

MEDIA RELEASE

7 March 2019

Cattle on feed remains above 1 million

Cattle on feed for the October – December 2018 quarter decreased by 15,977 head, or 1.4% from the record set in the September quarter, to finish the year at 1,110,689 head according to the results of the latest Australian Lot Feeders' Association (ALFA) and Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) National Accredited Feedlot Survey.

The modest decrease in numbers on feed were recorded in Queensland and New South Wales. Queensland decreased by 20,788 head, or 3.2%, to 631,286 head; while New South Wales decreased by 20,636, or 5.9%, to 326,322 head, compared to the previous quarter. These declines were somewhat offset by gains in Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia which were up 6.8%, 17.1% and 60.5% from the September quarter to 73,173 head, 40,439 head and 39,469 head respectively.

ALFA President, Bryce Camm, said that 2018 was a significant year for the feedlot production system which has played a leading role in managing seasonal variability and enabling the continued delivery of high-quality beef to our global customers.

"2018 was the first time in history that cattle on feed remained above one million head for the entire year; with unprecedented numbers of cattle on feed recorded in both the June quarter (1,120,459) and September (1,126,666) quarters," Mr Camm said.

"Grain fed beef exports broke 300,000 tonnes shipped weight (swt) for the first time in a calendar year, reflecting record production and continued demand for high quality Australian Beef in our Asian markets."

"There are no surprises that challenging east coast drought conditions and its impact on cattle turnover through 2018 have been a dominant driver for feedlot utilisation which sat above 85% for the majority of the year," Mr Camm said.

Scott Tolmie, MLA's Manager of Market Intelligence, said that variable seasonal conditions across the majority of supply regions once again presented feedlot operators with challenges.

"Opening in October at 273¢/kg lwt, the national saleyard feeder steer indicator rose to 300¢/kg lwt in November following rain, before falling to 283¢/kg lwt following a return to hot, dry conditions across QLD and NSW," Mr Tolmie said.

"Grain prices stabilised during the quarter, however consecutive years of poor harvests in the eastern states saw prices for wheat and barley double over a two-year period with wheat and barley averaging \$443/tonne and \$423 ex-Darling Downs; an increase of 37% and 33% year-on-year respectively."

"The Queensland 100-day grain fed steer over-the-hook indicator rose 11% year-on-year (or 54¢) in the December quarter to average 561¢/kg cwt which was supported by a favourable A\$ and robust export demand," Mr Tolmie said.

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ALFA / MLA FEEDLOT SURVEY Oct - Dec 2018

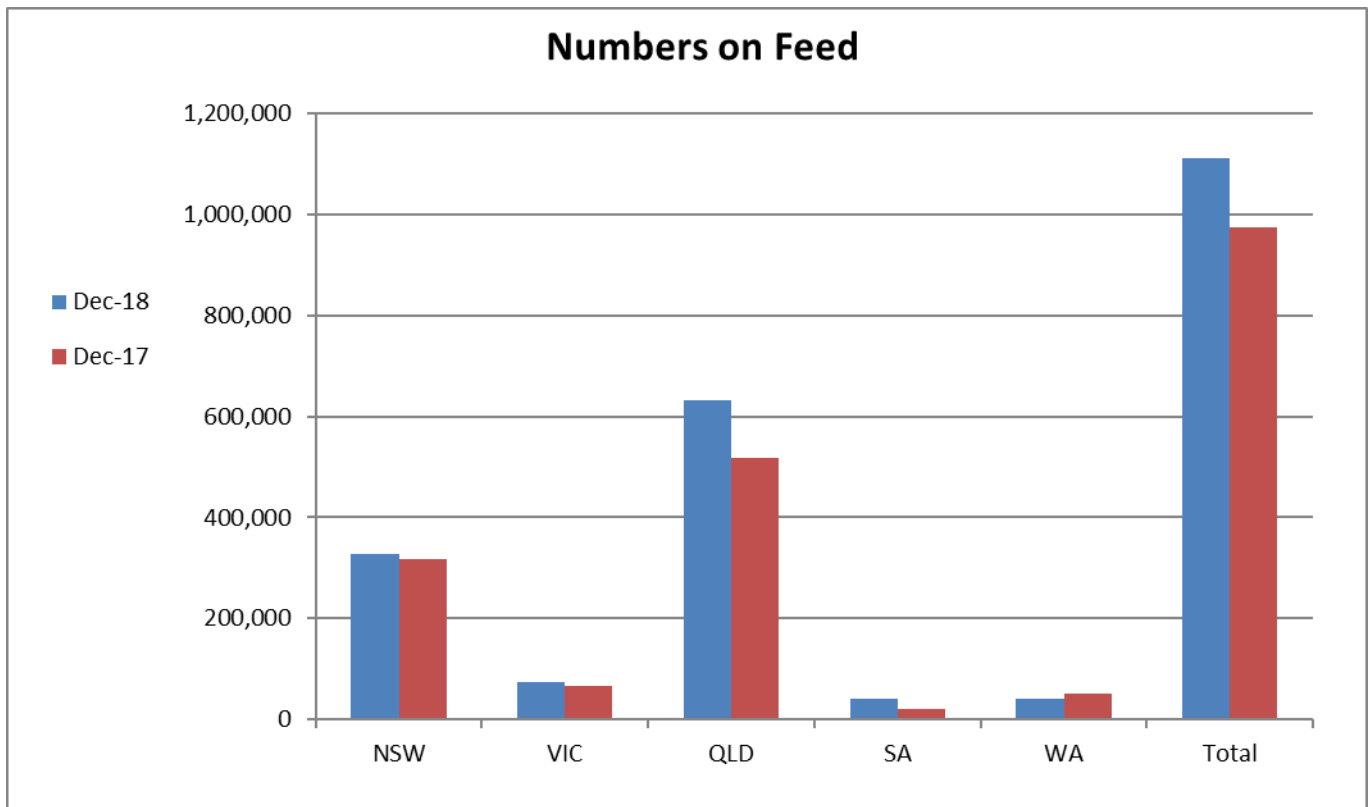
For more information:

Bryce Camm
President – ALFA
E: bryce@cammgroupp.com.au
P: (02) 9290 3700

Josh McIntosh
Media Manager – MLA
E: jmcintosh@mla.com.au
P: (02) 9463 9198

Cattle Numbers on Feed

Numbers on Feed	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	Total
Dec-18	326,322	73,173	631,286	40,439	39,469	1,110,689
Sep-18	346,958	68,512	652,074	34,526	24,596	1,126,666
Dec-17	317,414	65,761	518,749	20,959	50,293	973,176



Total Cattle Turnoff

Total Turnoff (quarterly)	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	Total
Dec-18	201,083	51,229	565,278	23,657	7,753	848,999
Sep-18	194,346	35,612	468,746	20,431	29,444	748,579
Dec-17	203,024	42,012	401,886	14,169	47,743	708,834

ALFA / MLA FEEDLOT SURVEY
Oct - Dec 2018

Total Turnoff (year ending)	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	Total
Dec-18	777,896	173,734	1,845,924	83,845	106,893	2,988,292
Dec-17	809,201	179,603	1,701,244	64,638	139,343	2,894,030
Dec-16	819,969	174,263	1,455,593	67,405	115,413	2,632,642

Cattle Numbers on Feed

	Numbers on Feed Dec 18	Numbers on Feed Sep 18	Numbers on Feed Dec 17
<i>New South Wales</i>			
Less than 500 head	650	1,156	1,333
500 -1000 head	6,866	10,135	34,244
1000 - 10000 head	108,426	121,544	82,502
over 10000 head	210,379	214,124	199,335
<i>State Total</i>	326,322	346,958	317,414
<i>Queensland</i>			
Less than 500 head	4,281	8,327	3,298
500 -1000 head	18,013	23,034	10,923
1000 - 10000 head	213,119	225,050	149,894
over 10000 head	395,873	395,663	354,635
<i>State Total</i>	631,286	652,074	518,749
<i>Victoria</i>			
500 -1000 head	4,553	4,762	4,316
1000 - 10000 head	28,620	25,250	21,024
over 10000 head	40,000	38,500	40,421
<i>State Total</i>	73,173	68,512	65,761
<i>South Australia</i>			
Less than 500 head	1,390	1,306	1,163
500 -1000 head	1,665	1,665	0
1000 - 10000 head	21,684	17,556	7,296
over 10000 head	15,700	14,000	12,500
<i>State Total</i>	40,439	34,526	20,959
<i>Western Australia</i>			
Less than 500 head	2,245	717	2,181
500 -1000 head	4,038	4,590	11,797
1000 - 10000 head	33,187	19,289	36,316
<i>State Total</i>	39,469	24,596	50,293
<i>Australia</i>			
Less than 500 head	8,566	11,505	7,975
500 -1000 head	35,135	44,186	61,279
1000 - 10000 head	405,036	408,688	297,031
over 10000 head	661,952	662,287	606,890
<i>Total</i>	1,110,689	1,126,666	973,176

ALFA / MLA FEEDLOT SURVEY
Oct - Dec 2018

Total Feedlot Capacity

Total Capacity	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	Total
Dec-18	393,012	76,551	725,911	43,879	68,077	1,307,430
Sep-18	392,763	76,551	724,660	43,879	72,052	1,309,905
Dec-17	394,863	73,552	709,999	40,937	74,272	1,293,623

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.

