

A record number of cattle on feed to start 2022

The early supply chain disruptions of 2022, including COVID-19 and floods, have not impacted the continued growth and strength of Australia's feedlot sector, according to the recent results of the ALFA and Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) survey.

In the first quarter of 2022, the lot feeding sector broke two new records.

The first record broken was the number of cattle on feed – there are now more cattle on feed in Australia than any other time in history.

At the end of March 2022, there were 1,269,927 cattle on feed in Australia, an increase of 109,936 on the December 2021 quarter. This new record is 30,364 head higher than the previous record set in Q4 2019, when Australia was in the middle of its worst drought.

Australian Lot Feeders' Association President Barb Madden said these record numbers of cattle on feed have been achieved in a herd rebuild environment when feeder cattle prices are high and livestock supply is tight.

"Historically, we have seen high cattle on feed numbers coincide with drought periods, however these latest results indicate that the feedlot industry continues to support beef production despite favourable seasonal conditions experienced across most of Australia," Ms Madden said.

"These latest records are welcomed and point to continued long-term confidence in the grain feeding production system, however lot feeders are closely monitoring the current strong global grain market and impact COVID-19 has had on commodity supply chain logistics here domestically."

The second record the feedlot sector hit in Q1 2022 was industry capacity.

During this time, capacity reached 1,485,714 – an increase of 32,134 head on the prior quarter – which was the previous record.

"Nationally, feedlot capacity continues to grow incrementally, reinforcing the long-term confidence and investment in the industry," MLA Market Information Manager Steve Bignell said.

"Capacity keeps climbing as projects come online and utilisation has remained strong, indicating that lot feeders have filled the additional pens being built.

"In Q1 2022, national utilisation hit 85%, up from 80% in December 2021."

Mr Bignell said Western Australia had the biggest jump in numbers on feed, increasing by 83%, which was in line with WA's seasonal trends during this time of year and capacity increased 27% as new projects came online.

"South Australian feedlot capacity also increased by 10% in the first three months of the year to 58,914 head," Mr Bignell said.

"The growth in capacity and sustained levels of utilisation, despite high feeder cattle prices, points to the importance the grain feeding production system has in Australia's ability to service demand for high quality Australian beef."

There was also significant growth in feedlot numbers in Queensland, with an increase of 58,736 head (8.6%) to 748,135 in quarter one. Mr Bignell said the growth in cattle on feed in Queensland showed that despite slaughter and yardings being subdued for the year, producers were still selling cattle to feedlots in large numbers.

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NUMBERS ON FEED

Quarter	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	Total
Mar-22	340,295	62,575	748,135	45,498	73,424	1,269,927
Dec-21	330,977	55,326	689,399	44,096	40,193	1,159,991
Mar-21	311,957	57,594	542,176	36,526	56,782	1,005,035

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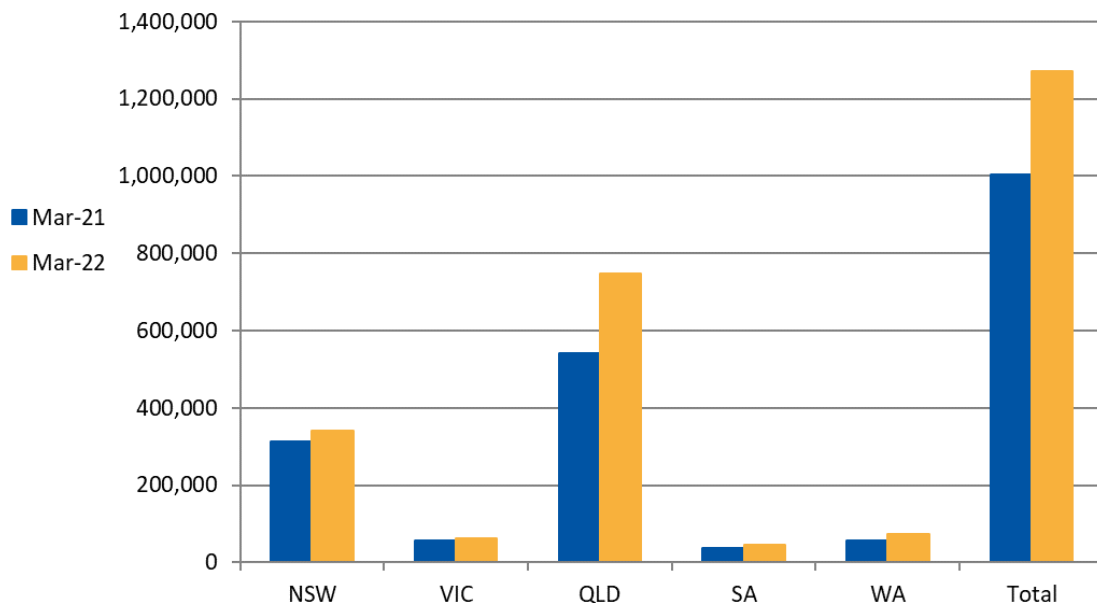
Quarter	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	Total
Mar-22	189,886	44,350	442,307	28,932	36,848	742,323
Dec-21	175,266	38,153	475,175	18,970	18,505	726,069
Mar-21	219,087	47,089	321,600	26,256	51,504	665,536

CAPACITY

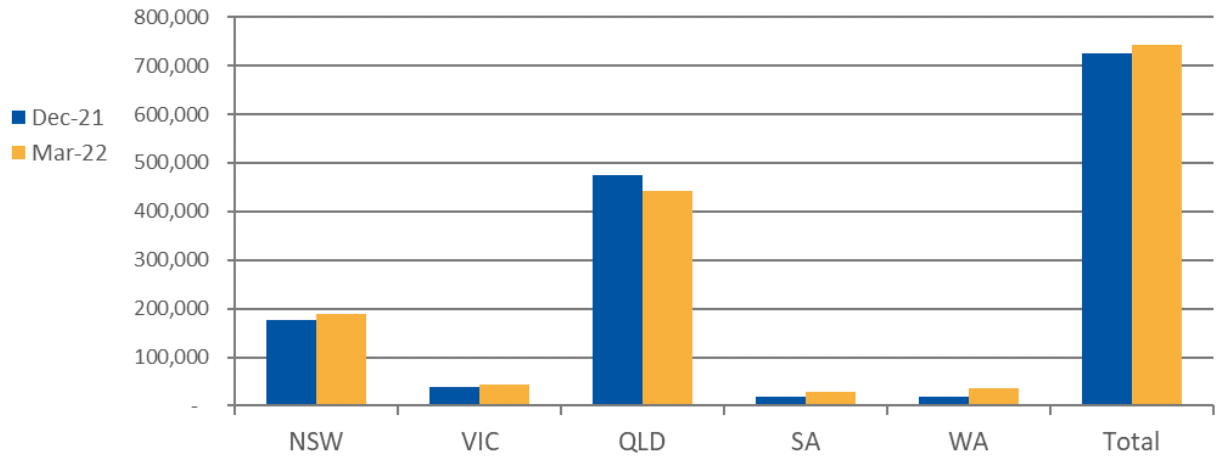
Quarter	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	Total
Mar-22	429,543	78,892	825,738	58,914	92,627	1,485,714
Dec-21	421,863	78,892	826,284	53,414	73,127	1,453,580
Mar-21	411,274	79,392	832,725	53,614	73,477	1,450,482

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.

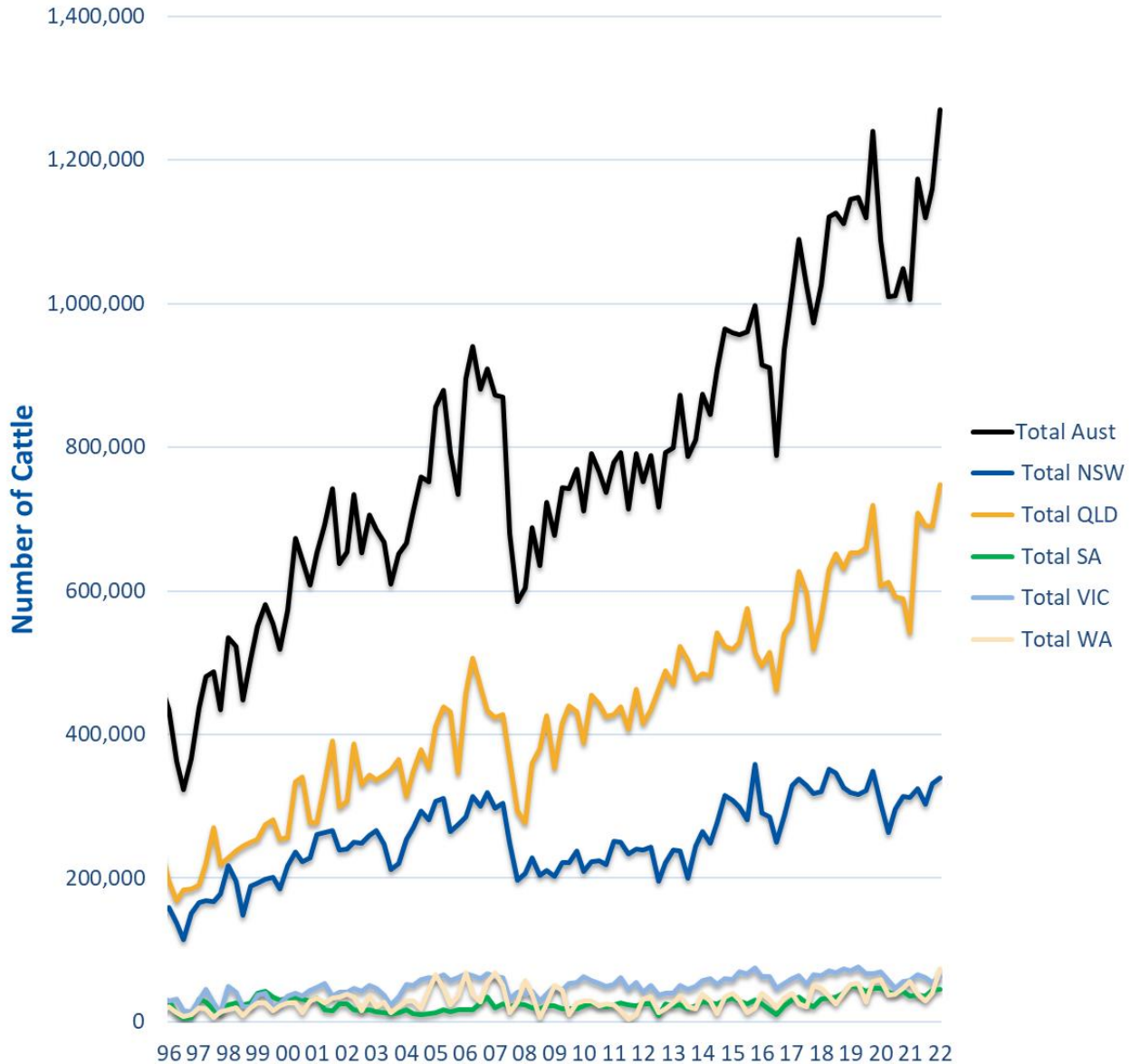
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CATTLE NUMBERS ON FEED - HISTORIC



	Numbers on Feed Mar 22	Numbers on Feed Dec 21	Numbers on Feed Mar 21
New South Wales			
Less than 500 head	0	0	680
500 -1000 head	7,061	8,755	11,112
1001 - 10,000 head	118,481	108,023	91,788
over 10,000 head	214,753	214,199	208,377
State Total	340,295	330,977	311,957
Queensland			
Less than 500 head	4,617	4,076	4,744
500 -1000 head	14,413	14,345	15,742
1001 - 10,000 head	182,925	146,750	150,201
over 10,000 head	546,180	524,228	371,489
State Total	748,135	689,399	542,176
Victoria			
Less than 500 head	0	0	0
500 -1000 head	4,071	4,054	4,582
1001 - 10,000 head	19,205	15,370	21,755
over 10,000 head	39,299	35,902	31,257
State Total	62,575	55,326	57,594
South Australia			
Less than 500 head	517	580	960
500 -1000 head	4,752	4,387	3,495
1001 - 10,000 head	20,593	22,629	14,702
over 10,000 head	19,636	16,500	17,369
State Total	45,498	44,096	36,526
Western Australia			
Less than 500 head	2,383	999	2,379
500 -1000 head	3,986	1,760	4,798
1001 - 10,000 head	56,552	37,434	49,605
over 10,000 head	10,503	0	0
State Total	73,424	40,193	56,782
Australia			
Less than 500 head	7,517	5,655	8,763
500 -1000 head	34,283	33,301	39,729
1001 - 10,000 head	397,756	330,206	328,051
over 10,000 head	830,371	790,829	628,492
Total	1,269,927	1,159,991	1,005,035

Note: Due to rounding, numbers presented throughout this document may not add up to the totals.