Fast Facts 2016

Australia’s beef industry

Australia is one of the world’s most efficient producers of cattle and was the world’s largest exporter of beef. The off-farm value (domestic expenditure plus export value) of the Australian beef and cattle industry was $17.87 billion in 2015-16 (ABS, MLA estimate).

At the time of publication, figures included in this document were the most up to date available but may be subject to revision.

Herd facts and figures:
• 71,659 businesses with cattle (ABS Agricultural Commodities 2014-15).
• 27.4 million head of cattle in Australia as of 2014-15, including 2.8 million head of dairy cattle (ABS Agricultural Commodities 2014-15).
• 12.5 million beef cows and heifers one year and over as of 2014-15 (ABS Agricultural Commodities 2014-15).
• The cattle industry involves 58% of all farms with agricultural activity

People in the industry:
• Around 200,000 people are employed in the red meat industry, including on-farm production, processing and retail (MISP 2015).

How much is produced?
• In 2015-16, Australia produced approximately 2.34 million tonnes cwt of beef and veal (ABS).
• In 2015-16, 2.8 million grainfed cattle were marketed – 35% of all adult cattle slaughtered.

What is the value of production?
• The gross value of Australian cattle and calf production (including live cattle exports) in 2015-16 was estimated at $14.3 billion (ABARES Agricultural Commodities June 2016).
• Cattle are estimated to have contributed 25% of the total farm value of $57.8 billion in 2015-16 (ABARES Agricultural Commodities June 2016).

Domestic value and consumption:
• Domestic expenditure on beef was approximately $7.83 billion in 2015-16 (MLA estimate).
• Australians ate around 25.4kg of beef per person in 2015-16 – maintaining its position as the sixth largest consumer in the world (FAO).
• Around 95.7% of Australian fresh meat buyers purchased beef in 2015-16 (AC Nielsen Homescan).
• In terms of number of meals, beef is the second most popular fresh meat consumed through the foodservice industry after chicken (MLA).
Export value and volume:
- In 2015-16, Australia exported 74% of its total beef and veal production to 84 countries (DA, ABS).
- The value of total beef and veal exports in 2015-16 was $8.5 billion (ABS).
- Australian live cattle exports were valued at $1.5 billion in 2015-16 (ABS), with 1.2 million head exported.

Australia’s place in the world:
- Australia has approximately 3% of the world cattle and buffalo inventory, with India, Brazil and China taking the top three places (USDA 2016).
- Australia produces 4% of the world’s beef supply and was the world’s largest beef exporter during 2015 (USDA 2015).

For MLA contact details in your area go to: www.mla.com.au/About-MLA/Contact

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