

BEEF CATTLE

Cattle farming occurs in all states and territories. While dairy cattle are restricted mainly to southern and coastal districts, beef cattle are concentrated in Queensland and New South Wales.

Cattle numbers in Australia increased slowly during the 1960s and 1970s, despite seasonal changes and heavy slaughterings, to a peak of 31.8 million in 1976. Beef cattle production is often combined with cropping, dairying and sheep. In the northern half of Australia, cattle properties and herd sizes are very large, pastures are generally unimproved, fodder crops are rare and beef is usually the only product. The industry is more intensive in the south, with higher stocking rates per hectare, improved pastures and use of fodder crops, use of rotational grazing practices and increased inputs such as fertiliser and animal health products.

Drought conditions in the early-1980s led to a decline in the beef herd until 1984. For the next five years the size of the herd remained relatively stable. Between 1989 and 1998 cattle numbers increased gradually, despite unfavourable weather conditions continuing in many parts of Australia. After a slight decline in 1999, cattle numbers increased to a high of 27.9 million in 2002. Dry conditions over much of the country in 2002-03 saw cattle numbers fall by 4% to 26.7 million. However, improved conditions in some regions resulted in numbers increasing by 3% to 27.5 million in 2003-04.

Table 14.31 shows the number of cattle by age, sex and purpose, and table 14.32 shows the number of cattle by state and territory. Map 14.33 shows the distribution of beef cattle in Australia at 30 June 2001.

14.31 CATTLE, By purpose - 30 June

	1999(a)	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
Milk cattle						
Cows (in milk and dry)	2,155	2,171	2,176	2,123	2,050	2,038
Other milk cattle	1,065	969	1,041	1,008	999	1,016
Total	3,220	3,140	3,217	3,131	3,049	3,055
Meat cattle						

Bulls and bull calves used or intended for service	528	518	591	620	570	617
Other calves under one year	5,740	5,872	6,083	5,679	5,292	5,260
Cows and heifers one year and over	11,621	12,282	12,007	12,652	12,245	12,570
Other cattle one year and over	5,469	5,774	5,823	5,788	5,508	5,964
Total	23,358	24,448	24,504	24,739	23,615	24,410
Total	26,578	27,588	27,722	27,870	26,664	27,465

(a) At 31 March.

Source: Agricultural Commodities, Australia (7121.0).

14.32 CATTLE, By state and territory - 30 June

	NSW '000	Vic. '000	Qld '000	SA '000	WA '000	Tas. '000	NT '000	Aust.(a) '000
1999(b)	6,291	4,125	10,748	1,183	1,931	724	1,567	26,578
2000	5,970	4,264	11,808	1,184	2,165	617	1,571	27,588
2001	6,215	4,405	11,376	1,242	2,128	636(c)	1,707	27,722
2002	6,021	4,412	11,544	1,381	2,104	619(c)	1,777	27,870
2003	5,817	4,388	10,740	1,401	1,945	682(c)	1,683	26,664
2004	5,816	4,281	11,500	1,352	2,095	684(d)	1,730	27,465

(a) Includes ACT.

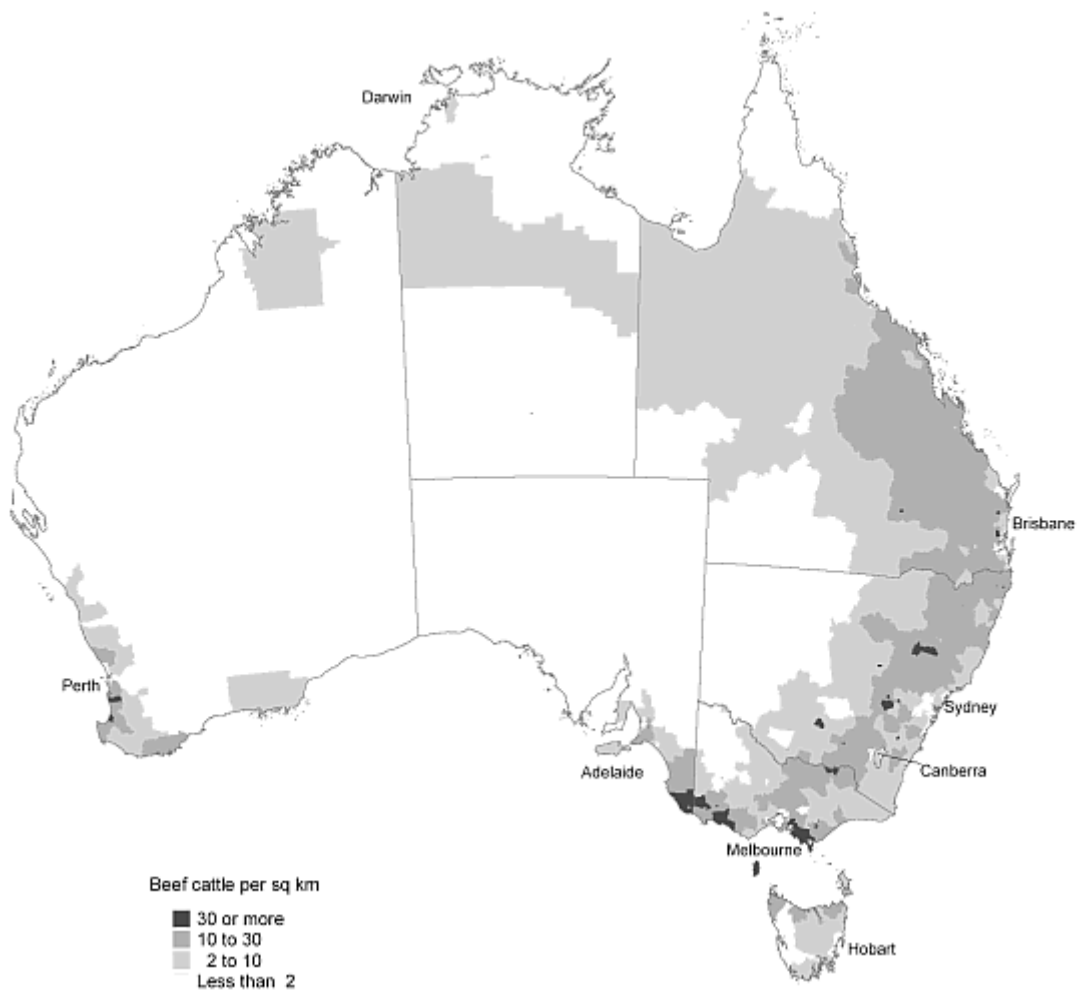
(b) At 31 March.

(c) Excludes dairy cattle.

(d) No dairy cattle were recorded in NT.

Source: Agricultural Commodities, Australia (7121.0).

14.33 BEEF CATTLE, Distribution - 30 June 2001(a)



(a) This map has been generated using Agricultural Census data at the Statistical Local Area level for 2000-01.

Source: AgStats on GSP (7117.0.30.001) CD-ROM product 1996-97 to 2000-01.