Media Release

16th February, 2015

Grain fed cattle numbers rise again

Cattle numbers in Australian feedlots rose again for the December quarter to the highest level on record.

The 6% increase to 965,000 was the third consecutive quarterly rise eclipsing the previous record of 940,000 experienced in the June 2006 quarter.

Australian Lot Feeders' Association (ALFA) President, Don Mackay, stated that "whilst good rain had fallen since the December quarter expired, the results still largely reflected the dry conditions in many areas which made it difficult for grass fed cattle operators to sustain numbers."

"The result also reflected the ongoing strong demand for Australian beef overseas and processors desire to shore up cattle requirements during the traditionally quiet January period."

"Increases in cattle numbers were witnessed in all feedlot states with the exception of Queensland. Utilisation of available feedlot capacity at 84% was also a record, exceeding the previous mark of 83% also in 2006."

"Yearling steers (330-400kg, C2) trended dearer for the quarter with a 15% year-on-year rise, averaging 198¢/kg lwt nationally."

"Average December quarter grain prices were mixed with wheat on the Darling Downs back 1% on the previous quarter but up 4% year-on-year while Riverina barley was 23% dearer than the same period last year, averaging $258/tonne."

Meat & Livestock Australia's Manager, Market Information and NLRS, Ben Thomas, stated that "grain fed beef exports for 2014 totalled 230,689 tonnes swt in volume, up 10% on 2013 levels on the back of a decline in world cattle inventories and a lower Australian dollar."

Grain fed beef exports results for 2014 were mixed with Japan, Korea and the EU up 12% (to 130,646 tonnes swt), 15% (to 32,626 tonnes swt) and 43% (to 16,483 tonnes swt) respectively whilst China and the Middle East were down 35% (to 13,443 tonnes swt) and 13% (to 9,087).

For further information:

Don Mackay
President - ALFA
Mob: 0408 482 737

Dougal Gordon
Chief Executive Director - ALFA
Ph: (02) 9290-3700
Mob: 0414 495 368

Ben Thomas
Manager, Market Information
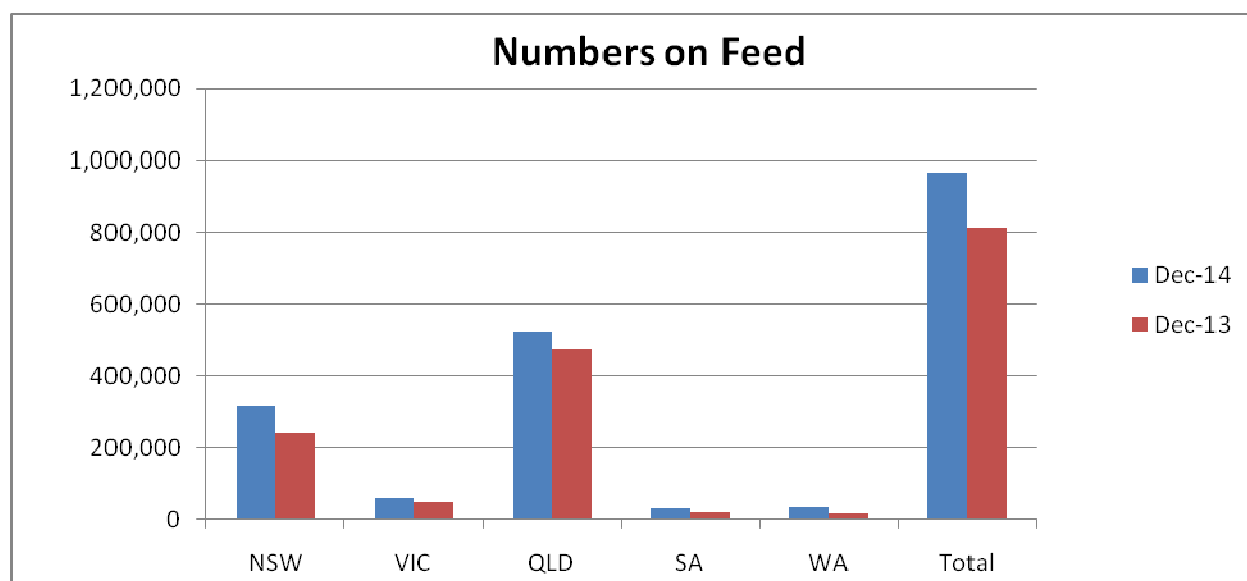and NLRS - MLA
Ph: (02) 9463 9283

ALFA / MLA FEEDLOT SURVEY
Oct – Dec 2014

Cattle numbers on feed, capacity and capacity utilisation

Numbers on Feed	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	Total
Dec-14	315,863	60,394	522,997	31,033	34,682	964,968
Sep-14	277,874	51,612	542,316	24,893	11,423	908,118
Dec-13	245,229	49,050	476,033	21,726	18,367	810,405

Capacity	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	Total
Dec-14	360,075	76,137	606,021	41,995	58,649	1,142,877
Sep-14	377,496	69,898	624,045	24,893	38,128	1,134,460
Dec-13	368,104	74,547	589,005	28,231	76,955	1,136,842

Utilisation	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	Total
Dec-14	88%	79%	86%	74%	59%	84%
Sep-14	74%	74%	87%	100%	30%	80%
Dec-13	67%	66%	81%	77%	24%	71%

Total Cattle Turnoff

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

ALFA / MLA FEEDLOT SURVEY
Oct – Dec 2014

Total Turnoff (quarterly)	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	Total
Dec-14	206,792	56,976	434,224	25,593	8,006	**731,591**
Sep-14	201,855	40,291	368,830	17,389	20,193	**648,557**
Dec-13	146,528	34,090	411,703	18,269	5,883	**616,473**

State Breakdown by Feedlot Size

	Capacity Dec 14	Capacity Sep 14	Capacity Dec 13	Numbers on Feed Dec 14	Numbers on Feed Sep 14	Numbers on Feed Dec 13
New South Wales						
Less than 500 head	5,222	7,784	7,925	3,348	5,189	4,290
500 -1000 head	23,247	24,811	13,297	14,085	8,706	4,960
1000 - 10000 head	100,004	112,076	82,876	94,304	91,001	46,835
over 10000 head	231,602	232,826	264,006	204,126	172,977	189,144
State Total	*360,075*	*377,496*	*368,104*	*315,863*	*277,874*	*245,229*
Queensland						
Less than 500 head	26,780	25,225	34,407	9,397	13,747	10,475
500 -1000 head	35,097	36,290	34,754	18,001	17,373	10,640
1000 - 10000 head	235,841	238,374	204,023	201,220	199,300	161,579
over 10000 head	308,303	324,156	315,821	294,380	311,896	293,339
State Total	*606,021*	*624,045*	*589,005*	*522,997*	*542,316*	*476,033*
Victoria						
Less than 500 head	0	0	4,768	0	0	2,795
500 -1000 head	8,637	7,773	999	8,637	7,773	0
1000 - 10000 head	29,500	22,125	34,551	26,154	15,271	19,438
over 10000 head	38,000	40,000	34,229	25,603	28,568	26,817
State Total	*76,137*	*69,898*	*74,547*	*60,394*	*51,612*	*49,050*
South Australia						
Less than 500 head	2,154	2,183	5,315	1,647	2,183	2,296
500 -1000 head	4,540	0	1,017	2,697	0	0
1000 - 10000 head	35,301	22,710	21,899	26,688	22,710	19,430
over 10000 head	0	0	0	0	0	0
State Total	*41,995*	*24,893*	*28,231*	*31,033*	*24,893*	*21,726*
Western Australia						
Less than 500 head	3,178	2,828	8,231	1,199	88	964
500 -1000 head	7,787	0	7,300	3,278	0	1,862
1000 - 10000 head	47,684	35,300	61,424	30,206	11,335	15,541
over 10000 head	0	0	0	0	0	0
State Total	*58,649*	*38,128*	*76,955*	*34,682*	*11,423*	*18,367*
Australia						
Less than 500 head	37,335	38,019	60,646	15,590	21,207	20,820
500 -1000 head	79,307	68,874	57,367	46,698	33,852	17,462
1000 - 10000 head	448,330	430,585	404,773	378,572	339,618	262,823
over 10000 head	577,905	596,982	614,056	524,108	513,441	509,300
Total	*1,142,877*	*1,134,460*	*1,136,842*	*964,968*	*908,118*	*810,405*

ALFA / MLA FEEDLOT SURVEY
Oct – Dec 2014

Cattle no's on feed over time