



6 March 2017

Media Release

Cattle numbers on feed recover

Cattle on feed for the December 2016 quarter increased 146,915 head, or 18% from the September quarter, to 935,788 head according to the results of the ALFA/MLA quarterly survey.

Greater numbers on feed were seen in all states, particularly South Australia which also experienced a 21% capacity increase.

NSW and Queensland also indicated increases of cattle on feed of 14% and 17% respectively on the September 2016 quarter.

The numbers were down, however, year-on-year by 6.2% from the record levels of the December 2015 quarter.

ALFA President, Tess Herbert said that the results from the December survey indicated a correlation with the seasonal conditions and tighter supply incentivising greater productivity through the feedlot sector.

"2016 closed with average carcass weights reaching a record high of 287.83kg/head as tighter cattle supply drove greater utilisation of the cattle that were available. This was achieved through favourable seasonal conditions but also greater utilisation of cattle on feed," Ms Herbert said.

"Now we are seeing parts of Queensland dry and NSW drying off very quickly, whilst demand still remains for consistent beef supply despite some fluctuations in export markets. The jump in numbers reflect demand for the feedlot sector's ability to provide a consistent quantity and quality of beef for our customers, irrespective of Australia's variable weather conditions and cattle supply."

"The recent increase in feedlot capacity is also a show of confidence in the grainfed system", Ms Herbert said.

Ben Thomas, MLA's Manager of Market Information, said that while the extent of the rise of cattle on feed was unexpected, low feed prices continued to assist the cost of gain.

"Despite recovering from September quarter averages, ex-Darling Downs grain prices remained well below year-ago levels in the December quarter, with wheat prices 22% lower on \$225/tonnes, while barley prices slipped 27% to \$198/tonne," Mr Thomas said.

"Similarly, Riverina wheat prices eased 27% year-on-year, to \$183/tonne for the quarter, while barley declined 32% to \$158/tonne."

Mr Thomas said that the fodder prices had followed a similar trend, "The quarterly average for Darling Downs cereal and lucerne fodder eased 27% and 23%, to \$230/tonne and \$345/tonne, respectively."

Australian grainfed beef exports eased in the December quarter, down 7% from year-ago levels, "Grainfed exports totalled 64,290 tonnes swt, which took total grainfed exports for 2016 to 260,386 tonnes swt," Mr Thomas said. "This eased 1% from record high exports during 2015."

-Ends-

For more information:

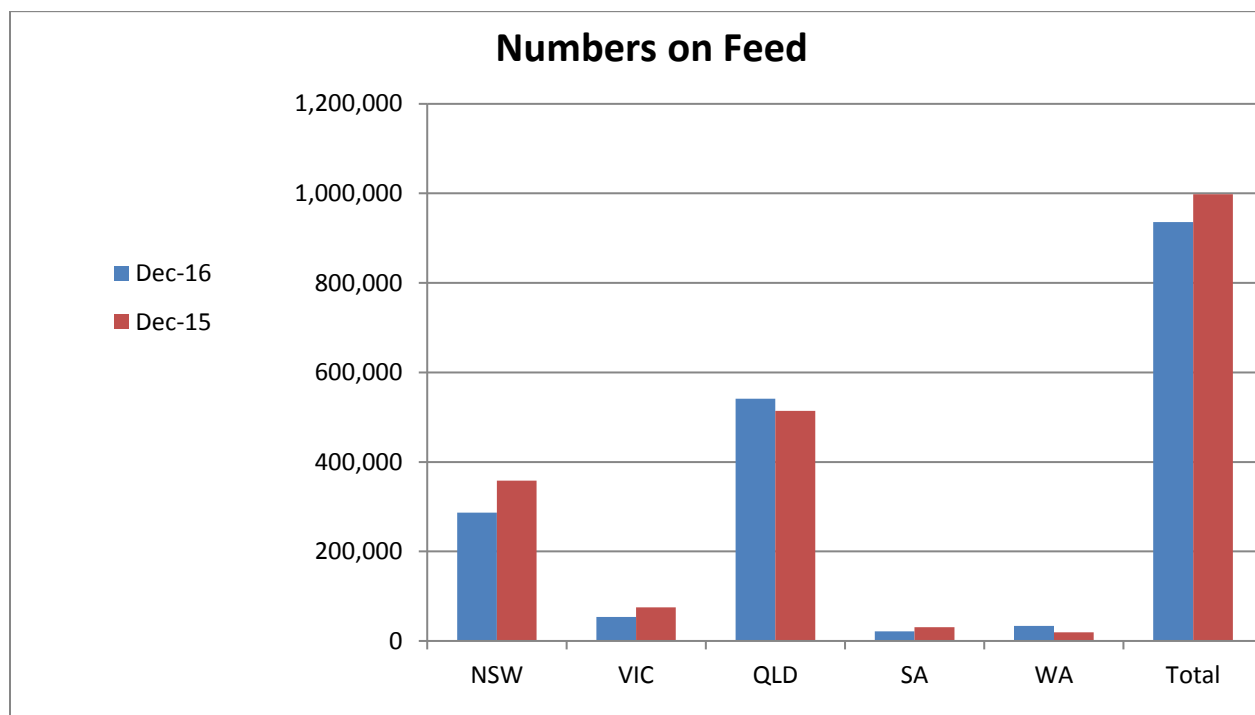
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**ALFA / MLA FEEDLOT SURVEY
Oct – Dec 2016**

Cattle Numbers on Feed

Numbers on Feed	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	Total
Dec-16	286,561	53,290	540,875	21,747	33,315	935,788
Sep-16	250,430	46,875	461,839	9,757	19,972	788,873
Dec-15	358,067	75,387	513,969	30,738	19,604	997,765



Total Cattle Turnoff

Total Turnoff (quarterly)	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	Total
Dec-16	155,492	31,980	408,315	11,411	11,108	618,307
Sep-16	226,828	40,351	367,528	8,118	27,279	670,105
Dec-15	210,286	60,765	399,377	21,946	6,693	699,067

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	Numbers on Feed Dec 16	Numbers on Feed Sep 16	Numbers on Feed Dec 15
New South Wales			
Less than 500 head	958	4,150	3,514
500 -1000 head	9,647	8,920	11,248
1000 - 10000 head	78,349	80,830	113,575
over 10000 head	197,607	156,531	229,730
State Total	286,561	250,430	358,067
Queensland			
Less than 500 head	6,817	8,970	5,492
500 -1000 head	8,701	20,359	9,468
1000 - 10000 head	177,806	147,979	157,935
over 10000 head	347,551	284,531	341,074
State Total	540,875	461,839	513,969
Victoria			
500 -1000 head	4,458	6,510	7,518
1000 - 10000 head	21,587	17,052	26,937
over 10000 head	27,245	23,313	40,932
State Total	53,290	46,875	75,387
South Australia			
Less than 500 head	0	560	757
500 -1000 head	0	2,016	1,680
1000 - 10000 head	21,747	7,181	28,301
State Total	21,747	9,757	30,738
Western Australia			
Less than 500 head	2,868	165	2,088
500 -1000 head	0	2,030	2,909
1000 - 10000 head	30,447	17,777	14,607
State Total	33,315	19,972	19,604
Australia			
Less than 500 head	10,643	13,845	11,851
500 -1000 head	22,806	39,834	32,823
1000 - 10000 head	329,936	270,819	341,355
over 10000 head	572,404	464,374	611,736
Total	935,788	788,873	997,765

Total Capacity	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	Total
Dec-16	390,222	74,651	667,432	40,307	67,777	1,240,389
Sep-16	390,222	75,150	662,328	33,298	59,777	1,220,775

Source: Feedlot Capacity figures are provided by AUS-MEAT Limited (AUS-MEAT). AUS-MEAT owns and administers the National Feedlot Accreditation Scheme (NFAS) on behalf of ALFA and the feedlot sector. Actual Feedlot Capacity figures are reported under the NFAS.

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