

# Fast Facts

# 2025

## Australia's sheepmeat industry

The industry turnover of the sheep farming sector in 2023–24 was \$9.1 billion, 15% below a year ago. Despite prices improving in the beginning of 2024, this followed a significant slide in the first half of 2023 which weighed heavily on annual results. (MLA State of the Industry Report – 2025).

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

### Flock facts and figures:

- There are 22,474 agricultural businesses involved in the sheep industry (MLA State of the Industry Report – 2025).
- The sheep flock is estimated at 79.1 million head as of 30 June 2024, a 0.4% lift year-on-year, making it the largest sheep flock since 2007 (MLA Sheep Projections – September 2025).
- There are 48.9 million breeding ewes and 27.5 million lambs (MLA/AWI Sheep Producers Intentions Survey – October 2024 & May 2025).
- Most of Australia's sheep population was located in NSW (38%), Victoria (24%), WA (17%) and SA (15%). Tasmania and Queensland accounted for 3% and 2% respectively (MLA State of the Industry Report – 2025).

### People in the industry:

- The Australian red meat and livestock industry employed approximately 462,272 people.
- Around 197,512 people are directly employed in the red meat and livestock industry, including on-farm production, processing and retail.

### How much is produced?

- In 2024, Australia produced 629,682 tonnes carcass weight (cwt) of lamb and 297,548 tonnes cwt of mutton (Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2024).
- Total sheepmeat production (lamb and mutton) was 927,230 tonnes cwt in 2024, 9.5% above year-ago levels, (ABS).

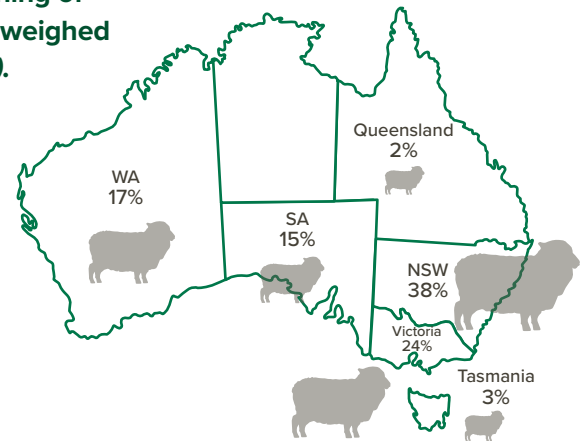
### What is the value of production?

- The gross value of Australian lamb and mutton production is expected to rise by 3% to \$5.0 billion in 2025–26 as higher saleyard prices more than offset a decrease in production. (ABARES Agricultural Commodities Outlook, March 2025).
- The average farm cash income of Australian sheep producers was estimated at \$51,000 in 2023–24, back 44% year-on-year (ABARES).

### Domestic value and consumption:

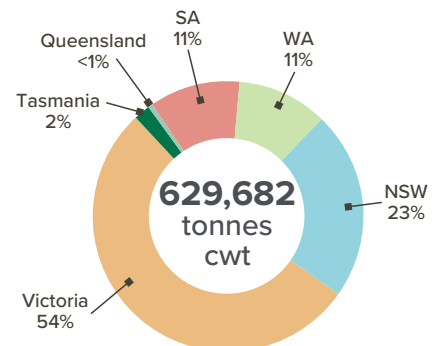
- Domestic expenditure on sheepmeat was approximately \$2.8 billion in 2024 (MLA estimate).
- Australian per capita consumption of sheepmeat was approximately 7kg in 2024, while the global average was 1.4kg (MLA State of the Industry Report – 2025).
- According to the OECD, Australia was the largest sheepmeat consumer on a per capita basis in 2024 followed by Kazakhstan, Türkiye, Israel, Norway, Saudi Arabia, Mainland China and the UK (MLA State of the Industry Report – 2025).

Proportion of total flock size  
National total flock size: 79.1 million head\*



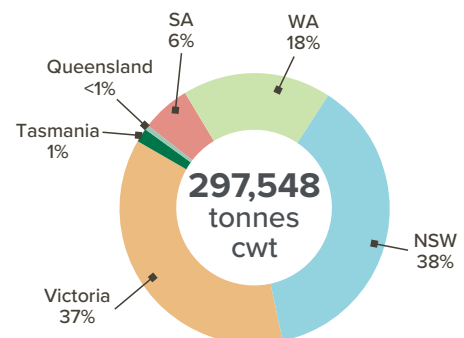
Source: Sheep Producers Intentions Survey, May 2025  
\*MLA estimate, as at June 2024

### Australian lamb production



Source: ABS, 2024

### Australian mutton production



Source: ABS, 2024

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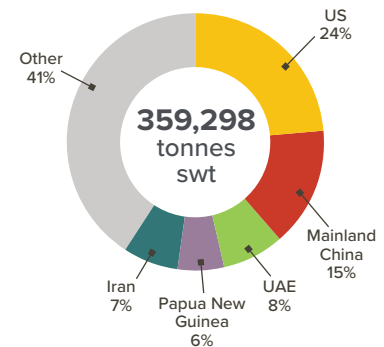
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### Export value and volume:

- In 2024, Australian lamb exports totalled 359,299 tonnes swt, the highest on record and 10% above 2023 (DAFF).
- Australian mutton exports were 255,089 tonnes swt in 2024, up 22% year-on-year and the highest on record (DAFF).
- The value of Australian sheepmeat (lamb and mutton) exports in 2024 was \$5.2 billion, up 17% from the previous year (TDM).
- In 2024, Australian live sheep exports totalled 433,078 head, down 33% on the previous year (DAFF).

### Australian lamb exports

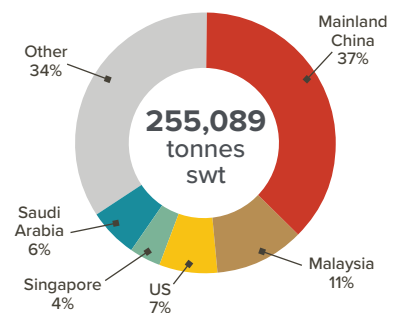


Source: DAFF, 2024

### Australia's place in the world:

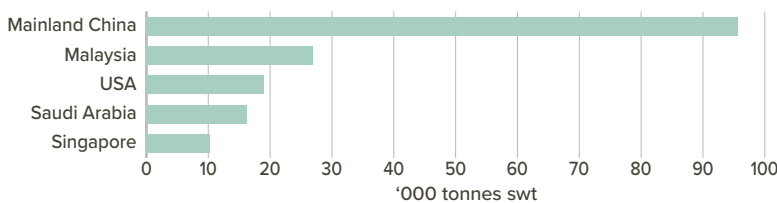
- Australia has approximately 5.9% of the world's sheep flock in 2023 (MLA State of the Industry Report – 2025).
- In 2024, Australia's top three sheepmeat (lamb and mutton) export markets were Greater China (157,391 tonnes swt, or 25.5% of total exports), the US (104,210 tonnes swt, or 17% of total exports), and Malaysia (39,187 tonnes swt, or 6.4% of total exports).
- For the first time, Jordan was Australia's largest destination for live sheep exports, accounting for 30% of exports, due to a 58% drop in Kuwait, largely caused by vessel availability constraints due to unscheduled maintenance and a lack of replacement vessels (DAFF).

### Australian mutton exports



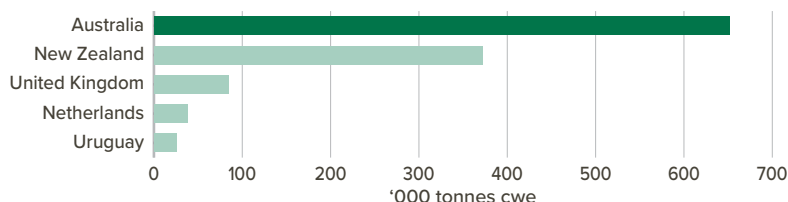
Source: DAFF, 2024

### Australia's top five mutton export markets in 2024



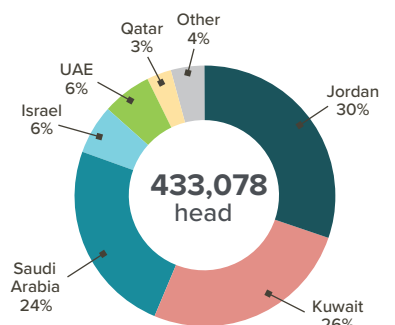
Source: DAFF, 2024

### Top five sheepmeat exporting countries in 2024



Source: ABS, FAO

### Australian live sheep exports



Source: DAFF, 2024

For further information read MLA's State of the Industry Report – 2025 [Click here to read the report](#)

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