Media Release

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Cattle on feed close 2015 at record levels

Cattle in Australian feedlots reached record levels in the final quarter of 2015 with 997,765 head on feed.

Australian Lot Feeders' Association (ALFA) President, Tess Herbert said that the increase was driven by more cattle in the large NSW feedlots, which offset a small decline in Queensland.

Ms Herbert said that the results reflected the decrease in the Australian dollar and grain prices, "The Australian dollar averaged 72US¢ in the December quarter, which is a 16% year-on-year decline".

"At the same time, Darling Downs wheat averaged $281 per tonne, back 11%, and sorghum decreased 8%, to average $270 per tonne for the last three months of the year," Ms Herbert said.

Meat and Livestock Australia's (MLA) Manager of Market Information, Ben Thomas, observed the strong demand for grainfed beef, "December quarter grainfed beef shipments were on par with the previous record volume set in 2006, with a little over 69,100 tonnes swt exported."

"Japan continued to be the dominant market for Australian grainfed beef, taking just over 52% of Australian shipments for the quarter."

"Korean exports continued to grow during the quarter, with 13,000 tonnes swt exported over the three months, up 40% year-on-year."

Mr Thomas also explained that strong international demand resulted in solid cattle prices throughout the December quarter.

"Whilst the Queensland 100-day grain fed steer over-the-hook indicator finished the year below where it peaked at the end of September, it averaged 557¢/kg cwt during the quarter, up 133¢/kg cwt year-on-year," Mr Thomas said.

Ms Herbert said that it was expected that the first quarter of 2016 will more than likely see a decreased number on feed, "due to the high cattle prices and tighter supply."

-Ends -

For more information:

Polly Bennett	Tess Herbert	Ben Thomas
Chief Executive Officer – ALFA	President – ALFA	Manager, Market Information – MLA
E: polly.bennett@feedlots.com.au	E: tess_herbert@gundamain.com.au	E: bthomas@mla.com.au
P: (02) 9290 3700	P: (02) 6859 2784	P: (02) 9463 9283

Cattle numbers on feed, capacity and capacity utilisation

Numbers on Feed	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	Total
Dec-15	358,068	75,387	513,969	30,738	19,603	**997,765**
Sep-15	281,960	66,735	575,242	24,371	13,020	**961,328**
Dec-14	315,863	60,394	522,997	31,033	34,682	**964,968**

Capacity	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	Total
Dec-15	409,571	85,344	658,510	39,619	45,694	**1,238,739**
Sep-15	365,349	77,538	628,981	28,849	50,500	**1,151,216**
Dec-14	360,075	76,137	606,021	41,995	58,649	**1,142,877**

Utilisation	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	Total
Dec-15	87%	88%	78%	78%	43%	**81%**
Sep-15	77%	86%	91%	84%	26%	**84%**
Dec-14	88%	79%	86%	74%	59%	**84%**
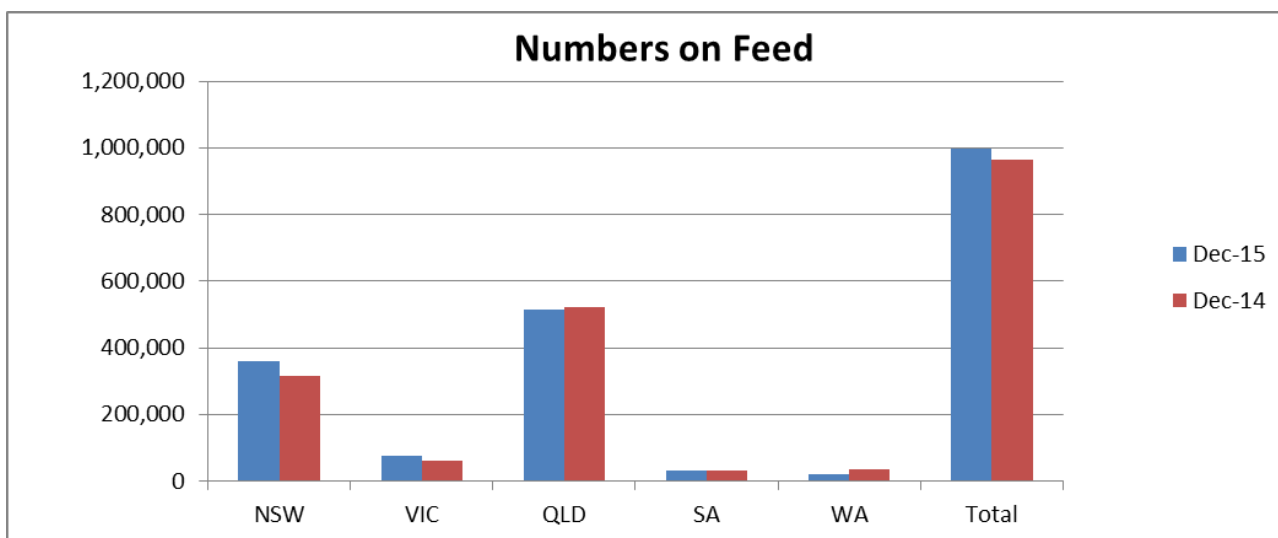
Total Cattle Turnoff

Total Turnoff (year ending)	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	Total
Dec-15	846,299	216,859	1,672,053	85,854	79,424	**2,900,488**
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**

Source: ALFA / MLA, December 2015, National Accredited Feedlot Survey

ALFA / MLA FEEDLOT SURVEY
Oct – Dec 2015

Total Turnoff (quarterly)	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	Total
Dec-15	210,286	60,765	399,377	21,946	6,693	**699,067**
Sep-15	212,160	53,205	492,086	8,284	19,846	**785,580**
Dec-14	206,792	56,976	434,224	25,593	8,006	**731,591**

State Breakdown by Feedlot Size

	Capacity Dec 15	Capacity Sep 15	Capacity Dec 14	Numbers on Feed Dec 15	Numbers on Feed Sep 15	Numbers on Feed Dec 14
New South Wales						
Less than 500 head	4,777	6,160	5,222	3,514	4,758	3,348
500 -1000 head	25,871	24,824	23,247	11,248	11,892	14,085
1000 - 10000 head	122,529	105,556	100,004	113,575	82,825	94,304
over 10000 head	256,394	228,809	231,602	229,730	182,485	204,126
State Total	*409,571*	*365,349*	*360,075*	*358,068*	*281,960*	*315,863*
Queensland						
Less than 500 head	22,529	24,398	26,780	5,492	14,269	9,397
500 -1000 head	64,358	37,472	35,097	9,468	21,826	18,001
1000 - 10000 head	212,144	213,065	235,841	157,935	198,784	201,220
over 10000 head	359,479	354,046	308,303	341,074	340,363	294,380
State Total	*658,510*	*628,981*	*606,021*	*513,969*	*575,242*	*522,997*
Victoria						
500 -1000 head	9,051	8,038	8,637	7,518	6,529	8,637
1000 - 10000 head	28,293	29,500	29,500	26,937	29,500	26,154
over 10000 head	48,000	40,000	38,000	40,932	30,706	25,603
State Total	*85,344*	*77,538*	*76,137*	*75,387*	*66,735*	*60,394*
South Australia						
Less than 500 head	1,749	1,651	2,154	757	0	1,647
500 -1000 head	5,040	4,540	4,540	1,680	3,847	2,697
1000 - 10000 head	32,830	22,658	35,301	28,301	20,524	26,688
over 10000 head	0	0	0	0	0	0
State Total	*39,619*	*28,849*	*41,995*	*30,738*	*24,371*	*31,033*
Western Australia						
Less than 500 head	3,797	3,178	3,178	2,088	851	1,199
500 -1000 head	5,800	7,122	7,787	2,909	2,331	3,278
1000 - 10000 head	36,097	40,200	47,684	14,607	9,839	30,206
over 10000 head	0	0	0	0	0	0
State Total	*45,694*	*50,500*	*58,649*	*19,603*	*13,020*	*34,682*
Australia						
Less than 500 head	32,851	35,387	37,335	11,851	19,877	15,590
500 -1000 head	110,120	81,995	79,307	32,822	46,425	46,698
1000 - 10000 head	431,894	410,979	448,330	341,356	341,472	378,572
over 10000 head	663,874	622,855	577,905	611,736	553,554	524,108
Total	*1,238,739*	*1,151,216*	*1,142,877*	*997,765*	*961,328*	*964,968*