



# Media Release

16 May 2018

## Cattle on feed bounce back

Cattle on feed for the January – March 2018 quarter increased 52,506 head, or 5% from the December quarter according to the latest feedlot survey results released by the Australian Lot Feeders' Association (ALFA) and Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) today.

Total cattle on feed reached 1,025,682 head representing the second highest level ever recorded, and 12% above the five year average for this time of year.

Queensland experienced the greatest rate of change with an additional 42,782 head coming onto feed in Queensland feedlots; whilst more moderate increases were seen in South Australia (10,617) and New South Wales (3,483). Small reductions occurred in Victoria (1,439) and Western Australia (2,937).

ALFA President, Tess Herbert said that the results were not surprising given the extended period of particularly dry weather for much of mainland south-eastern Australia over the quarter - the seventh-driest such period on record for that part of the country.

"Queensland and NSW have experienced challenging seasonal conditions resulting in more cattle moving into the feedlot production system," Mrs Herbert said.

"The feedlot production system has cemented itself as an integral part of the branded beef movement, with a reputation for consistently delivering high quality beef to consumers. Despite the rise of branded beef programs it's important to remember that our production system also plays an important role in managing variable seasonal conditions for the beef supply chain."

"The winners are consumers of Australian beef who will continue to have access to consistent, high quality product despite the ongoing tough seasonal conditions," Mrs Herbert said.

Scott Tolmie, MLA's Manager of Market Intelligence, said that the poor seasonal conditions dictated a reduction in store cattle prices, an increase in feed grain prices, whilst prices for finished cattle remained stable.

"The prolonged lack of rain across south-eastern Australia increased destocking rates and subdued restocker activity which contributed to yarded cattle prices softening over the quarter. The national saleyard feeder steer indicator dropped 6% (17c) over the March quarter averaging out at 290¢/kg lwt," Mr Tolmie said.

"The lack of moisture across the Eastern states added pressure to feed grain prices which increased 6% on the last quarter; following increased competition from graziers, lot feeders and grain traders all trying to secure tonnage. Wheat ex-Darling Downs averaged \$330/tonne, while barley averaged \$328/tonne, an increase of 39% and 55% year-on-year, respectively," Mr Tolmie said.

"On a brighter note, the Queensland 100-day grain fed steer over-the-hook (OTH) indicator remained relatively stable only dropping 1% (5c) lower than the December quarter and averaging 501¢/kg cwt during the March quarter," Mr Tolmie said.

For more information:

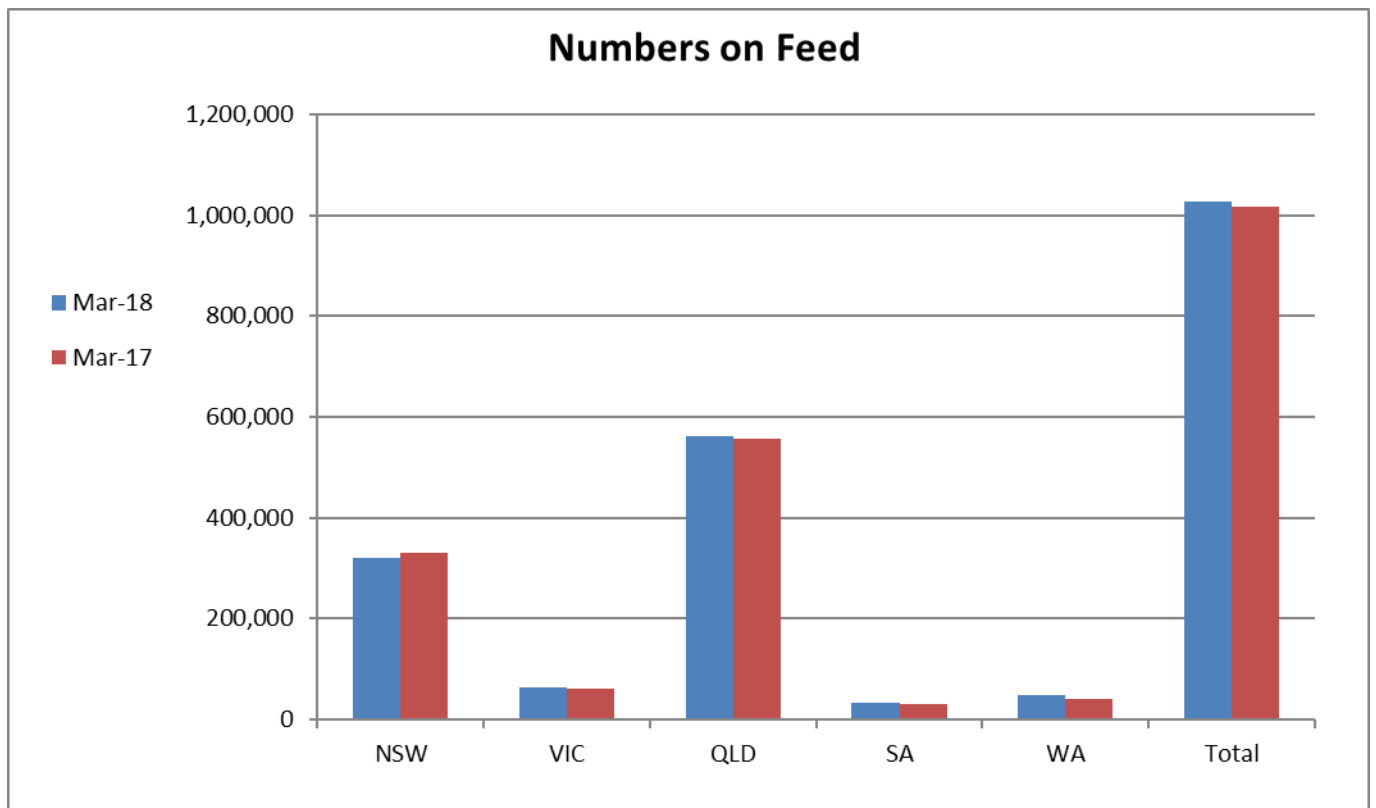
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**ALFA / MLA FEEDLOT SURVEY**  
**Jan - Mar 2018**

**Cattle Numbers on Feed**

<b>Numbers on Feed</b>	<b>NSW</b>	<b>VIC</b>	<b>QLD</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>WA</b>	<b>Total</b>
Mar-18	320,897	64,322	561,531	31,576	47,356	<b>1,025,682</b>
Dec-17	317,414	65,761	518,749	20,959	50,293	<b>973,176</b>
Mar-17	329,170	60,008	556,886	29,864	40,548	<b>1,016,475</b>



**Total Cattle Turnoff**

<b>Total Turnoff (quarterly)</b>	<b>NSW</b>	<b>VIC</b>	<b>QLD</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>WA</b>	<b>Total</b>
Mar-18	195,004	40,865	391,388	17,696	29,022	<b>673,976</b>
Dec-17	203,024	42,012	401,886	14,169	47,743	<b>708,834</b>
Mar-17	219,141	35,909	397,154	5,985	40,008	<b>698,199</b>

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	Numbers on Feed Mar 18	Numbers on Feed Dec 17	Numbers on Feed Mar 17
<b>New South Wales</b>			
Less than 500 head	693	1,333	1,500
500 -1000 head	7,081	34,244	10,078
1000 - 10000 head	112,797	82,502	94,312
over 10000 head	200,326	199,335	223,280
<b>State Total</b>	<b>320,897</b>	<b>317,414</b>	<b>329,170</b>
<b>Queensland</b>			
Less than 500 head	6,652	3,298	9,253
500 -1000 head	12,880	10,923	12,896
1000 - 10000 head	176,002	149,894	167,738
over 10000 head	365,997	354,635	366,998
<b>State Total</b>	<b>561,531</b>	<b>518,749</b>	<b>556,886</b>
<b>Victoria</b>			
500 -1000 head	4,236	4,316	4,408
1000 - 10000 head	19,339	21,024	21,700
over 10000 head	40,747	40,421	33,900
<b>State Total</b>	<b>64,322</b>	<b>65,761</b>	<b>60,008</b>
<b>South Australia</b>			
Less than 500 head	1,388	1,163	624
500 -1000 head	0	0	1,602
1000 - 10000 head	17,688	7,296	12,638
over 10000 head	12,500	12,500	15,000
<b>State Total</b>	<b>31,576</b>	<b>20,959</b>	<b>29,864</b>
<b>Western Australia</b>			
Less than 500 head	3,259	2,181	2,971
500 -1000 head	5,208	11,797	4,640
1000 - 10000 head	38,889	36,316	32,936
<b>State Total</b>	<b>47,356</b>	<b>50,293</b>	<b>40,548</b>
<b>Australia</b>			
Less than 500 head	11,993	7,975	14,348
500 -1000 head	29,404	61,279	33,624
1000 - 10000 head	364,716	297,031	329,324
over 10000 head	619,570	606,890	639,178
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,025,682</b>	<b>973,176</b>	<b>1,016,475</b>

<b>Total Capacity</b>	<b>NSW</b>	<b>VIC</b>	<b>QLD</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>WA</b>	<b>Total</b>
Mar-18	397,363	76,552	707,066	40,937	70,752	<b>1,292,670</b>
Dec-17	394,863	73,552	709,999	40,937	74,272	<b>1,293,623</b>
Mar-17	389,662	74,652	667,432	40,307	67,777	<b>1,239,830</b>

Source: Feedlot Capacity figures are provided by AUS-MEAT Limited (AUS-MEAT). AUS-MEAT owns and administers the National Feedlot Accreditation Scheme (NFAS) on behalf of ALFA and the feedlot sector. Actual Feedlot Capacity figures are reported under the NFAS.

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