

US Lamb Market Update

Prepared Exclusively for Meat & Livestock Australia - Sydney

February 26, 2026

USA Domestic Lamb Market - Supply/Demand Situation

Sheep and Lamb Inventories: Following the release of the annual inventory survey, the inescapable conclusion is that the US lamb and mutton supply base will continue to decline in 2026 and possibly 2027. If US consumers relied on imports before, they are likely to rely even more going forward. With tariffs currently in place on lamb, mutton, and goat imports, the cost base has increased and could impact per capita availability in 2026.

As of January, the total inventory of all sheep and lambs in the US was estimated at 4.99 million head, 35,000 head (-0.7%) lower than a year ago. This is the first time inventory has dropped below 5 million head, and it has declined by some 220,000 head since 2020. More important for the future, however, is the trend in breeding stock, which was estimated at 3.610 million head, 50,000 head (-1.4%) lower than last year. The breeding flock is made up of three groups, ewes 1 year and older, replacement lambs, and rams 1 year and older. All three groups were lower, with ewes 1 year and older down 30,000 head (-1%). The outlook offers little reason for optimism. Replacement lambs totaled just 600,000 head, down 15,000 head (-2.4%). The year before they were down 3.1%, and the year before that 1.3%.

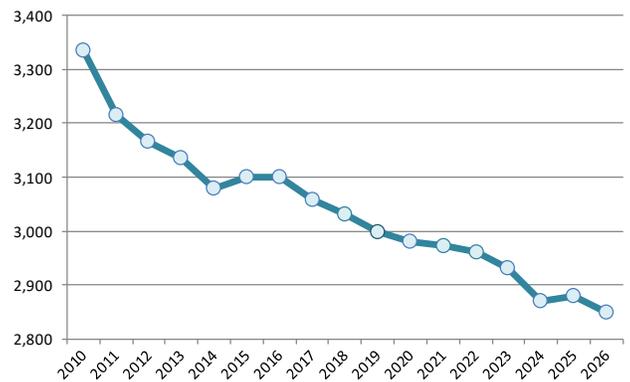
Contraction Persists: Producers are showing no signs of expanding their herds, opting instead to continue marketing lambs. The inventory of market lambs on January 1 was 1.380 million head, 15,000 head (+1.1%) higher than a year ago. Market lamb inventory increased modestly despite a continued decline in the lamb crop. The latest survey pegs the 2025 lamb crop at 3.030 million head, 10,000 head (-0.3%) lower than a year ago. Over the last 15 years, the lamb crop has declined by 540,000 head, resulting in a material contraction in domestic supply, excess packing capacity, and the structural adjustments that follow.

This is a shrinking business with no clear end in sight. The 2025 lambing percentage was estimated at 105.2%, in line with recent trends. We are using 105.5% for 2026. Given the number of ewes 1 year and older on January 1, this would imply a 2026 lamb crop near 3.0 million head, 0.8% lower than the previous year and the lowest on record.

Regional supply: We have included a map of lamb and sheep inventories by state on page 16, showing both total supply and the year over year change. Texas now has the largest inventory at 700,000 head, up 4.5% from the previous year. California ranks second with 505,000 head, down 5,000 head (-1%), and Colorado is third at 410,000 head, up 5,000 head (+1.2%). Idaho and Wyoming posted the largest net declines. At last count, Idaho had 220,000 sheep and lambs, 15,000 head (-6.4%) fewer than a year ago. Wyoming had 280,000 head, also 15,000 head (-5%) lower than a year ago. Higher land and operational costs have significantly impacted producers out west.

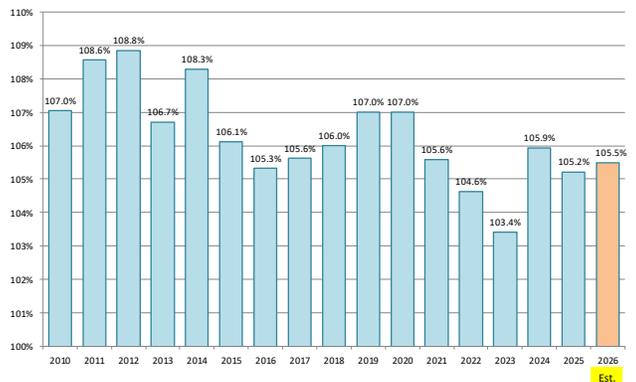
US Inventory of Ewes 1 Year or Older. '000 Head

Source: USDA January 1 Sheep and Lamb Inventory Survey. Analysis by Steiner Consulting



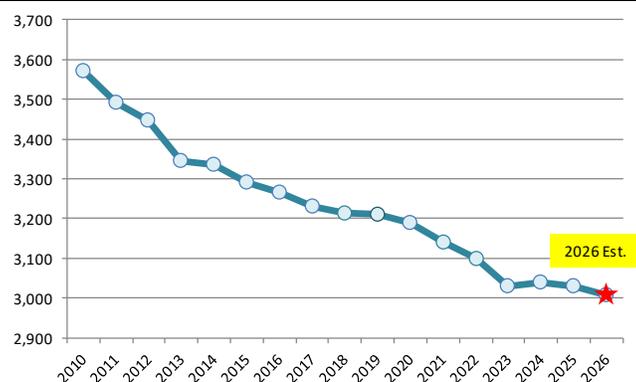
Lambing % (Ratio of Lamb Crop to +1Yr Ewes)

Source: USDA January 1 Sheep and Lamb Inventory Survey



US Annual Lamb Crop. '000 Head

Source: USDA January 1 Sheep and Lamb Inventory Survey. Analysis by Steiner Consulting



Imported Lamb Supply and Price Trends

Imports of lamb, mutton and goat meat started the year strong but have declined sharply in the last few weeks. Tariffs remain a major challenge for importers and they are directly impacting offer prices. Different from beef, which was excluded from tariffs in November 2025, Australia, New Zealand and other countries (except Mexico and Canada) continue to face tariffs on lamb, goat and mutton shipments to the US. There is some uncertainty as to the tariff that Australia currently faces. It used to be 10% but after the global tariffs were struck down by the Supreme Court, administration imposed new tariffs that could be set at 15%.

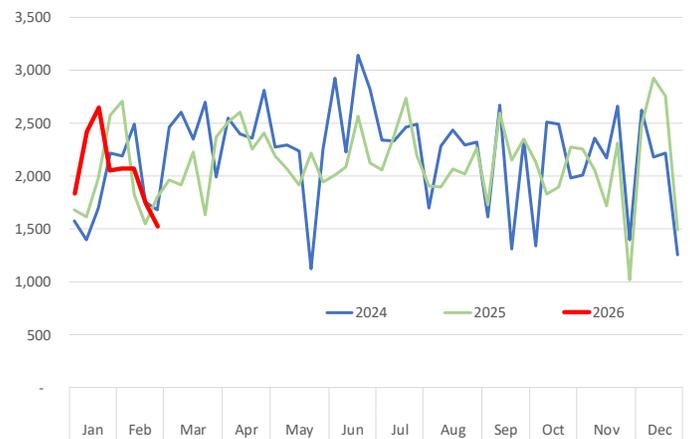
Lamb imports: In the four weeks ending February 21, US lamb imports were a total of 7,403MT, 480 MT (-6.1%) lower than a year ago. Imports from Australia accounted for near 72% of the imported volume. During the reference period, imports of Australian lamb were 5,311 MT, 550 MT (-9.4%) lower than last year. Imports from New Zealand, however at 2,023 MT were 111 MT (+5.8%) higher than a year ago. Imports from other suppliers are almost nonexistent. Canada was the largest supplier outside of Oceania and imports during the four-week period were a mere 31 MT. Prices for imported lamb are all over the place although broadly up by double digits than a year ago (see page #7). Tariffs are clearly a factor. High price of some lamb cuts appears to have shifted demand to less expensive items, with square cut shoulder priced 30-80% higher than a year ago. New Zealand racks currently up 15-20% vs. a year ago while Australian frozen racks up as much as 37%. Keep in mind that import data is not official statistics, it is based on food inspector reports.

Mutton imports: Imports are largely following last year's trend. In the four weeks ending February 21, total imports were 1,341 MT, 100 MT (+8.1%) higher than a year ago. Imports from Australia accounted for 81% of the total and at 1,080 MT were up 25% while imports from New Zealand at 261 MT were down 31%. Higher prices, in part due to tariffs, could keep supply in check in the near term.

Goat imports: Different from lambs, US goat inventory increased in 2025. The kid crop in the US was estimated at 1.524 million, 13,000 head (+0.9%) higher than a year ago. Demand in the US remains robust although the higher tariffs continue to present headwinds. Australia is effectively the only supplier of imported goat meat in the US. Imports in the four weeks ending February 21 were 2,667 MT (+67%) higher than a year ago. However, imports have been trending lower and are expected to be limited into early March. Australian goat meat shipments to the US in January were just 1,249 MT, 18% lower than a year ago. The US market accounted for about 36% of all Australian goat meat exports. Australian shipments to Canada in January were 649 MT, the second largest market and up 56% vs. a year ago.

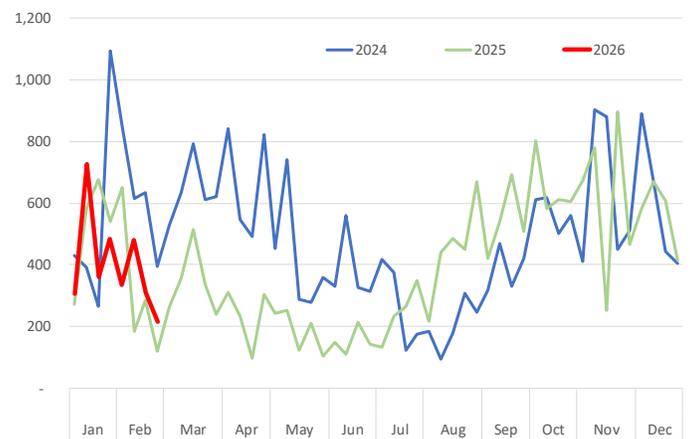
Weekly US Lamb Import. Total Volume. MT Product Wt.

Source: USDA-AMS. Analysis by Steiner Consulting



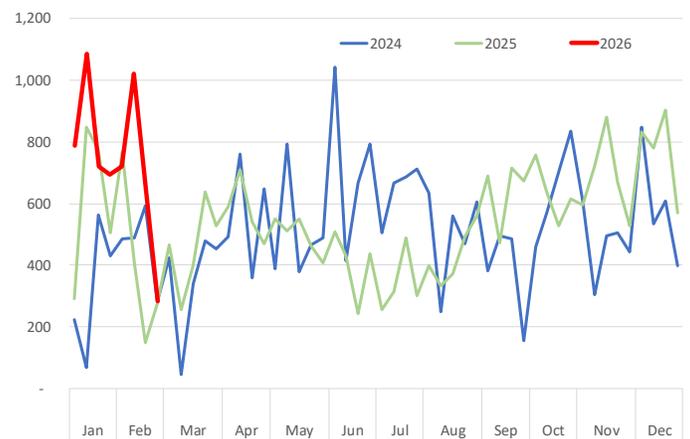
Weekly Mutton Imports. Total Volume. MT Product Wt.

Source: USDA-AMS. Analysis by Steiner Consulting



Weekly Goat Meat Imports. Total Volume. MT Product Wt.

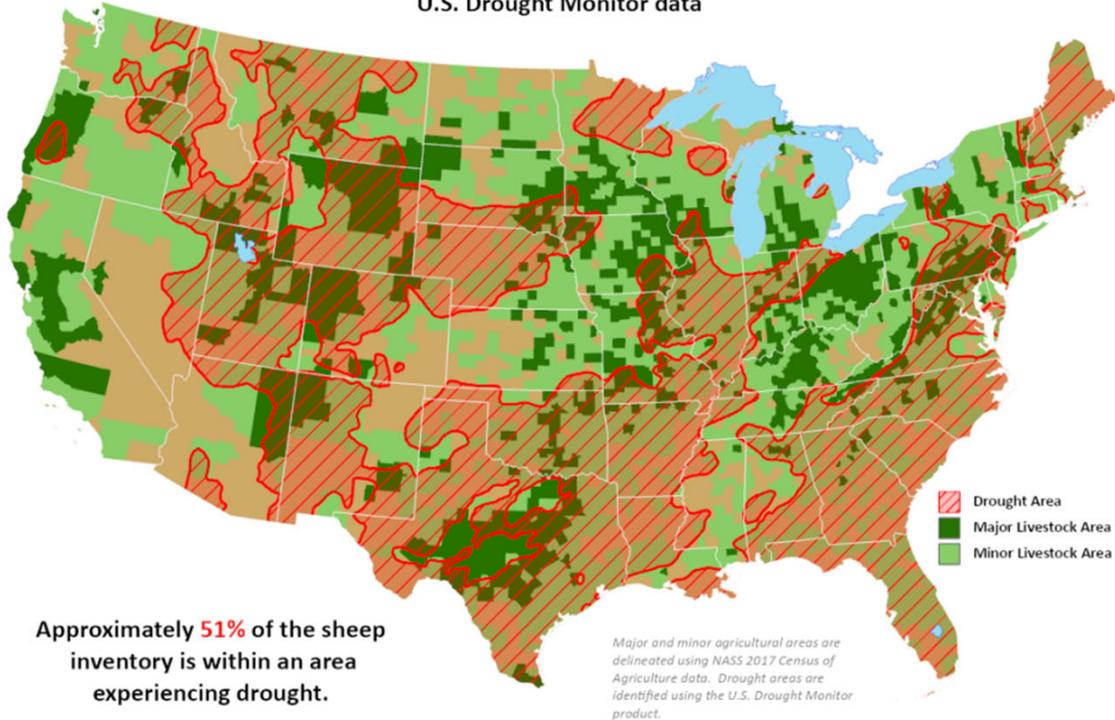
Source: USDA-AMS. Analysis by Steiner Consulting



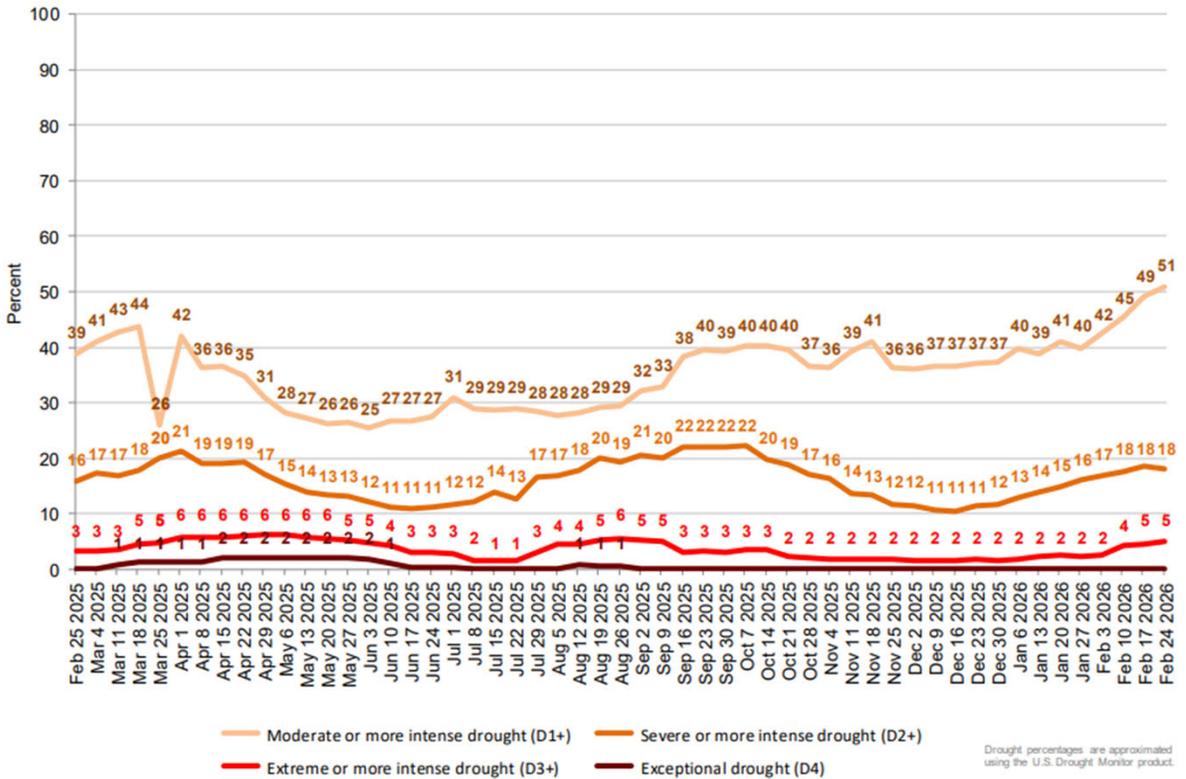
USDA United States Department of Agriculture
 This product was prepared by the USDA Office of the Chief Economist (OCE) World Agricultural Outlook Board (WAOB)

Sheep Areas in Drought

Reflects **February 24, 2026**
 U.S. Drought Monitor data



Percent of United States Sheep Located in Drought



US Domestic Lamb Cut and Primal Values

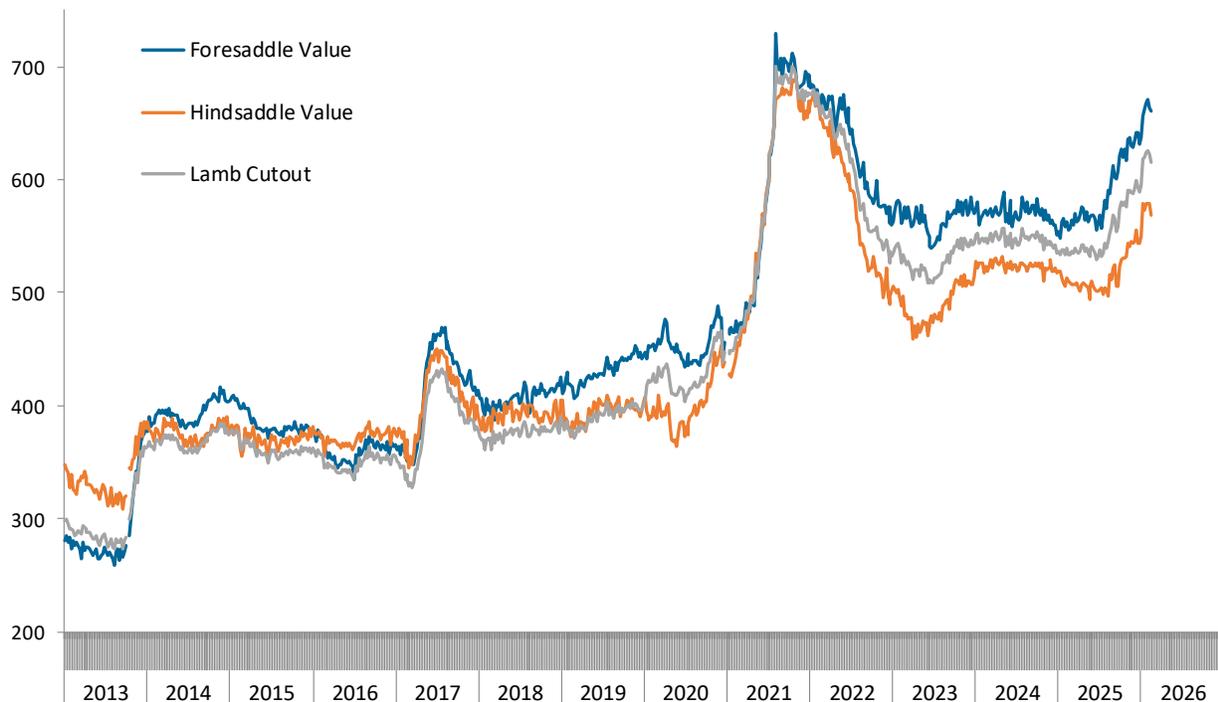
Weekly Prices from USDA. Wt. Average

		2/14/2025	2/6/2026	2/13/2026	w/w	y/y
		US\$/cwt	US\$/cwt	US\$/cwt	% ch.	% ch.
Foresaddle	204 Rack, 8-Rib, Medium	983.6	1202.7	1242.8	3.3%	26.3%
	209 Breast	369.3	380.4	358.8	-5.7%	-2.8%
	207 Shoulders, Square Cut	406.5	508.0	497.8	-2.0%	22.5%
	210 Foreshank	541.7	639.1	689.9	8.0%	27.4%
	Neck **	419.0	509.6	500.8	-1.7%	19.5%
Foresaddle Value		555.5	662.8	660.5	-0.3%	18.9%
Hindsaddle	232 Loin, Trimmed, 4x4	704.0	761.4	763.0	0.2%	8.4%
	232E Flank, Untrimmed	213.5	296.1	297.5	0.5%	39.3%
	233A Leg, Trotter Off	507.1	582.8	579.2	-0.6%	14.2%
Hindsaddle Value		510.7	579.3	568.7	-1.8%	11.4%
Carcass Value		533.7	622.3	616.0	-1.0%	15.4%

** Includes fresh and frozen product. Week to week prices tend to change significantly

Hindsaddle, Foresaddle and Total Lamb Cutout Value

Source: USDA Mandatory Price Reporting System. Analysis by Steiner Consulting (800.526.4612)



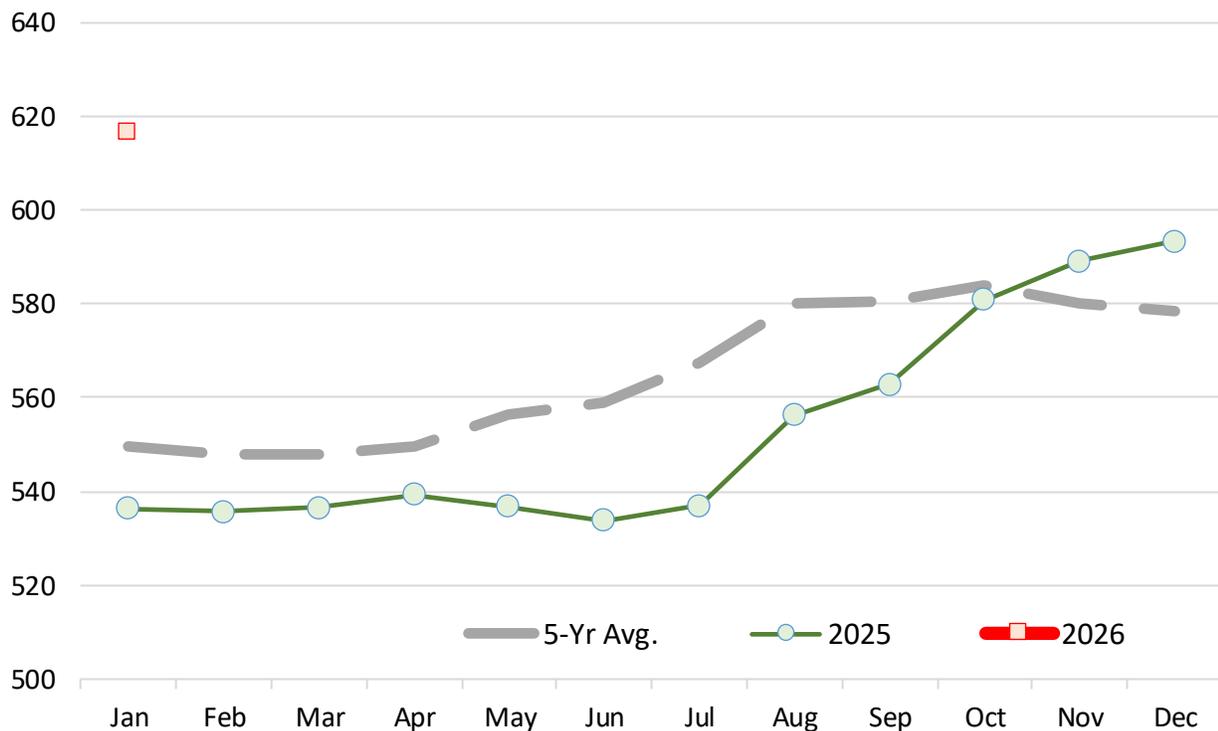
Domestic Lamb Cutout Value, USA

Source: Agricultural Marketin Service, USDA. \$ per 100 lb. Dressed Carcass

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	5-Yr Avg.	% ch. vs. Yr Ago	% ch. vs. 5-Yr Avg.
Jan	447.93	674.75	539.93	548.38	536.26	616.58	549.45	15.0%	12.2%
Feb	459.01	666.76	531.52	546.60	535.77		547.93		
Mar	472.79	656.04	521.34	553.79	536.52		548.10		
Apr	489.76	649.56	519.01	550.69	539.39		549.68		
May	531.44	645.15	520.94	548.47	536.70		556.54		
Jun	575.84	629.63	509.46	545.98	533.77		558.94		
Jul	625.93	613.89	513.85	547.15	536.97		567.56		
Aug	691.20	578.40	524.36	549.36	556.18		579.90		
Sep	689.51	558.19	540.84	550.89	562.74		580.43		
Oct	693.44	554.46	544.25	545.89	580.76		583.76		
Nov	676.35	542.81	542.78	549.59	589.02		580.11		
Dec	674.88	536.20	547.71	539.66	593.42		578.37		

USA Domestic Lamb Cutout Value

Monthly Avg. Price. Data source: USDA. Analysis by Steiner Consulting



Slaughter Lamb Price, Sioux Falls, SD Basis

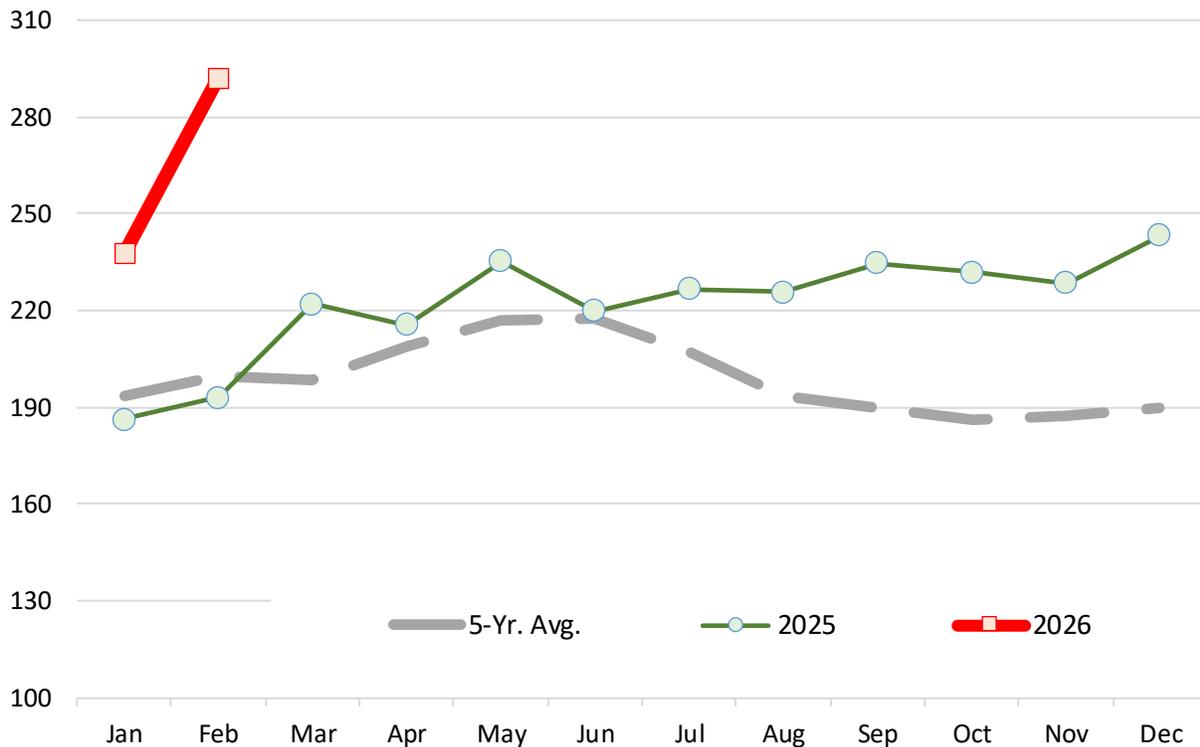
Monthly Average Prices, 100-150 lb. Woolled and Shorn, Choice & Prime 2-3 . \$ per 100 lb.

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	5-Yr. Avg.	% ch. vs. Yr Ago.	% ch. vs. 5-Yr Avg.
Jan	170.1	237.0	138.5	191.6	186.4	238.1	193.6	27.7%	23.0%
Feb	167.4	220.6	132.2	194.9	193.1	292.0	200.0	51.2%	46.0%
Mar	184.0	207.9	147.3	231.1	222.0		198.5		
Apr	192.0	233.6	172.2	230.3	215.5		208.7		
May	223.3	236.6	166.7	222.1	235.4		216.8		
Jun	261.5	203.2	185.7	218.6	219.8		217.8		
Jul	277.2	130.0	208.3	193.2	226.6		207.0		
Aug	254.2	102.7	209.1	177.3	225.8		193.8		
Sep	242.9	111.6	205.0	154.7	234.7		189.8		
Oct	231.6	118.0	195.8	153.2	232.0		186.1		
Nov	227.1	124.7	185.9	171.6	228.5		187.6		
Dec	228.0	133.8	179.4	165.0	243.4		189.9		

Source: USDA

Slaughter Lamb Price, Sioux Falls, SD Basis

Monthly Average Prices, 100-150 lb. Woolled and Shorn, Choice & Prime 2-3 . \$ per 100 lb.



Imported Lamb Price Summary

Source: USDA Agricultural Marketing Service, Mandatory Price Reporting

	2025 Volume	2025 Wt. Avg. \$	2025 Implied Value	Feb 24, 2025	Feb 16, 2026	Feb 23, 2026	% ch. vs. wk Ago	% ch. vs. Year Ago
Fresh/Chilled								
	Pounds	\$/lb.	Total \$					
AUS Leg, bnls	9,253,334	\$ 5.76	\$ 53,275,127	\$ 6.74	\$ 6.38	\$ 6.16	-3.6%	-8.7%
AUS Shortloin, 1-Rib, 0x0	8,242,770	\$ 6.28	\$ 51,776,750	\$ 5.96	\$ 7.27	\$ 6.83	-6.1%	14.5%
AUS Shoulder, Square-cut	6,429,474	\$ 3.94	\$ 25,339,274	\$ 3.41	\$ 4.65	\$ 4.39	-5.6%	28.8%
AUS Rack, FR, Cap-off, 28 oz/up	3,657,415	\$ 14.44	\$ 52,802,980	\$ 13.96	\$ 15.01	\$ 15.74	4.8%	12.8%
AUS Leg, semi bnls	1,622,667	\$ 5.35	\$ 8,679,178	\$ 4.49	\$ 6.40	\$ 5.43	-15.2%	21.0%
AUS Rack, FR, Cap-off, 24-28 oz	709,854	\$ 14.44	\$ 10,253,355	\$ 13.36	\$ 15.99	\$ 15.93	-0.4%	19.2%
AUS Leg, Long	708,503	\$ 5.49	\$ 3,886,792	\$ 5.01	\$ 6.15	\$ 6.47	5.2%	29.2%
AUS Foreshank, VP	501,583	\$ 4.36	\$ 2,187,069	\$ 4.39	\$ 4.84	\$ 5.23	7.9%	19.0%
AUS Shortloin, 1-Rib, 1x1	385,510	\$ 6.07	\$ 2,339,283	n/a	\$ 6.18	\$ 6.18	0.0%	
AUS Rack, FR, Cap-off, 20-24 oz	237,816	\$ 14.26	\$ 3,391,993	\$ 13.52	\$ 15.43	\$ 15.30	-0.9%	13.2%
AUS Tenderloin	44,928	\$ 13.07	\$ 587,085	\$ 11.93	\$ 15.08	\$ 13.90	-7.8%	16.5%
AUS Shoulder, Square-cut, bnls	0	\$ -	\$ -				n/a	
Subtotal	31,748,926	\$ 6.56	\$ 208,200,525	\$ 6.64	\$ 7.53	\$ 7.34	-2.5%	10.5%
Frozen								
AUS Leg, bnls	6,077,750	\$ 5.03	\$ 30,595,858	\$ 4.13	\$ 6.13	\$ 6.17	0.5%	49.1%
AUS Foreshank, LP	5,501,686	\$ 3.69	\$ 20,325,919	\$ 3.33	\$ 4.32	\$ 4.43	2.5%	33.1%
AUS Leg, Long	4,820,171	\$ 4.51	\$ 21,729,611	\$ 3.56	\$ 5.39	\$ 5.73	6.4%	60.9%
NZ Rack, FR, Cap-off, 16-20 oz	4,169,396	\$ 13.24	\$ 55,215,279	\$ 12.32	\$ 14.44	\$ 14.58	1.0%	18.4%
AUS Shoulder, Square-cut	3,966,814	\$ 3.40	\$ 13,501,328	\$ 2.63	\$ 3.90	\$ 3.61	-7.4%	37.5%
AUS Hindshank, LP	2,693,341	\$ 3.42	\$ 9,220,867	\$ 2.98	\$ 4.20	\$ 4.38	4.4%	47.2%
NZ Rack, FR, Cap-off, 20 oz/up	2,451,280	\$ 13.04	\$ 31,954,177	\$ 12.17	\$ 14.41	\$ 14.54	0.9%	19.5%
AUS Shoulder, Square-cut, bnls	1,952,055	\$ 4.78	\$ 9,339,366	\$ 3.66	\$ 6.45	\$ 6.72	4.2%	83.5%
NZ Rack, FR, Cap-off, 12-16 oz	1,716,125	\$ 13.10	\$ 22,488,152	\$ 12.31	\$ 14.65	\$ 14.18	-3.2%	15.2%
AUS Rack, FR, Cap-off, 28 oz/up	1,405,370	\$ 14.45	\$ 20,312,293	\$ 13.03	\$ 15.80	\$ 15.60	-1.2%	19.7%
AUS Rack, FR, Cap-off, 24-28 oz	825,874	\$ 13.73	\$ 11,336,159	\$ 12.12	\$ 15.38	\$ 15.43	0.3%	27.3%
AUS Rack, FR, Cap-off, 20-24 oz	733,283	\$ 13.20	\$ 9,682,768	\$ 11.29	\$ 13.91	\$ 15.44	10.9%	36.7%
AUS Leg, bnls, shank-off	475,876	\$ 4.94	\$ 2,350,641	\$ 4.42			n/a	
AUS Rack, FR, Cap-off, 20 oz/dn	48,206	\$ 11.50	\$ 554,542	\$ 12.78			n/a	
AUS Hindshank, VP	25,535	\$ 5.16	\$ 131,887		\$ 5.53	\$ 5.65	2.2%	
AUS Tenderloin	22,622	\$ 11.33	\$ 256,233				n/a	
NZ Rack, FR, Cap-off, 12 oz/dn	8,283	\$ 15.16	\$ 125,611				n/a	
Subtotal	36,893,667	\$ 7.02	\$ 259,120,692	\$ 6.18	\$ 7.92	\$ 8.01	1.1%	29.8%

Top 4 Chilled Lamb Items Traded

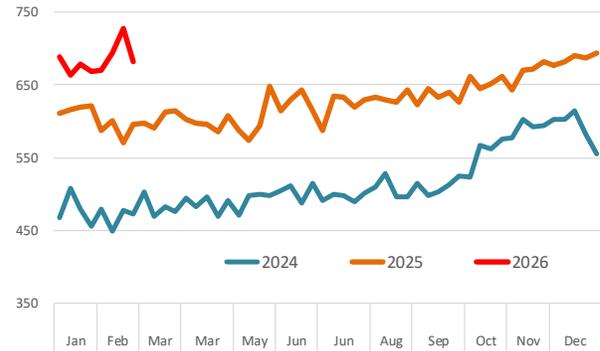
AUS Leg, bnls

Source: USDA-AMS. Weighted Average Weekly Price in US\$/cwt.



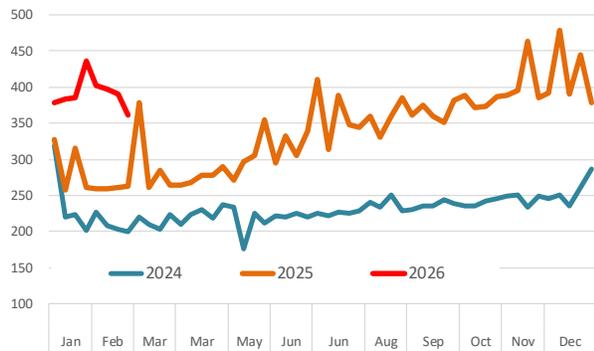
AUS Shortloin, 1-Rib, 0x0

Source: USDA-AMS. Weighted Average Weekly Price in US\$/cwt.



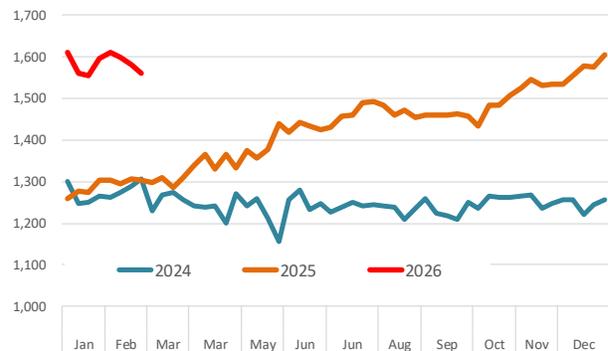
AUS Shoulder, Square-cut

Source: USDA-AMS. Weighted Average Weekly Price in US\$/cwt.



AUS Rack, FR, Cap-off, 28 oz/up

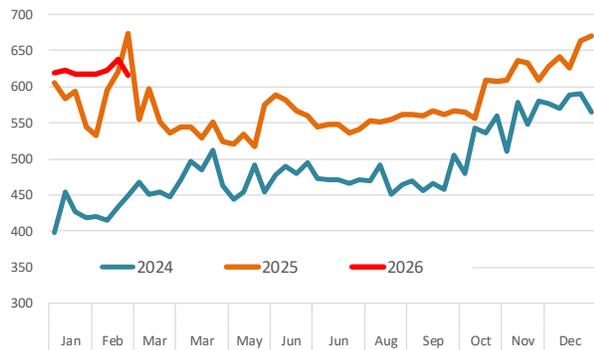
Source: USDA-AMS. Weighted Average Weekly Price in US\$/cwt.



Top 4 Frozen Lamb Items Traded

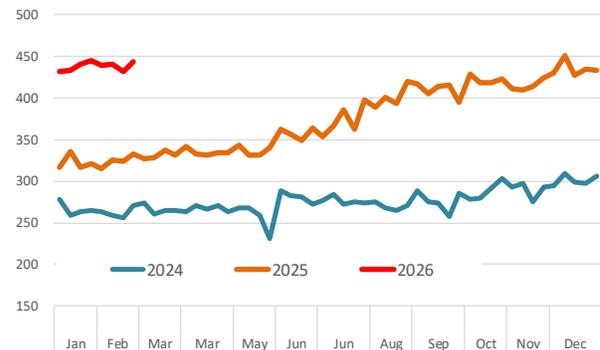
AUS Leg, bnls

Source: USDA-AMS. Weighted Average Weekly Price in US\$/cwt.



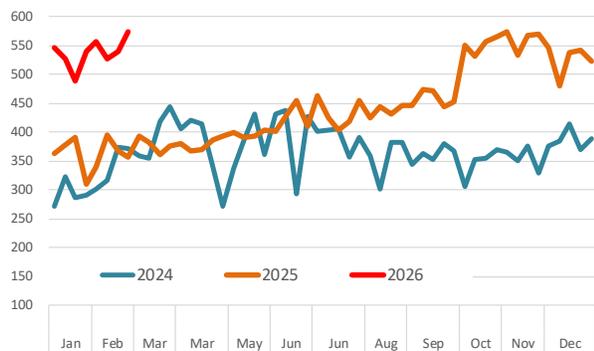
Racks, Cap-off, 24-28oz, Australian, Frozen

Source: USDA-AMS. Weighted Average Weekly Price in US\$/cwt.



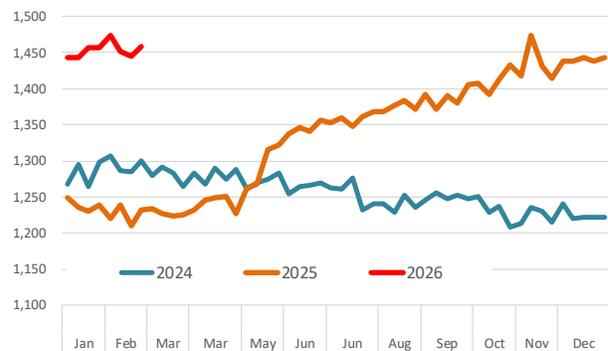
AUS Leg, Long

Source: USDA-AMS. Weighted Average Weekly Price in US\$/cwt.



NZ Rack, FR, Cap-off, 16-20 oz

Source: USDA-AMS. Weighted Average Weekly Price in US\$/cwt.



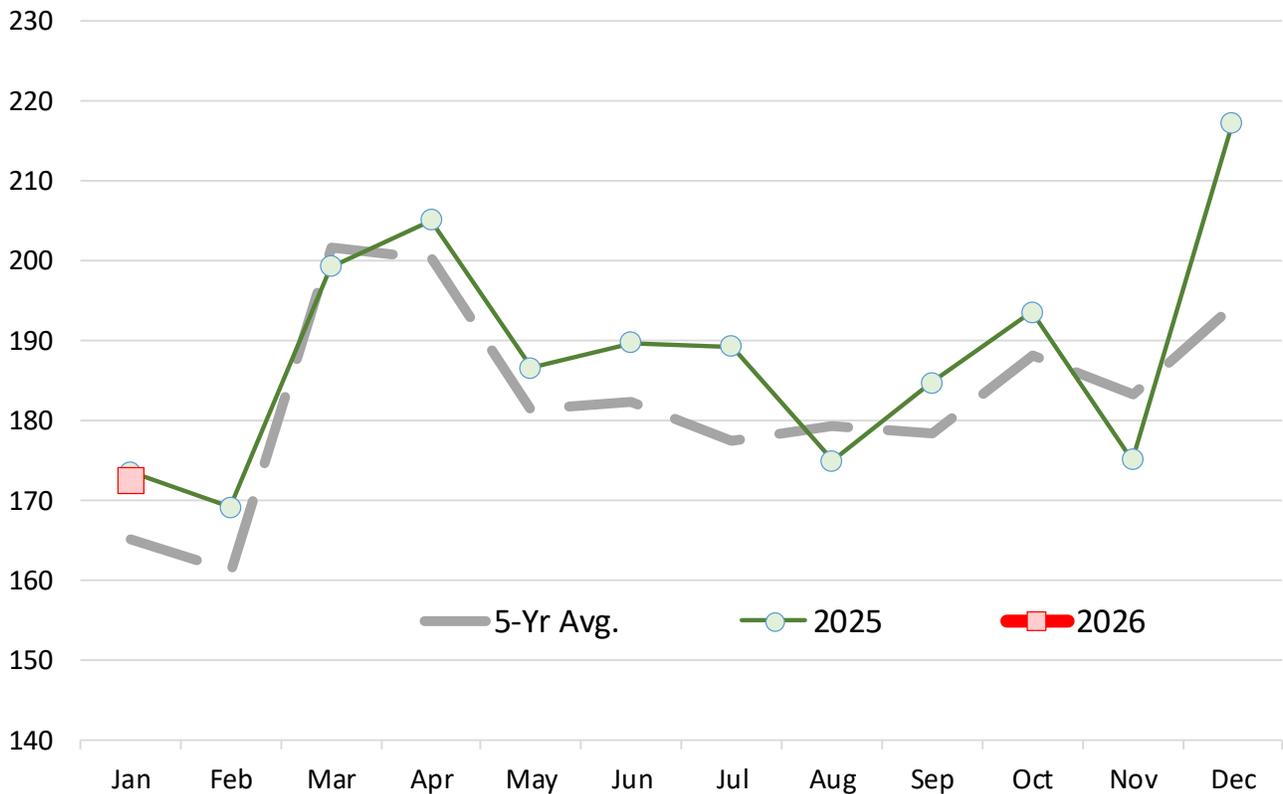
Lamb & Sheep Slaughter. Monthly. '000 Head

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	5-Yr Avg.	% ch Yr Ago	% ch 5-Yr Avg.
Jan	162.4	154.8	162.8	171.7	173.5	172.6	165.0	-0.5%	4.6%
Feb	163.9	143.6	157.7	171.9	169.1		161.2		
Mar	214.7	187.8	206.5	199.4	199.2		201.5		
Apr	223.5	198.5	185.7	188.8	205.0		200.3		
May	182.4	165.0	186.1	187.0	186.6		181.4		
Jun	189.8	174.2	181.0	176.7	189.7		182.3		
Jul	189.3	163.8	160.2	185.1	189.2		177.5		
Aug	178.4	182.4	184.5	176.4	174.9		179.3		
Sep	184.4	171.9	174.7	176.4	184.7		178.4		
Oct	188.5	170.0	194.5	194.7	193.5		188.2		
Nov	196.6	181.1	189.9	173.6	175.1		183.3		
Dec	189.5	178.5	184.2	201.5	217.3		194.2		

Source: USDA

Lamb & Sheep Slaughter. Monthly. '000 Head

Monthly Data. Source: USDA



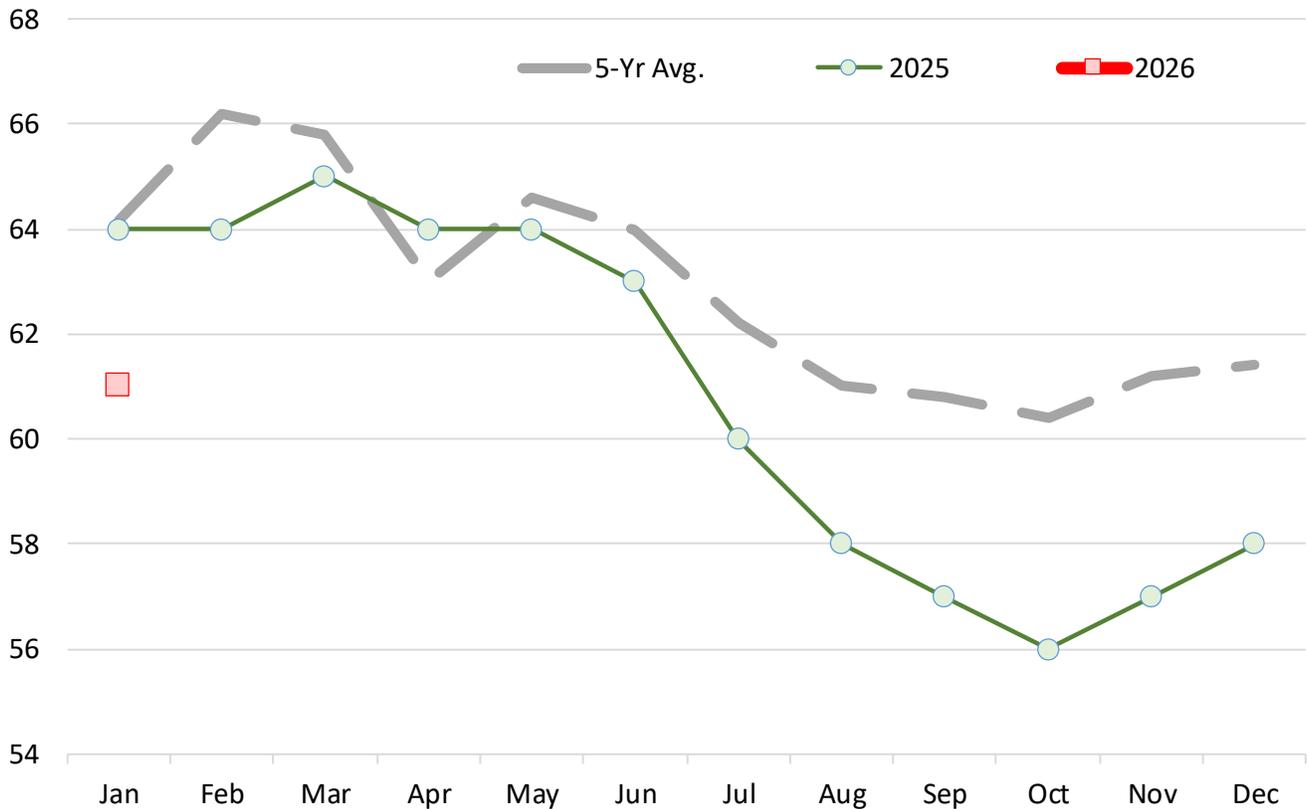
Lamb and Yearling Dressed Weights. Monthly. Avg. Pounds per Carcass

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	5-Yr Avg.	% ch Yr Ago	% ch 5-Yr Avg.
Jan	67.00	66.00	64.00	63.00	64.00	61.00	64.17	-4.7%	-4.9%
Feb	68.00	67.00	67.00	65.00	64.00		66.20		
Mar	68.00	68.00	65.00	63.00	65.00		65.80		
Apr	63.00	65.00	62.00	61.00	64.00		63.00		
May	63.00	69.00	64.00	63.00	64.00		64.60		
Jun	63.00	69.00	64.00	61.00	63.00		64.00		
Jul	60.00	67.00	62.00	62.00	60.00		62.20		
Aug	60.00	67.00	59.00	61.00	58.00		61.00		
Sep	60.00	65.00	60.00	62.00	57.00		60.80		
Oct	62.00	63.00	60.00	61.00	56.00		60.40		
Nov	64.00	64.00	60.00	61.00	57.00		61.20		
Dec	64.00	64.00	60.00	61.00	58.00		61.40		

Source: USDA

Lamb and Yearling Dressed Weights. Monthly. Avg. Pounds per Carcass

Monthly Data. Source: USDA



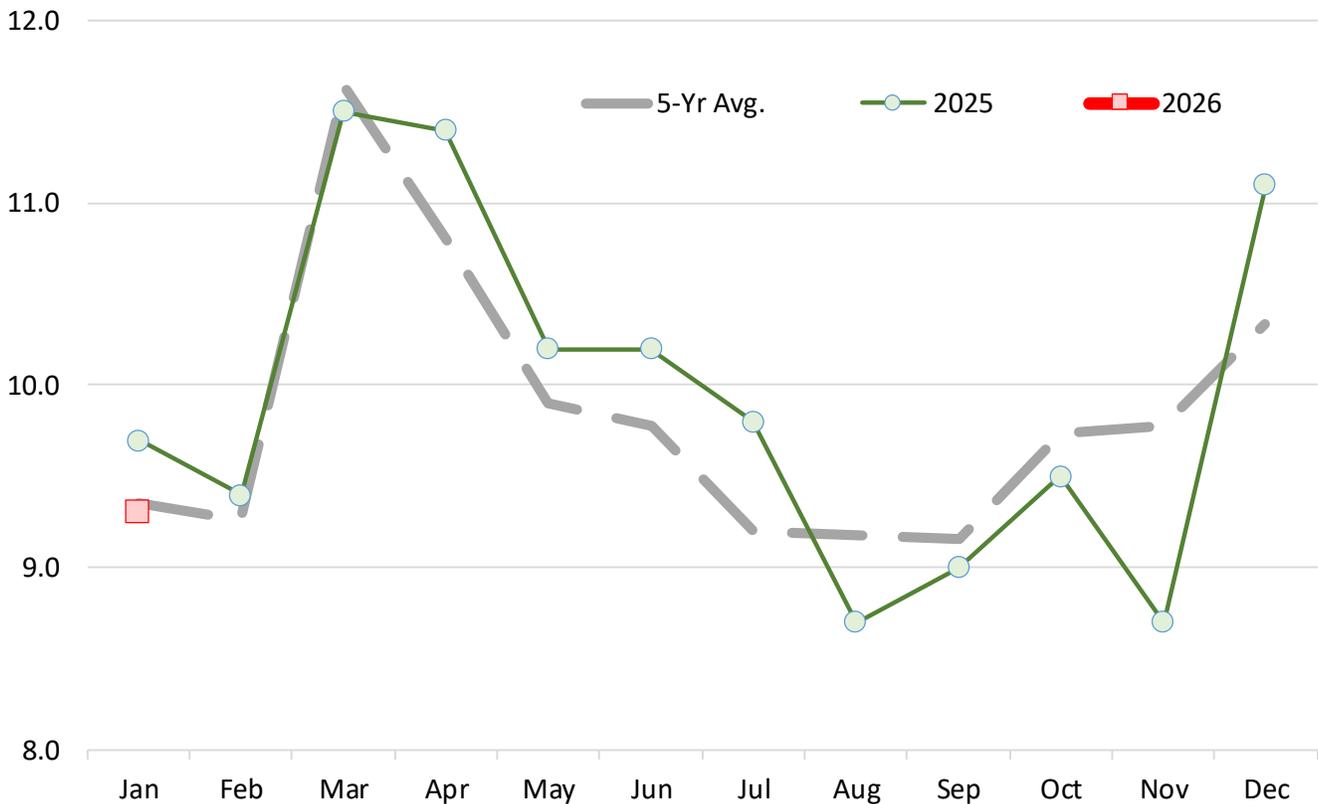
Lamb Yearling Production. Monthly. Carcass Wt. Basis. Million Lb.

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	5-Yr Avg.	% ch Yr Ago	% ch 5-Yr Avg.
Jan	9.4	8.9	9.2	9.6	9.7	9.3	9.3	-4.1%	-0.5%
Feb	9.7	8.1	9.3	9.8	9.4		9.3		
Mar	12.7	11.2	11.7	11.1	11.5		11.6		
Apr	12.0	10.8	9.7	10.1	11.4		10.8		
May	9.6	9.6	9.9	10.2	10.2		9.9		
Jun	9.9	10.2	9.5	9.1	10.2		9.8		
Jul	9.2	8.9	8.1	10.0	9.8		9.2		
Aug	8.8	10.3	8.9	9.2	8.7		9.2		
Sep	9.2	9.6	8.6	9.4	9.0		9.2		
Oct	10.1	9.0	9.8	10.3	9.5		9.7		
Nov	10.9	10.0	10.1	9.2	8.7		9.8		
Dec	10.5	9.8	9.5	10.8	11.1		10.3		

Source: USDA

Lamb Yearling Production. Monthly. Carcass Wt. Basis. Million Lb.

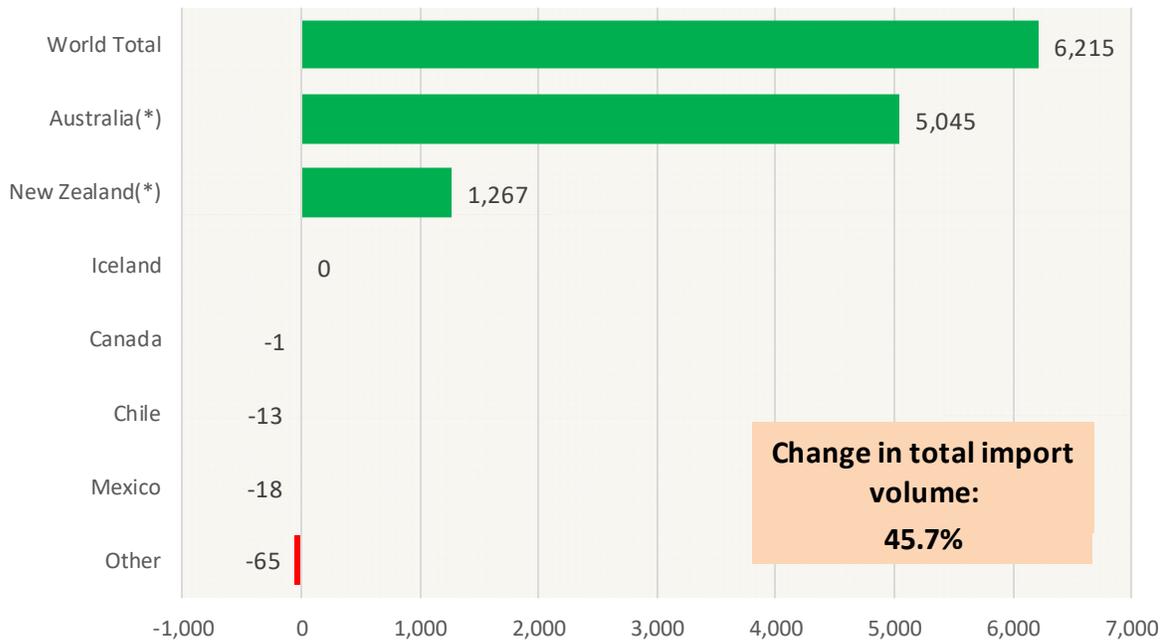
Monthly Data. Source: USDA. Analysis by Steiner Consulting



Y/Y Ch. in Dec. 25 vs. Dec. 24 US Mutton, Goat, Lamb Imports

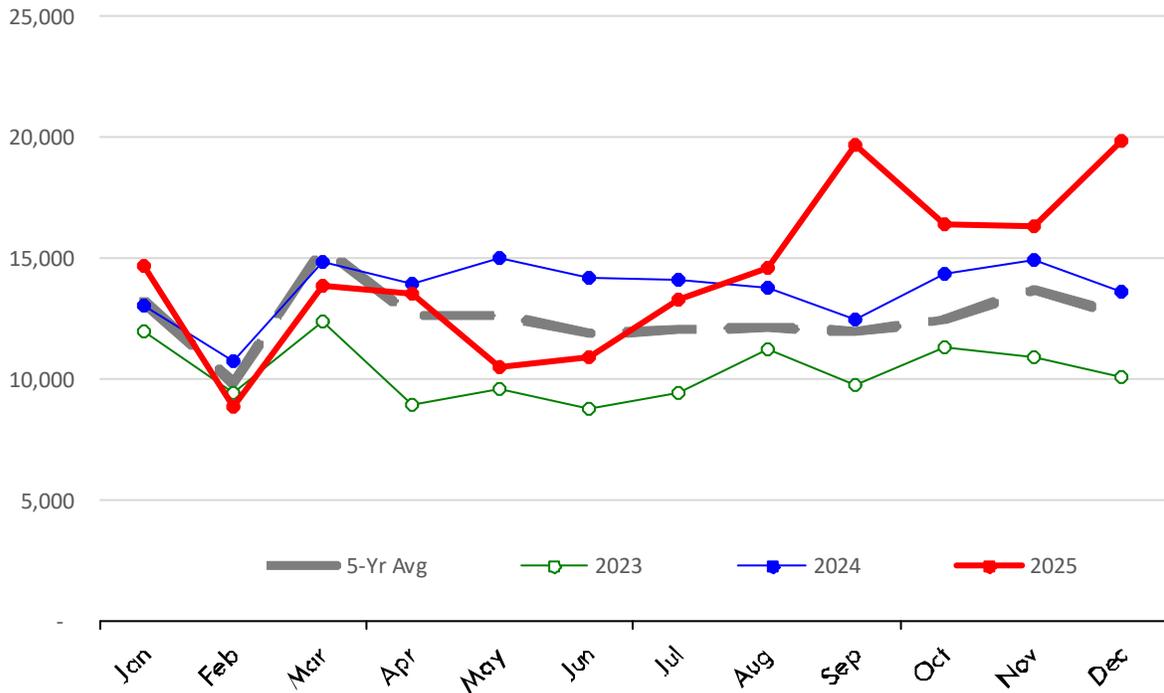
Source: USDA/FAS

Units: Metric Tons



Quantity of US Imports of Fr/Frz Mutton, Goat, Lamb: World Total

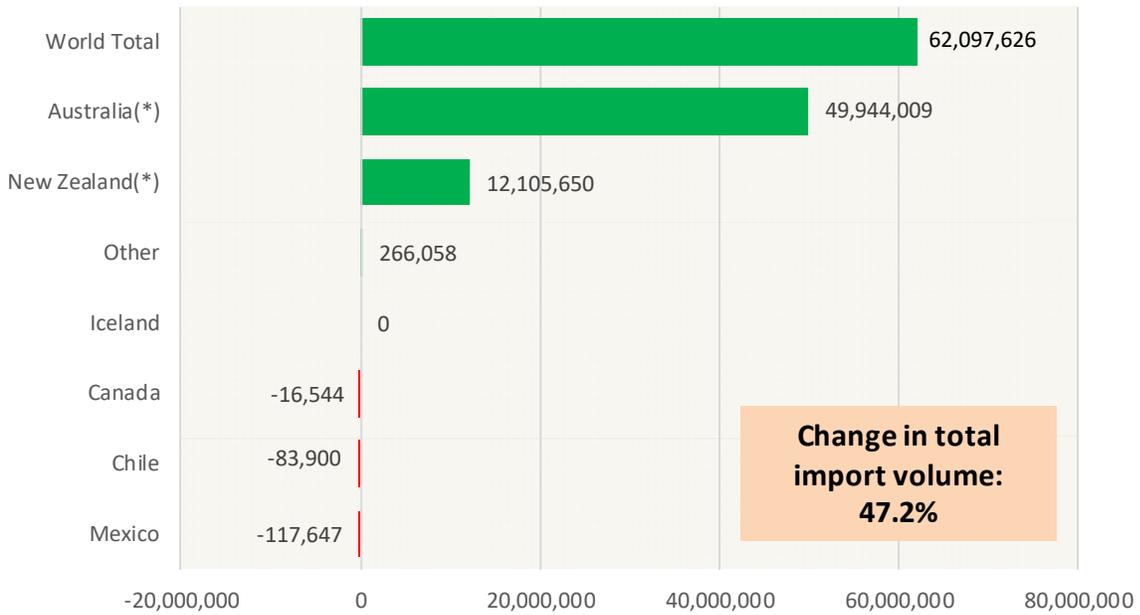
Source: USDA/FAS. Units: Metric Ton. Analysis by: Steiner Consulting (800.526.4612)



Y/Y Ch. in Dec. 25 vs. Dec 24 US Mutton, Goat, Lamb Import Value (\$)

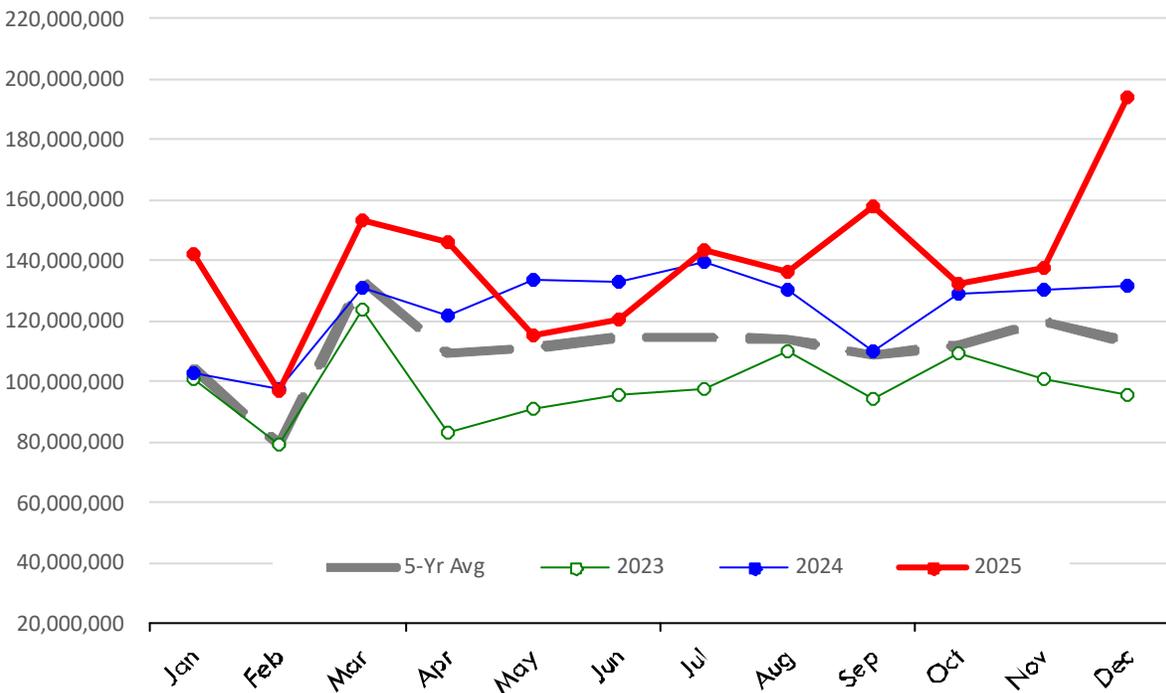
Source: USDA/FAS

Units: US Dollars



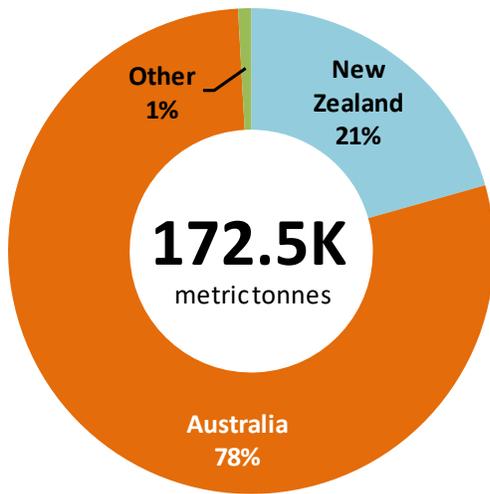
\$ Value of US Imports of Fr/Frz Mutton, Goat, Lamb: World Total

Source: USDA/FAS. Units: US Dollars. Analysis by: Steiner Consulting (800.526.4612)



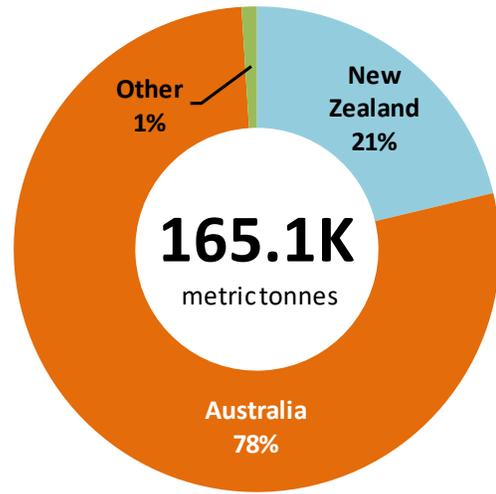
TOP US LAMB IMPORT MARKETS IN 2025

Total Volume and Country Shares for Period Jan - Dec 2025, MT



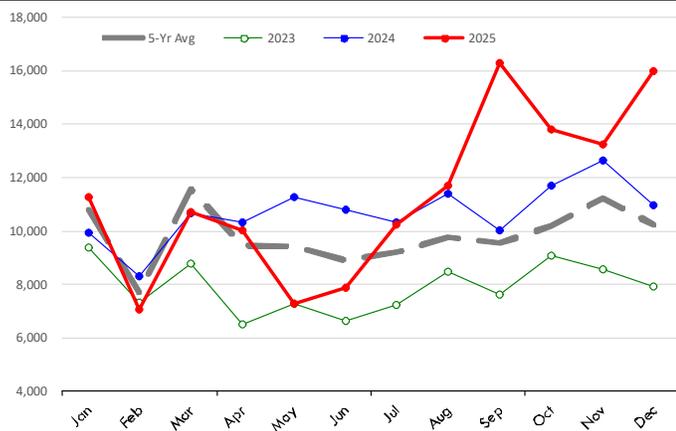
TOP US LAMB IMPORT MARKETS IN 2024

Total Volume and Country Shares for Period Jan - Dec 2024, MT



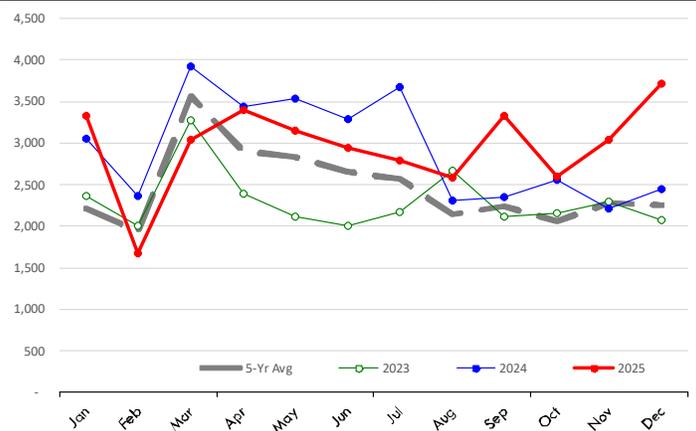
Quantity of US Imports of Fr/Frz Mutton, Goat, Lamb: Australia(*)

Source: USDA/FAS. Units: Metric Ton. Analysis by: Steiner Consulting (800.526.4612)



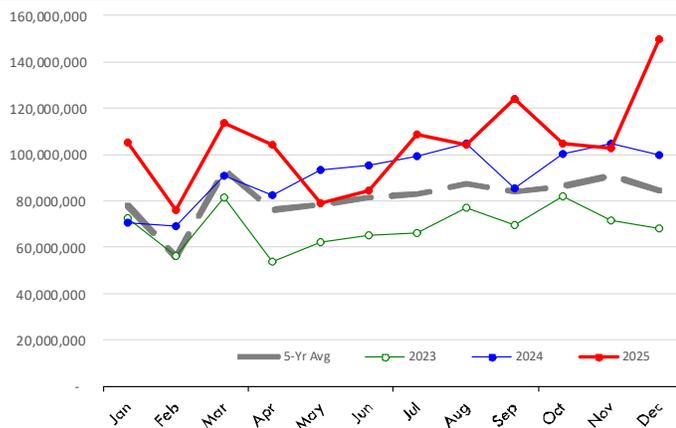
Quantity of US Imports of Fr/Frz Mutton, Goat, Lamb: New Zealand(*)

Source: USDA/FAS. Units: Metric Ton. Analysis by: Steiner Consulting (800.526.4612)



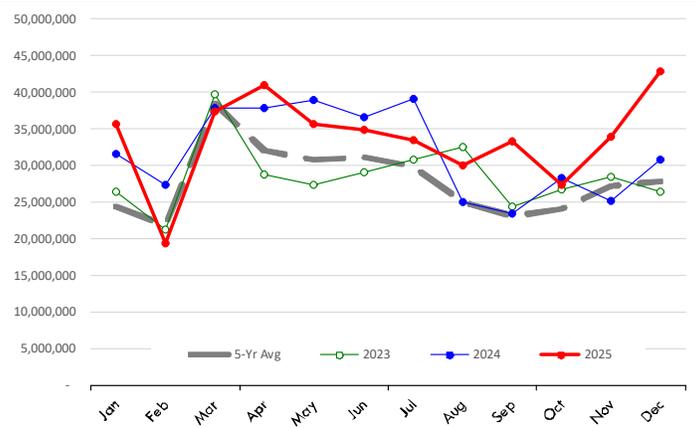
\$ Value of US Imports of Fr/Frz Mutton, Goat, Lamb: Australia(*)

Source: USDA/FAS. Units: US Dollars. Analysis by: Steiner Consulting (800.526.4612)



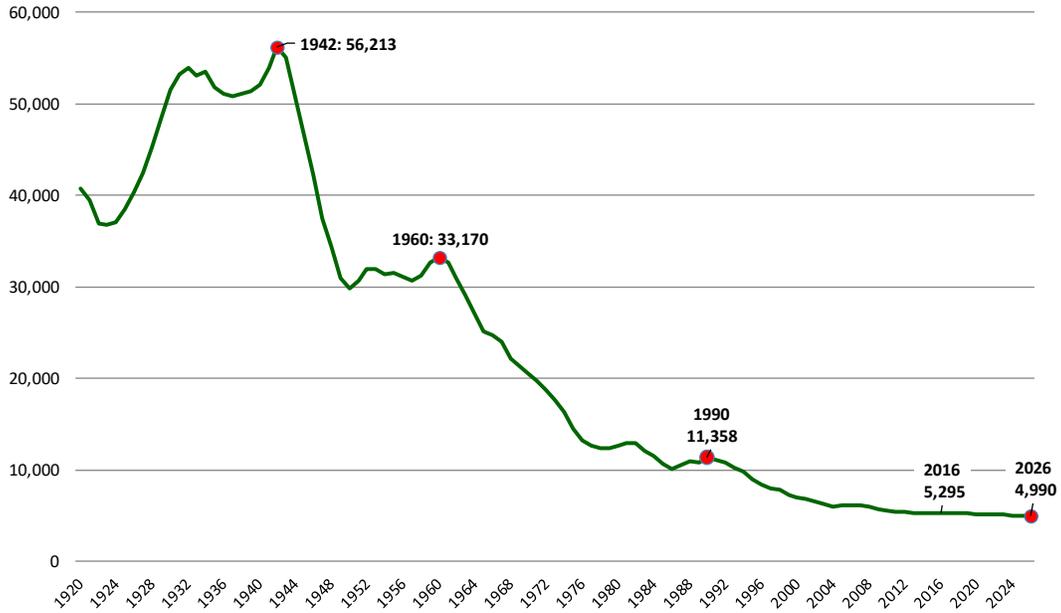
\$ Value of US Imports of Fr/Frz Mutton, Goat, Lamb: New Zealand(*)

Source: USDA/FAS. Units: US Dollars. Analysis by: Steiner Consulting (800.526.4612)



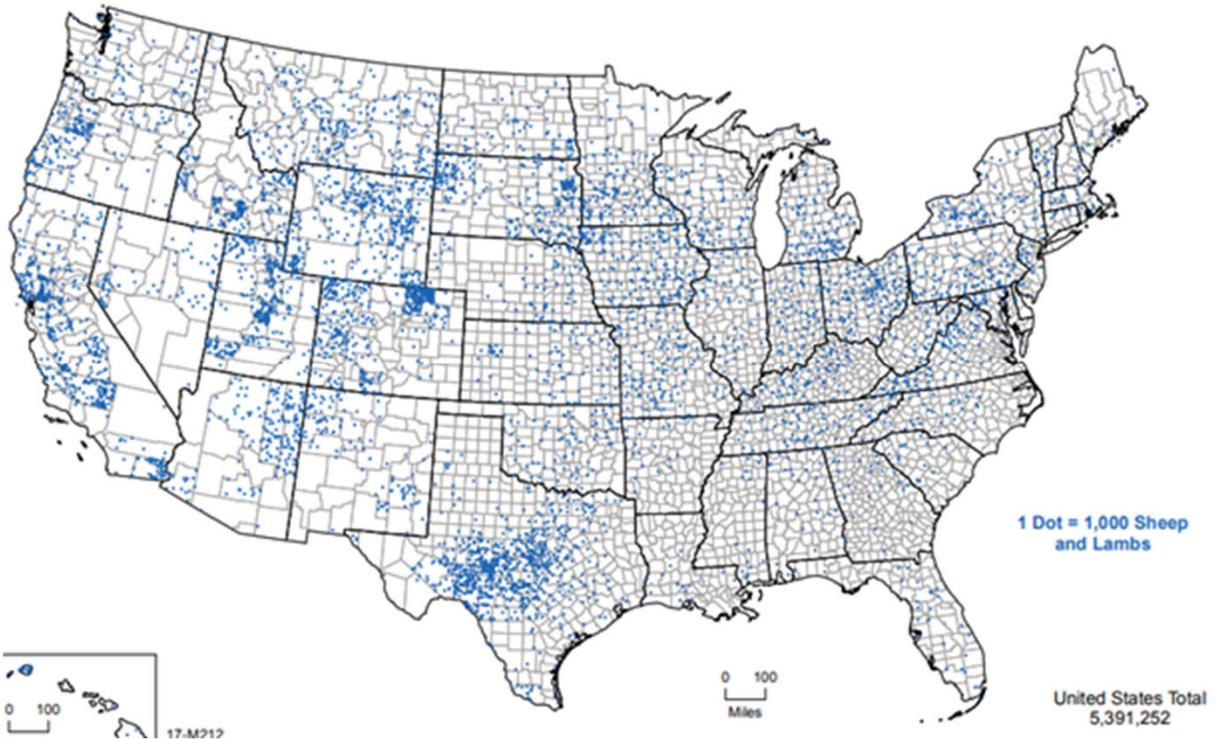
January 1 Inventory of Sheep and Lambs in the US, '000 Head

Data source: USDA-NASS. Analysis by Steiner Consulting

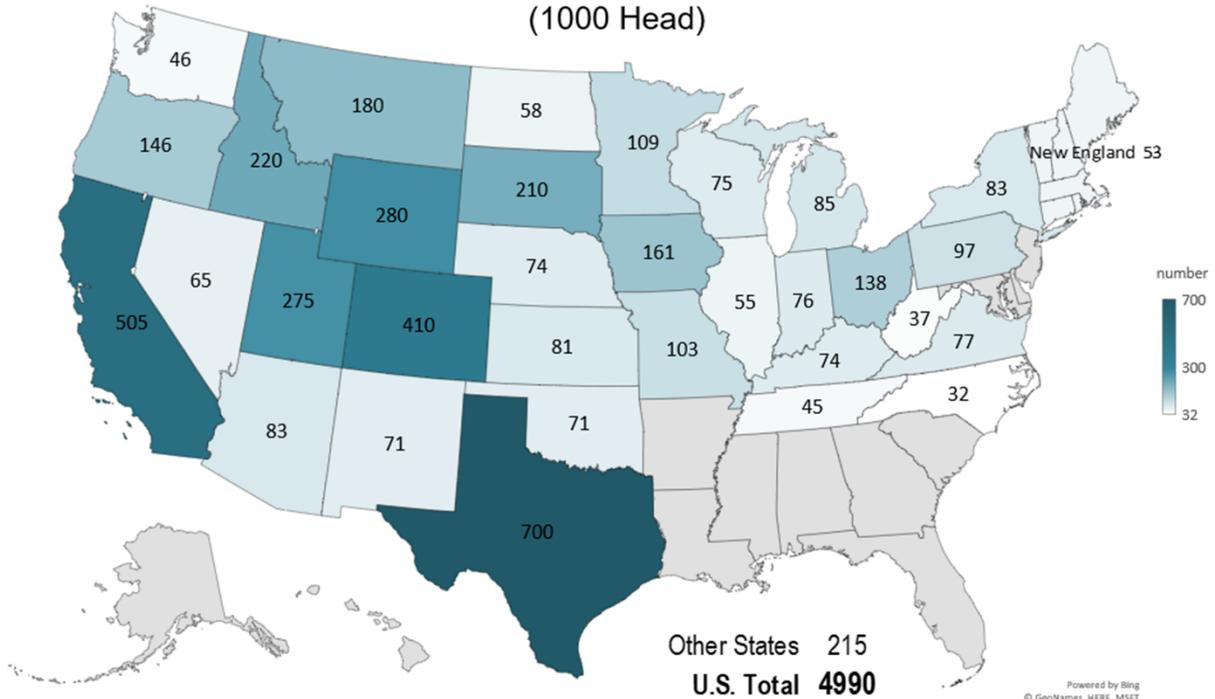


Distribution of Lambs and Sheep in the US by County

Source: USDA-NASS, 2017 Census of Agriculture



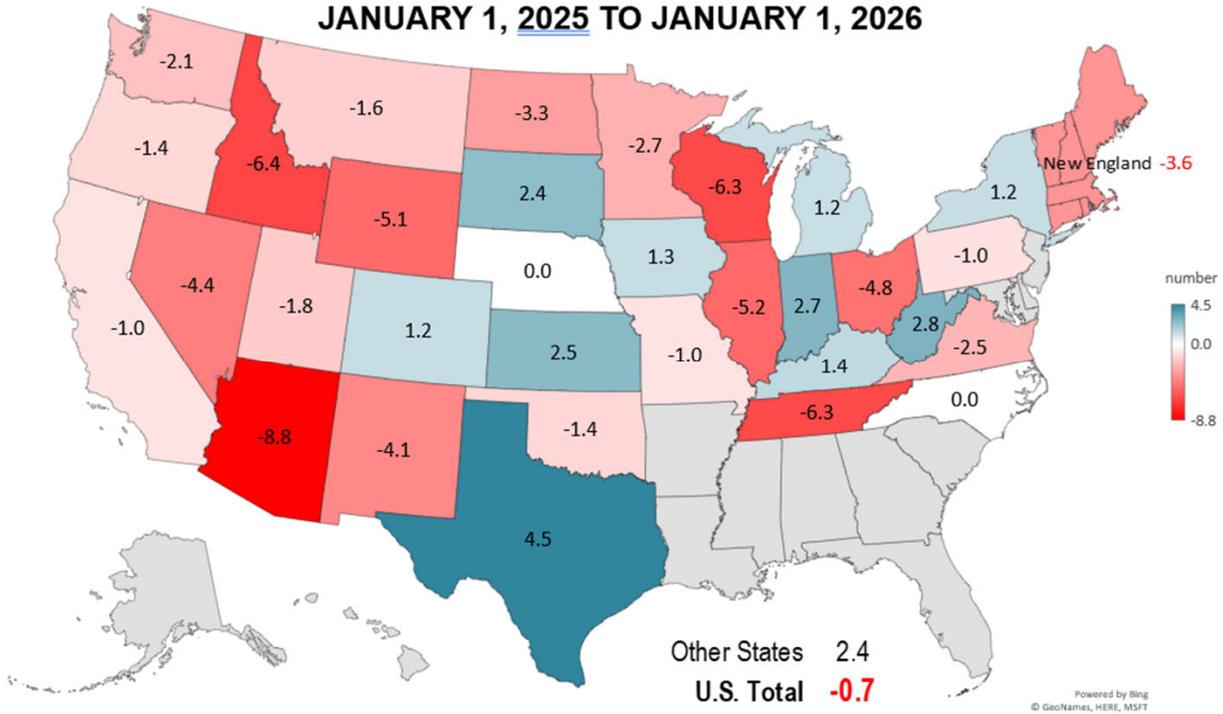
SHEEP AND LAMB NUMBERS JANUARY 1, 2026 (1000 Head)



Livestock Marketing Information Center
Data Source: USDA-NASS

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S-N-05
02/02/26

% CHANGE SHEEP AND LAMB INVENTORY JANUARY 1, 2025 TO JANUARY 1, 2026



Livestock Marketing Information Center
Data Source: USDA-NASS

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02/02/26

Domestic Lamb Production + Imports

Data source: USDA-NASS + Steiner Consulting Estimates for 2024 and 2025

