Quarterly production and slaughter volumes

MEAT & LIVESTOCK AUSTRALIA MARKET INFORMATION

December Quarter 2024 data

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		Slaughter (head)	Production (tonne)	Carcase weight (kg)	Live export (head)	Total turnoff (head)	Seasonal estimate (Full Year Run Rate*)	Value of production (A$)	Value per animal (A$)	Why**
Beef	Figure	**2,132,700**	**662,827**	**310.79**	**201,267**	**2,333,967**	**9,078,545**	**$4,195,383,074**	**$1,967**	Over the fourth quarter, cattle supply reduced after witnessing the highest quarterly cattle slaughter since 2019. Annual cattle slaughter in 2024 hit 8.3 million, marking it the largest slaughter since 2019.
	Quarter on Quarter change	-5%	-4%	1%	-2%	-5%	1%	-2%	3%	
	Year on year change	15%	14%	-1%	1%	14%	18%	44%	24%	
	Comparison to 5 year average	24%	25%	0%	4%	22%	20%	22%	-4%	
Male cattle	Figure	**1,028,379**	**355,890**	**346.07**	–	–	–	–	–	Bull, bullock and steer slaughter, production eased by 4% while carcase weights remained stable. However over the last 5 years male cattle slaughter remains elevated.
	Quarter on Quarter change	-4%	-4%	0%	–	–	–	–	–	
	Year on year change	5%	7%	2%	–	–	–	–	–	
	Comparison to 5 year average	15%	17%	1%	–	–	–	–	–	
Female cattle	Figure	**1,104,368**	**306,938**	**277.93**	–	–	–	–	–	Cow and heifer slaughter eased by 6% since the last quarter, a slowing of cow slaughter after consecutive quarters of high throughput.
	Quarter on Quarter change	-6%	-4%	2%	–	–	–	–	–	
	Year on year change	27%	26%	-1%	–	–	–	–	–	
	Comparison to 5 year average	33%	35%	1%	–	–	–	–	–	
Sheepmeat	Figure	**9,602,500**	**231,666**	**24.13**	**113,482**	**9,715,982**	**38,593,478**	**$1,297,057,682**	**$135.07**	Sheep slaughter and production lifted by 6% high for the last quarter of 2024. For CY24, it marks the largest combined lamb and sheep slaughter and production on record.
	Quarter on Quarter change	6%	6%	0%	251%	7%	1%	-3%	-9%	
	Year on year change	3%	4%	1%	-34%	2%	9%	45%	41%	
	Comparison to 5 year average	25%	22%	-3%	-24%	24%	22%	8%	-16%	
Lamb	Figure	**6,103,800**	**140,819**	**23.07**	–	–	–	–	–	Strong saleyard prices for heavy and trade lamb resulted in processors switching to sheep leading to a slight reduction in lamb slaughter in Q4. Overall lamb slaughter remains above historical levels.
	Quarter on Quarter change	-4%	-6%	-2%	–	–	–	–	–	
	Year on year change	-8%	-8%	0%	–	–	–	–	–	
	Comparison to 5 year average	7%	1%	-6%	–	–	–	–	–	
Sheep	Figure	**3,498,700**	**90,847**	**25.97**	–	–	–	–	–	Favourable market conditions pushed mutton slaughter to record levels. A large cohort of older breeding ewes meant heavier sheep were favoured by processors, leading to a 31% increase in production.
	Quarter on Quarter change	29%	31%	2%	–	–	–	–	–	
	Year on year change	31%	30%	-1%	–	–	–	–	–	
	Comparison to 5 year average	71%	73%	1%	–	–	–	–	–	
Goat	Figure	**874,126**	**14,276**	**16.33**	**0**	**0**	**3,404,139**	–	–	Goat slaughter has remained consistently high lifting by 2% in Q4. Growing cost of production and a large population of goats has driven this record goat slaughter and production.
	Quarter on Quarter change	2%	3%	1%	-100%	-100%	-2%	–	–	
	Year on year change	40%	50%	7%	-100%	-100%	42%	–	–	
	Comparison to 5 year average	82%	84%	0%	-100%	-100%	83%	–	–	

Female slaughter rate (FSR)

	FSR
FSR	**51.8%**
Quarter on Quarter change	0%
Year on year change	3%
Comparison to 5 year average	4%

Rebuild Status

The Female Slaughter Rate (FSR) measures the percentage of female cattle slaughtered relative to the total. Industry uses a 47% FSR as a technical lead indicator for gauging whether the national cattle herd is undergoing liquidation or a rebuild phase. This quarter, the FSR is just below 52%, indicating the industry is in a technical destock since the beginning of the year. Despite entering a technical destock, the herd has not shown any signs of a liquidation instead producers looking at maintaining stocking rates if weather conditions allow.

Source: MLA/ABS

*NB: Based on historical seasonality (2000–2022)

** Note: The reasoning behind these figures are not solely attributed to the brief explanation in this doucment. For further justification of the drivers of these figures, contact insights@mla.com.au