

# Fast Facts

# 2024

## Australia's sheepmeat industry

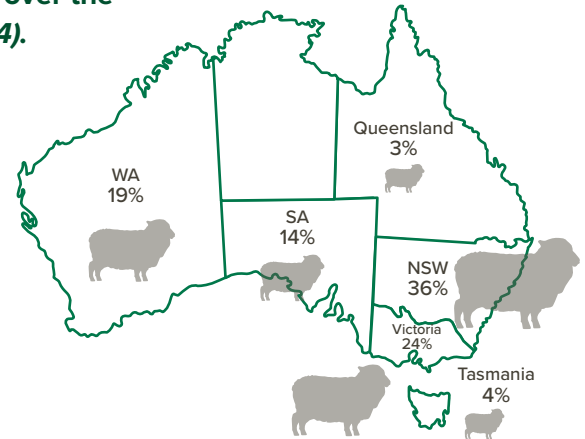
The industry turnover of the sheep farming sector in 2022–23 was **\$9.6 billion**, **11.5% above a year ago** despite prices falling dramatically over the first six months of 2023 (*MLA State of the Industry Report – 2024*).

Proportion of total flock size  
National total flock size: 78.8 million head\*

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 20,147 agricultural businesses involved in the sheep industry (*MLA State of the Industry Report – 2024*).
- The sheep flock is estimated at 78.8 million head as of 30 June 2023, making it the largest sheep flock since 2007 (*MLA Sheep Projections – September 2024*).
- There are 48 million breeding ewes and 27.1 million lambs (*MLA/AWI Sheep Producers Intentions Survey – May 2024*).
- Most of Australia's sheep population was located in NSW (36.6%), Victoria (14.9%), WA (18.8%) and SA (14.9%). Tasmania and Queensland accounted for 3% and 4% respectively (*MLA State of the Industry Report – 2024*).



Source: Sheep Producers Intentions Survey, May 2024  
\*MLA estimate, as at June 2023

### People in the industry:

- The Australian red meat and livestock industry employed approximately 418,921 people.
- Around 194,712 people are directly employed in the red meat and livestock industry, including on-farm production, processing and retail.

### How much is produced?

- In 2023, Australia produced 599,461 tonnes carcass weight (cwt) of lamb and 246,003 tonnes cwt of mutton (ABS).
- Total sheepmeat production (lamb and mutton) was 845,464 tonnes cwt in 2023, 19% above year-ago levels, (ABS).

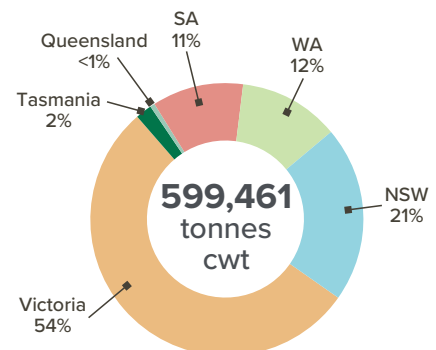
### What is the value of production?

- The gross value of Australian lamb and mutton production is expected to rise by 5% to \$4.6 billion in 2024–25 due to higher prices and higher production. (ABARES Agricultural Commodities Outlook, June 2024).
- The average farm cash income of Australian lamb producers<sup>12</sup> was estimated at \$91,600 in 2022–23, back 27.6% year-on-year (ABARES).

### Domestic value and consumption:

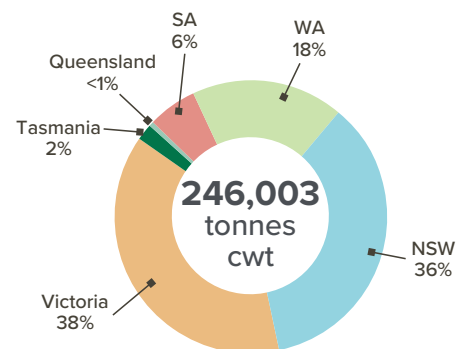
- Domestic expenditure on sheepmeat was approximately \$3.5 billion in 2023 (MLA estimate).
- Australian per capita consumption of sheepmeat was approximately 7.1kg in 2023, while the global average was 1.3kg (*MLA State of the Industry Report – 2024*).
- According to the OECD, Australia was the largest sheepmeat consumer on a per capita basis in 2023 followed by Kazakhstan, Türkiye, Israel, Norway, Saudi Arabia, China and the UK (*MLA State of the Industry Report – 2024*).

### Australian lamb production



Source: ABS, 2023

### Australian mutton production



Source: ABS, 2023

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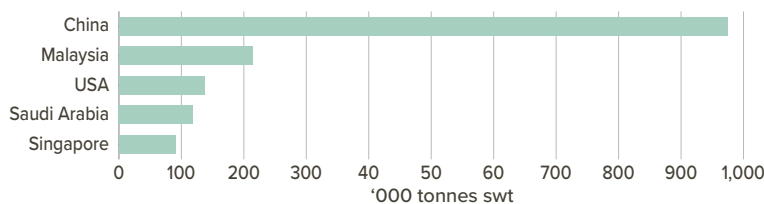
### Export value and volume:

- In 2023, Australian lamb exports totalled 326,014 tonnes swt, the highest on record and 15% above 2022 (DAFF).
- Australian mutton exports were 209,580 tonnes swt in 2023, up 46% year-on-year and the highest on record (DAFF).
- The value of Australian sheepmeat (lamb and mutton) exports in 2023 was \$4.4 billion, down 4% from the previous year (TDM).
- In 2023, Australian live sheep exports totalled 611,822 head, up 22% on the previous year (DAFF).

### Australia's place in the world:

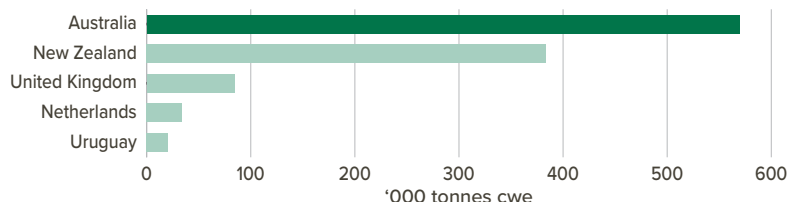
- Australia has approximately 5.8% of the world's sheep flock in 2022 (MLA State of the Industry Report – 2024).
- In 2023, Australia's top three sheepmeat (lamb and mutton) export markets were China (165,244 tonnes swt, or 30.9% of total exports), the US (80,069 tonnes swt, or 14.9% of total exports), and Malaysia (30,380 tonnes swt, or 5.7% of total exports) (DAFF).
- Kuwait remained Australia's largest destination for live sheep exports in 2023 accounting for 44% of exports, followed by Israel at 14% (DAFF).

### Australia's top five mutton export markets in 2023



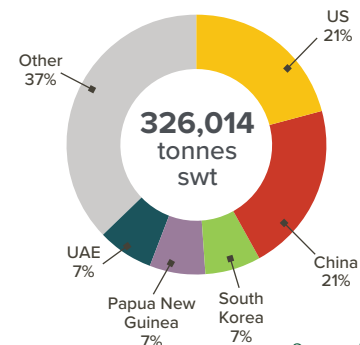
Source: DAFF, 2023

### Top five sheepmeat exporting countries in 2023



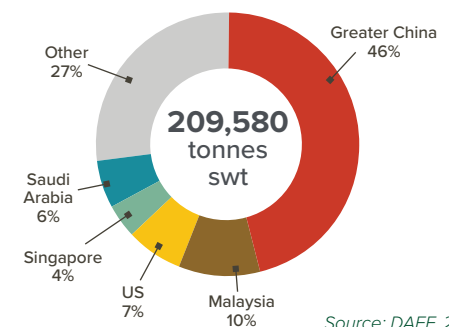
Source: ABS, FAO

### Australian lamb exports



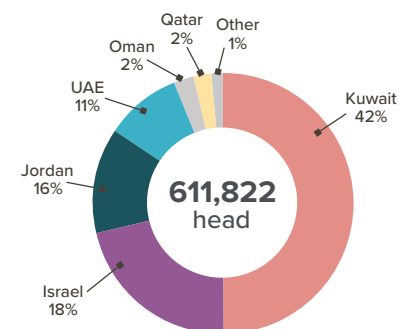
Source: DAFF, 2023

### Australian mutton exports



Source: DAFF, 2023

### Australian live sheep exports



Source: DAFF, 2023

For further information read MLA's State of the Industry Report – 2024 [Click here to read the report](#)

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