



# Media Release

23 May 2017

## Confidence in grainfed system sees numbers on feed increase

Cattle on feed for the March quarter increased 80,687 head, or 8.6% from the December quarter, to 1,016,475 head according to the results of the ALFA/MLA quarterly survey.

An increase of numbers on feed was recorded in all states, with South Australia indicating the biggest increase of 37%, or 8,117 head, followed by Western Australia with an increase of 21%, or 7,233 head. The survey also signified a rise of 14% in New South Wales, to 329,170 head.

ALFA President, Tess Herbert said that the results from the March survey reflected that feedlots are retaining cattle for longer and capitalising on the lower cost of grain.

“With tighter cattle supply caused by herd rebuilding activities, cattle are being held on feed for longer periods which has seen the total cattle on feed tick over the 1 million mark this quarter”.

“Lot feeders are also capitalising on lower grain prices which continue to partially offset higher cattle prices, and are anticipated to remain low on the back of high domestic and global grain supplies,” Ms Herbert said.

Ms Herbert also said that the growing numbers of cattle on feed, and underlying capacity investment, continue to demonstrate the confidence in the grainfed system, “We are seeing the evidence of something that we have known for some time, that lot feeding is not just a drought mitigation tool, but an integral part of the beef supply chain, ensuring consistent quantity and quality of beef for brand owners and their consumers.”

Ben Thomas, MLA’s Manager of Market Information, said that cattle prices had eased slightly from the December Quarter, however the strong competition from restockers has seen cattle prices maintain their historically high levels.

“The quarterly average for the domestic paddock feeder steer indicator averaged 346.69¢/kg lwt, up 11% from year ago levels,” Mr Thomas said. “The national saleyard feeder steer indicator remained unchanged compared to December quarter figures and also from year ago levels – averaging 337.15¢/kg.”

Despite edging higher than the December quarter, ex-Darling Downs grain prices remained well below year-ago levels through the March quarter, “Wheat prices were 10% lower at \$236/tonnes, while barley prices declined 12% to \$211/tonne,” Mr Thomas said.

“Riverina wheat prices also eased 29% year-on-year, to \$190/tonne for the quarter, while barley declined 31% to \$161/tonne.”

-Ends-

For more information:

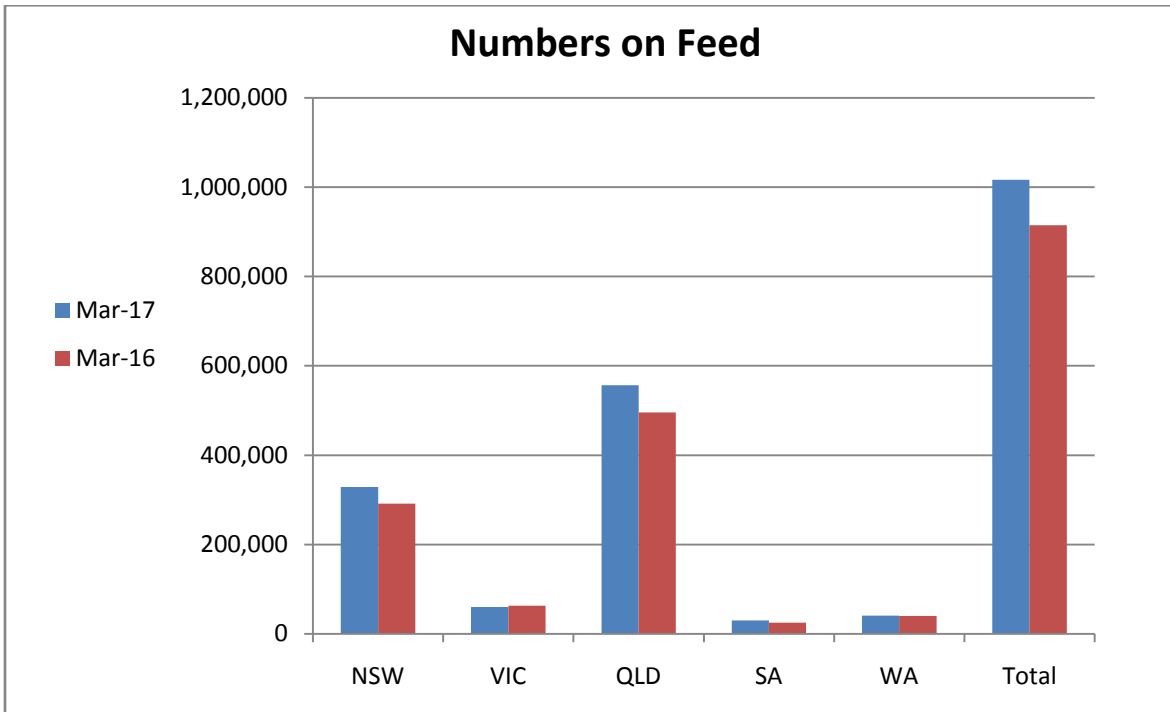
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**ALFA / MLA FEEDLOT SURVEY**  
**Jan - Mar 2017**

**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-17	329,170	60,008	556,886	29,864	40,548	<b>1,016,475</b>
Dec-16	286,561	53,290	540,875	21,747	33,315	<b>935,788</b>
Mar-16	291,312	62,889	495,578	25,146	39,976	<b>914,901</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-17	219,141	35,909	397,154	5,985	40,008	<b>698,199</b>
Dec-16	155,492	31,980	408,315	11,411	11,108	<b>618,307</b>
Mar-16	206,195	43,549	329,172	19,845	32,965	<b>631,726</b>

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	Numbers on Feed Mar 17	Numbers on Feed Dec 16	Numbers on Feed Mar 16
<b>New South Wales</b>			
Less than 500 head	1,500	958	3,418
500 -1000 head	10,078	9,647	12,602
1000 - 10000 head	94,312	78,349	104,296
over 10000 head	223,280	197,607	170,996
<b>State Total</b>	<b>329,170</b>	<b>286,561</b>	<b>291,312</b>
<b>Queensland</b>			
Less than 500 head	9,253	6,817	6,113
500 -1000 head	12,896	8,701	18,349
1000 - 10000 head	167,738	177,806	156,361
over 10000 head	366,998	347,551	314,755
<b>State Total</b>	<b>556,886</b>	<b>540,875</b>	<b>495,578</b>
<b>Victoria</b>			
Less than 500 head	0	0	0
500 -1000 head	4,408	4,458	8,765
1000 - 10000 head	21,700	21,587	24,604
over 10000 head	33,900	27,245	29,520
<b>State Total</b>	<b>60,008</b>	<b>53,290</b>	<b>62,889</b>
<b>South Australia</b>			
Less than 500 head	624	0	1,221
500 -1000 head	1,602	0	2,318
1000 - 10000 head	12,638	21,747	21,607
over 10000 head	15,000	0	0
<b>State Total</b>	<b>29,864</b>	<b>21,747</b>	<b>25,146</b>
<b>Western Australia</b>			
Less than 500 head	2,971	2,868	1,466
500 -1000 head	4,640	0	4,843
1000 - 10000 head	32,936	30,447	33,667
over 10000 head	0	0	0
<b>State Total</b>	<b>40,548</b>	<b>33,315</b>	<b>39,976</b>
<b>Australia</b>			
Less than 500 head	14,348	10,643	12,218
500 -1000 head	33,624	22,806	46,877
1000 - 10000 head	329,324	329,936	340,535
over 10000 head	639,178	572,404	515,271
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,016,475</b>	<b>935,788</b>	<b>914,901</b>

<b>Total Capacity</b>	<b>NSW</b>	<b>VIC</b>	<b>QLD</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>WA</b>	<b>Total</b>
Mar-17	389,662	74,652	667,432	40,307	67,777	<b>1,239,830</b>
Dec-16	390,222	74,651	667,432	40,307	67,777	<b>1,240,389</b>
Sep-16	390,222	75,150	662,328	33,298	59,777	<b>1,220,775</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.

ALFA / MLA FEEDLOT SURVEY  
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