

Australia's red meat exports set for record high in 2024-25

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Australia's red meat exports are projected to reach record levels in 2024-25, according to the latest data from the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES). This achievement is closely tied to the improved trade relationship with China, following the removal of suspensions on Australian meat processing establishments, significantly boosting exports to the region. This surge is expected to increase the overall value of agriculture, fisheries, and forestry to \$94.3 billion, marking the second-highest total on record.

Australian beef and veal exports are anticipated to hit approximately \$13.9 billion in 2024-25, representing a 12 per cent increase from the previous record set in 2023-24. This growth follows China's recent decision to lift the remaining suspensions on two Australian meat processing establishments, enabling the full resumption of red meat exports to the country. Over the past year, the removal of suspensions on eight beef processing facilities has positively impacted trade relations.

China has lifted restrictions on all 10 Australian abattoirs that were banned between 2020 and 2022. These bans coincided with China's decision to block imports of several Australian commodities, including coal, barley, and wine, after Canberra requested an independent investigation into the origins of COVID-19.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese expressed optimism about the developments, stating, "This is great news for Australian exporters, producers, and farmers. Since we were elected, we've worked tirelessly to resume trade, and that's exactly what we are seeing. It's a win for trade and a win for Australian jobs – something my Government will always back."

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Julie Collins echoed this sentiment, noting, "The results from this quarter's forecasts show that Australia's farmers are still punching above their weight. Our Government is proud to be backing our farmers to succeed."

It's especially heartening to see demand for our red meat increase. It shows there is room for these markets to grow and improve. In 2023â??24, Australia exported over 70 per cent of its agricultural, fisheries, and forestry production to 169 markets globally â?? the most diversified trade has ever been. This is thanks to our Government, and weâ??ll continue to strengthen our trading relationships so Australian farmers get their best deal for their hard work.â??

Currently, China is the second-largest market for Australian beef and veal, following the United States. The lifting of the final two suspensions signifies a return to normal operations for beef and veal exports, which were valued at \$2.2 billion in 2023â??24. The United States led as the primary destination for Australian beef and veal, worth \$3.3 billion in 2023â??24, followed by China at \$2.2 billion and Japan at \$2 billion.

Australian beef exports have surged this year as the country steps into the gap left by low U.S. production, though most of the increase has been in shipments to the United States and Japan.

Exports in 2024â??25 are being driven by strong demand from the United States, Japan, and South Korea. Lower supply from the United States is enhancing prices and competitiveness for Australian producers in international markets, prompting higher production rates.

Australian lamb and mutton exports also reached a record high in 2023â??24. The United States served as the largest market for lamb, while China remained the largest market for mutton. Notably, the largest increases in both lamb and mutton exports were observed in the Middle East and North Africa region.

Australian beef and sheep meat producers benefit directly from the Albanese Labor Government's steady approach to trade policy. Ongoing engagement and advocacy have resulted in positive outcomes with China, Australia's largest trading partner. Red meat exports to China remain significantly above long-term averages, valued at \$3.1 billion in 2023â??24.

The trend of increasing sheep meat exports to the Middle East is expected to grow further following the Albanese Government's recent trade agreement with the United Arab Emirates, which will eliminate tariffs on red meat exports. Strong international demand for Australian meat has also contributed to rising livestock prices and exports, supported by favourable production conditions that have led to high livestock availability in recent years.

Shraddha Warde

shraddha.warde@mmactiv.com