



Lot feeding brief

Results for the June quarter 2026 feedlot survey

Alex Fry – Market Information Analyst – insights@mla.com.au

August 2026

National summary

- Australian feedlots contributed 1,050,768 head of cattle to the supply chain in the June 2026 quarter, lifting 0.4% on the March 2026 quarter and 17.5% on the June 2025 quarter.
- Australian feedlots have continued to grow, with built capacity lifting another 1% in the June quarter 2026 for a record 1,794,806 head.
- Numbers on feed in June 2026 also grew to a record 1,660,513 head, a 5.2% increase on the same period last year and 1.9% higher than the March 2026 quarter. The national utilisation rate increased by 1% to 93%.
- In the June 2026 quarter, numbers being placed into feedlots increased due to sustained elevated demand from international markets.

State by state summary

- The Queensland feedlot sector remained stable in terms of built capacity (988,599 head), however turn-off rose 3.2% (653,734) and numbers on feed increased 4.5% (973,049). The utilisation rate lifted from 94% in the March quarter to 98% in the June quarter. Queensland continues to house 55% of total capacity.

Figure 1: Cattle on feed

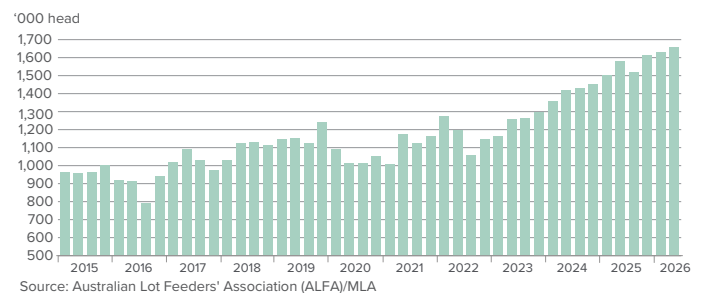


Figure 2: Quarterly grainfed beef exports

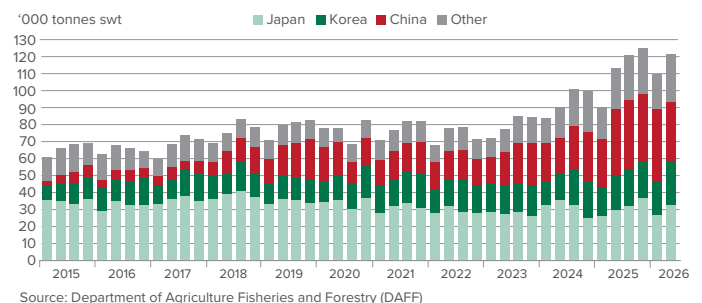


Table 1: Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA)/Australian Lot Feeders' Association (ALFA) survey of feedlot activity

	Feedlot capacity			Numbers on feed			Utilisation %		
	Jun-26	Mar-26	Jun-25	Jun-26	Mar-26	Jun-25	Jun-26	Mar-26	Jun-25
NSW	558,601	542,473	494,396	503,502	501,499	471,767	90	96	95
Vic	81,227	80,822	86,196	63,529	67,432	72,170	78	83	84
Qld	988,599	988,599	957,648	973,049	931,433	893,280	98	94	93
SA	75,464	75,084	77,618	66,112	65,986	71,072	88	77	92
WA	90,915	90,915	90,414	54,321	63,561	70,886	60	61	78
Australia	1,794,806	1,777,893	1,706,272	1,660,513	1,629,911	1,579,175	93	92	93

Source: MLA/ALFA

State by state summary: continued...

- NSW drove most of the national growth in built capacity, reaching (558,601), a lift of 3%. The number of animals on feed lifted 0.4% (to 503,502), turn-off over the quarter dropped 3.9% to 268,112 due to the growth in capacity, utilisation fell from 92% to 90%.
- The SA sector lifted 0.5% in total capacity over the quarter to 75,464 head, while utilisation remained stable at 88%. Turn-off dropped 1.8% to 40,651 head and the number of cattle on feed lifted (0.2%) to 66,112.
- Victorian capacity lifted 0.5% (81,227), while numbers on feed (63,529) and turn-off (47,738) fell 5.8% and 6.9% respectively since the March quarter. Utilisation also fell from 83% in the March quarter to 78% in the June quarter.
- WA feedlot capacity (90,915) remained stable, with cattle on feed (54,321) decreased by 14.5%, resulting in a 10% drop in utilisation to 60%. The number of cattle turned off (40,533) decreased by 5.5% during the June 2026 quarter.

Grainfed exports

- An 11% increase in grainfed beef export volumes over the quarter led to a total of 121,750 tonnes being exported.
- This figure is a record level of grainfed beef exports for a June quarter and is a 7.7% increase on the June quarter 2025.
- Grainfed beef exports as a proportion of all beef exports declined slightly since the March 2026, making up 28% of total exports, compared to 30% in the previous quarter.
- Market access challenges created some disruption for beef exports. Volumes sent to China decreased 16% to 35,884 tonnes over the quarter, making up 29% of total exports. Meanwhile, exports to Korea over the quarter increased 29% at 25,027 tonnes, and exports to Japan increased 21% to 32,656 tonnes.
- When comparing the same period from last year, grainfed export volumes are down 9% in China but up 26% in Korea and 9% in Japan.
- Outside of China, Korea and Japan, Australia continues to have access to a diverse range of markets, in total Australia exported grainfed beef to 52 countries.

Table 2: Numbers on feed by feedlot size

Feedlot size (head)	Jun-26	Mar-26	Jun-25
< 500	8,767	9,818	12,254
500-1,000	51,953	64,160	47,954
1,000-10,000	438,350	426,674	441,984
>10,000	1,161,443	1,129,259	1,076,983
Total	1,660,513	1,629,911	1,579,175

Source: MLA/ALFA

Domestic feeder cattle price and supply

- The feeder cattle market lifted over the June 2026 quarter with the Feeder Steer Indicator lifting 2.5% and the Feeder Heifer Indicator lifting 4.7% against a reduced supply. Average Darling Downs grain prices have lifted, adding pressure to feed costs.
- The National Livestock Reporting Service (NLRS) feeder throughputs dropped in the June 2026 quarter. The Feeder Heifer Indicator saw throughput down 13% to 67,412 head. The Feeder Steer throughput fell by 11% to 76,707 head.
- Feeder prices lifted against the previous quarter. Feeder heifer prices lifted 4.7% or 20¢ to 439¢/kg liveweight (lwt), while feeder steer prices lifted 2.5% to 485¢/kg lwt. The reduced supply and improving on-farm conditions throughout NSW and southern Queensland drove the rising prices, while a long-term El Niño forecast remains.

Figure 3: Grainfed cattle turn-off

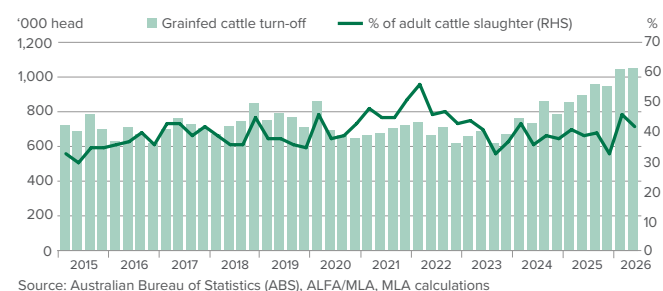


Figure 4: Feed grain and feeder steer prices

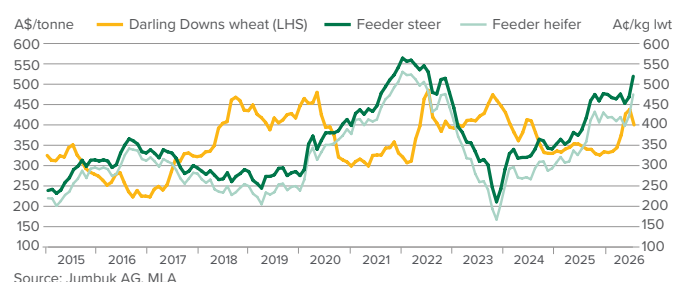


Table 3: Quarterly cattle feedlot turn-off

	Jun-26	Mar-26	Jun-25
Head			
NSW	268,112	278,690	220,841
Vic	47,738	51,036	40,831
Qld	653,734	632,873	537,548
SA	40,651	41,372	46,349
WA	40,533	42,746	48,609
Australia	1,050,768	1,046,717	894,178

Source: MLA/ALFA

© Meat & Livestock Australia, 2026. ABN 39 081 678 364. Care has been taken to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this publication. However, MLA, MDC and ISC ("MLA Group") do not accept responsibility for the accuracy, currency or completeness of the information or opinions contained in this publication. This publication is intended to provide general information only. It has been prepared without taking into account your specific circumstances, objectives, or needs. Any forward-looking statements made within this publication are not guarantees of future performance or results, and performance or results may vary from those expressed in, or implied by, any forward-looking statements. No representation, warranty or other assurance is given as to the fairness, accuracy, completeness, likelihood of achievement or reasonableness of forward-looking statements or related assumptions contained in the publication. You should make your own enquiries before making decisions concerning your interests. Your use of, or reliance on, any content is entirely at your own risk and the MLA Group accepts no liability for any losses or damages incurred by you as a result of that use or reliance.



Access MLA's Terms of Use: mla.com.au/general/Terms-and-conditions/data-and-information