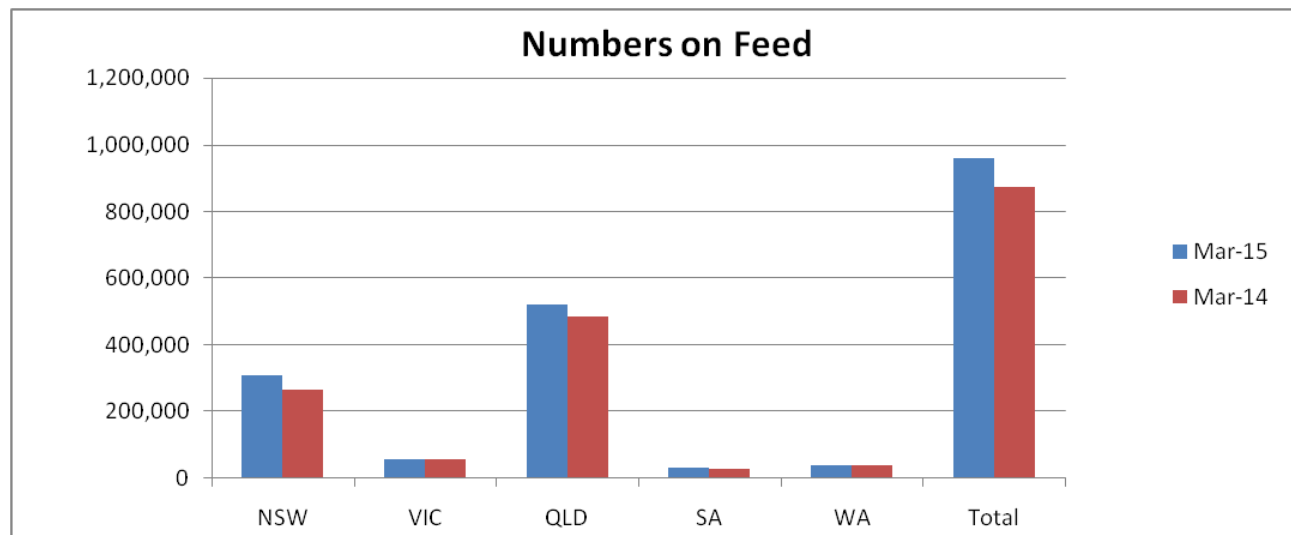
**ALFA / MLA FEEDLOT SURVEY**  
**Jan – Mar 2015**

**Cattle numbers on feed, capacity and capacity utilisation**

<b>Numbers on Feed</b>	<b>NSW</b>	<b>VIC</b>	<b>QLD</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>WA</b>	<b>Total</b>
Mar-15	308,274	58,582	519,248	33,108	39,929	<b>959,141</b>
Dec-14	315,863	60,394	522,997	31,033	34,682	<b>964,968</b>
Mar-14	265,227	57,804	484,534	27,398	38,821	<b>873,783</b>

<b>Capacity</b>	<b>NSW</b>	<b>VIC</b>	<b>QLD</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>WA</b>	<b>Total</b>
Mar-15	365,483	71,272	614,786	40,130	55,324	<b>1,146,995</b>
Dec-14	360,075	76,137	606,021	41,995	58,649	<b>1,142,877</b>
Mar-14	358,242	76,325	597,880	26,499	48,728	<b>1,107,674</b>

<b>Utilisation</b>	<b>NSW</b>	<b>VIC</b>	<b>QLD</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>WA</b>	<b>Total</b>
Mar-15	84%	82%	84%	83%	72%	<b>84%</b>
Dec-14	88%	79%	86%	74%	59%	<b>84%</b>
Mar-14	74%	76%	81%	103%	80%	<b>79%</b>



**Total Cattle Turnoff**

<b>Total Turnoff (year ending)</b>	<b>NSW</b>	<b>VIC</b>	<b>QLD</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>WA</b>	<b>Total</b>
Dec-14	783,132	183,510	1,577,009	85,406	66,938	<b>2,695,995</b>
Dec-13	675,353	161,378	1,581,591	87,291	117,377	<b>2,622,990</b>
Dec-12	610,687	156,573	1,566,232	104,681	67,077	<b>2,505,250</b>
Dec-11	665,278	220,082	1,402,924	101,822	55,026	<b>2,445,132</b>
Dec-10	634,526	207,305	1,468,631	110,831	112,318	<b>2,533,611</b>
Dec-09	587,444	161,614	1,374,959	77,281	130,601	<b>2,331,899</b>

**ALFA / MLA FEEDLOT SURVEY**  
**Jan – Mar 2015**

<b>Total Turnoff (quarterly)</b>	<b>NSW</b>	<b>VIC</b>	<b>QLD</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>WA</b>	<b>Total</b>
Mar-15	214,949	37,489	419,993	32,525	20,255	<b>725,211</b>
Dec-14	206,792	56,976	434,224	25,593	8,006	<b>731,591</b>
Mar-14	192,761	36,941	377,690	18,081	16,432	<b>641,905</b>

**State Breakdown by Feedlot Size**

	<b>Capacity Mar 15</b>	<b>Capacity Dec 14</b>	<b>Capacity Mar 14</b>	<b>Numbers on Feed Mar 15</b>	<b>Numbers on Feed Dec 14</b>	<b>Numbers on Feed Mar 14</b>
<b><i>New South Wales</i></b>						
Less than 500 head	5,442	5,222	5,189	4,251	3,348	3,715
500 -1000 head	24,749	23,247	24,404	15,071	14,085	14,120
1000 - 10000 head	104,179	100,004	112,076	88,601	94,304	84,433
over 10000 head	231,113	231,602	216,573	200,351	204,126	162,959
<b>State Total</b>	<b>365,483</b>	<b>360,075</b>	<b>358,242</b>	<b>308,274</b>	<b>315,863</b>	<b>265,227</b>
<b><i>Queensland</i></b>						
Less than 500 head	27,754	26,780	27,147	11,653	9,397	8,859
500 -1000 head	37,736	35,097	37,089	18,770	18,001	21,734
1000 - 10000 head	206,950	235,841	225,632	169,969	201,220	154,789
over 10000 head	342,345	308,303	308,012	318,856	294,380	299,152
<b>State Total</b>	<b>614,786</b>	<b>606,021</b>	<b>597,880</b>	<b>519,248</b>	<b>522,997</b>	<b>484,534</b>
<b><i>Victoria</i></b>						
Less than 500 head	0	0	0	0	0	0
500 -1000 head	7,918	8,637	7,773	7,543	8,637	9,752
1000 - 10000 head	23,354	29,500	28,552	20,193	26,154	18,809
over 10000 head	40,000	38,000	40,000	30,846	25,603	29,243
<b>State Total</b>	<b>71,272</b>	<b>76,137</b>	<b>76,325</b>	<b>58,582</b>	<b>60,394</b>	<b>57,804</b>
<b><i>South Australia</i></b>						
Less than 500 head	1,992	2,154	1,530	1,410	1,647	1,348
500 -1000 head	4,540	4,540	4,540	2,300	2,697	2,861
1000 - 10000 head	33,599	35,301	20,429	29,398	26,688	23,188
over 10000 head	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>State Total</b>	<b>40,130</b>	<b>41,995</b>	<b>26,499</b>	<b>33,108</b>	<b>31,033</b>	<b>27,398</b>
<b><i>Western Australia</i></b>						
Less than 500 head	8,194	3,178	3,928	2,546	1,199	7,802
500 -1000 head	6,930	7,787	7,300	4,495	3,278	3,119
1000 - 10000 head	40,200	47,684	37,500	32,888	30,206	27,900
over 10000 head	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>State Total</b>	<b>55,324</b>	<b>58,649</b>	<b>48,728</b>	<b>39,929</b>	<b>34,682</b>	<b>38,821</b>
<b><i>Australia</i></b>						
Less than 500 head	43,381	37,335	37,794	19,860	15,590	21,724
500 -1000 head	81,874	79,307	81,106	48,179	46,698	51,587
1000 - 10000 head	408,282	448,330	424,189	341,048	378,572	309,119
over 10000 head	613,458	577,905	564,585	550,053	524,108	491,354
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,146,995</b>	<b>1,142,877</b>	<b>1,107,674</b>	<b>959,141</b>	<b>964,968</b>	<b>873,783</b>

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