



NLRS data collection

The National Livestock Reporting Service (NLRS) has become an integral part of the livestock industry since its inception some 25 years ago. The NLRS has a proud history of providing accurate and timely market information.

The cornerstone of NLRS operations is the process used to collect market information. The NLRS comprises a head office team, based in North Sydney, and 21 livestock market officers (LMO) scattered throughout regional Australia.

Each week, LMOs attend 74 physical markets throughout Australia. The latest technologies are employed in the data capture process. LMOs use data capture devices (DCD) to record the data outlined in Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1 Cattle market data recorded by NLRS*

Age classification	eg vealers, yearlings
Sex classification	eg steers, heifers, cows, bulls
Liveweight	Depending on sale type, will be actual or estimate
Muscle score	A (very heavily muscled) to E (lightly muscled)
Fat score	1 (lean) to 6 (fat)
Dressing %	Estimated for slaughter
Number of head in pen	Actual number
Price	Actual price
Other classifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market destination – slaughter, restocker, feeder, live export • Feeding regime – grassfed (default), grainfed • PTIC – pregnancy tested in calf • Dairy cattle

* For further information on cattle classifications, please see the 'NLRS assessing cattle' brochure

Table 2 Sheep market data recorded by NLRS**

Stock type	Young lambs, lambs, hoggets, ewes, wethers, rams
Carcase weight	Estimate
Fat score	1 (lean) to 6 (fat)
Skin value	Estimate based on skin value paid by processors
Number of head in pen	Actual number
Price	Actual dollar value per head
Other classifications	Breed – first cross, Merino second cross, Market destination – slaughter, restocker, live export

** For further information on sheep classifications, please see the 'NLRS assessing sheep' brochure

This information is then downloaded into the NLRS software, which allows a detailed statistical report to be built. The information is then value added with a high degree of analysis and explanation through a market commentary before submission to the NLRS head office in Sydney and distribution to subscribers.

Our team of professional market analysts collect data to compile over the hooks (OTH), wholesale, feeder cattle, skin, hide and slaughter reports. Information is gathered via email, phone and fax. Contributors to our reports include:

- agents
- processors
- butchers
- producers
- commission buyers
- lot feeders

All information is gathered in the strictest confidence, with the NLRS reputation allowing the number of contributors to swell over time. In turn, the quality of reports is constantly improving as the growing number of contributors encourage greater accuracy.

Accuracy assurance

The various collection methods are also used as a comparative yardstick to ensure the accuracy of data collated. Direct sale and wholesale prices are compared to physical market rates, highlighting any anomalies that may occur, as well as being cross referenced.

Care is taken to ensure the accuracy of information in the publication, however MLA cannot accept responsibility for the accuracy or completeness of the information or opinions contained in the publication. Readers should make their own enquiries in making decisions concerning their interests.

To manage the quality of NLRS information, a series of key performance indicators are set in place to measure daily performance against a predetermined set of requirements. The system, which outlines standards that must be met, is underpinned by a set of standard operating procedures.

All LMOs are regularly assessed to ensure they maintain their national accreditation as livestock assessors. LMOs are required meet a consistent standard of accuracy in the assessment of liveweight, carcass weight, dressing percentage, fat scoring and muscle scoring.

To ensure that a statistically valid data sample is being collected at each sale, LMOs must record a minimum of 70% of the total stock offered for sale. In reality, the introduction of new technologies has allowed coverage to average closer to 90%.

Finally, the NLRS has a plethora of stringent cross-checking measures to warrant its claim of providing the most up-to-date and accurate market information available. All reports are double checked before being published, while our market analysts pride themselves on the integrity of NLRS databases.



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Published July 2005