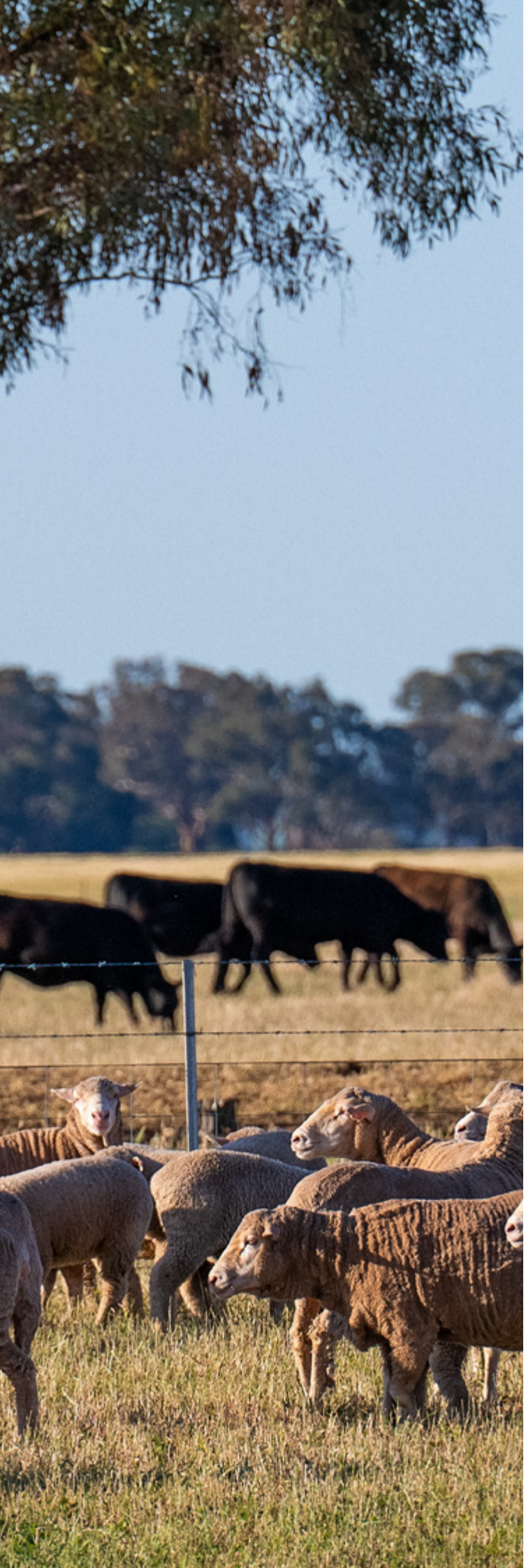
MEAT & LIVESTOCK AUSTRALIA

2024–2025

ANNUAL OUTCOMES REPORT

Delivering consumer confidence in eating quality

MEAT STANDARDS AUSTRALIA GRADED ®



Contents

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MLA acknowledges the matching funds provided by the Australian Government to support the research and development detailed in this publication.

MLA acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we live, work and care for. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, as we recognise their history, culture, connection to land and water, and share in their commitment to caring for Country.

Meat Standards Australia (MSA) is the world's leading eating quality grading program for beef and sheepmeat, developed to improve the eating quality and consistency of red meat.

The system is based on more than 1.8 million consumer taste tests by more than 250,000 consumers from 13 markets and takes into account the factors that affect eating quality from paddock-to-plate.

The MSA program delivers customers the assurance of eating quality consistency, removing the need for specialist beef and sheepmeat knowledge. MSA forms the foundation of the brands it underpins and provides the trust, confidence and consistency required by consumers when purchasing and cooking red meat.

Founded in 1998, MSA continues to both evolve and drive the improvement in eating quality of Australian red meat. It delivers commercial outcomes utilising more than 30 years of research and development across the entire supply chain.

The MSA program provides a focus on adoption, supporting producers, processors, brand owners, livestock advisors and other supply chain stakeholders to understand carcase performance, adopt eating quality principles, and build on areas for improvement.

Ultimately, the MSA program generates and captures additional value along the entire supply chain. The MSA program has now expanded beyond eating quality, to also report on additional carcase traits such as lean meat yield and animal health traits.

The MSA program

MSA is the world's leading eating quality grading program for beef and sheepmeat.

It ensures quality and consistency for consumers of Australian beef and sheepmeat and advises the correct cooking method for each cut.

It provides detailed feedback on eating quality to producers and processors.

MSA equips producers with information and tools to make on-farm management decisions to improve eating quality of their livestock.

Price differentials for MSA-compliant livestock improve profitability for producers.

MSA provides the opportunity for brand owners to differentiate product in the market and underpins confidence in, and consistency of, their brands.

Program manager's report

David Packer

MSA Program manager

Another year of records

The MSA program continues to evolve to capture even greater value for the Australian red meat industry, with the number of animals presented for MSA grading reaching a new record of 4.13 million head in FY25. Following on from that success was the achievement of the best eating quality result since the MSA Index was introduced – a record MSA Index of 58.81. This continued improvement in MSA Index and ultimately, the eating quality of beef, means there are 10% more 5-star tenderloins, 14% more 4-star cube rolls, and 10% more 4-star striploins compared with 10 years ago. This represents the outcome of continual improvement in genetics and management.

The MSA program delivered more than ever back to the farm-gate, with an estimated $409 million in additional returns for MSA compliant beef carcases. This demonstrates the value captured from our customers and consumers being shared along the supply chain. More than 50 million carcases have been graded since the MSA program began.

Ongoing support for brand owners in international markets to explain the value of MSA – including differentiation to the grades of United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) beef – has gained even further momentum, particularly as a result of increased demand for Australian beef. Several online and in-person activities to support this work took place, including MSA consumer sensory research with Japanese consumers.

Excitingly, two sheepmeat supply chains have partnered with MLA to begin the process of enabling the MSA sheepmeat cuts-based grading model. This has involved installing a range of technologies to measure carcase traits and equipping the plant IT infrastructure with the MSA system to enable eating quality prediction. A range of long-term producer adoption initiatives have also been set in motion, with the aim of preparing producers for current and future brand specifications.

Research investments have led to the development of an expanded MSA sheepmeat 23 cut model which includes hoggets and saleyard consignment.

The MSA team also delivered a range of education activities across the supply chain, with 88 events and workshops attended by more than 3,200 participants from across the supply chain. These included producers, lot feeders, processors, agents and livestock advisors. These activities focused on supporting producers to understand carcase feedback, including the new platform, myFeedback, as well as how to identify opportunities for improvement.

More than 2,500 producers from more than 3,000 properties (Property Identification Codes (PICs)) used the myFeedback platform for insights into MSA, carcase traits, lean meat yield (LMY%) and animal health traits. These additional traits now form part of the expanded MSA program which, moving forward, will be the commercial program underpinning Australian red meat eating quality and carcase value.

The number of brands underpinned by MSA continues to grow, with 197 beef and 22 sheep brands now MSA licensed.

Butchers and wholesalers are seeing even more value in the MSA program than in previous years, according to the latest research. Quality and consistency remain the top drivers for the decision to stock MSA beef and lamb, with these drivers rated as 'very good to excellent' by 89% of butchers and 100% of wholesalers.

Education and support for end users were topics featured in eight independent boning room workshops. Additionally, 12 workshops were conducted to deliver education on increasing MSA product utilisation,

> The MSA program delivered more than ever back to the farm-gate, with an estimated $409 million in additional returns for MSA compliant beef carcases.

with 162 chefs and staff from food service providers such as airline caterers and mining companies.

The MSA program maintained the USDA Process Verified Program (PVP) certification – which enables brand owners to market their brand in the US alongside the MSA and USDA logos. As US customers are loyal to and trust the USDA brand, this certification will enable Australia to take full advantage of the increased US demand for Australian red meat.

Continued investment into research aims to enable more livestock to be MSA eligible and to discover new and improved traits that explain carcase value.

This financial year saw the completion of the MSA saleyard research for cattle and sheep, enabling an extension of the cattle pathway to 48 hours and saleyard consignment now being included as part of the of the new cuts-based model for sheepmeat.

AUS-MEAT, on behalf of MSA, carried out 159 audit activities to ensure continued integrity and robustness of the MSA program. Additionally, 74 new MSA carcase graders were accredited around the country, and 267 on-plant active MSA graders completed the in-person correlation.

The MSA program continues to grow, underpinning ever improving eating quality outcomes and increasing returns to the Australian red meat industry. The expansion of the MSA program to include additional carcase value traits such as yield and animal health traits, along with the commercialisation of the MSA sheepmeat cuts-based model, will enable industry to capture even further value.

This financial year saw the completion of the MSA saleyard research for cattle and sheep, enabling an extension of the cattle pathway to 48 hours and saleyard consignment now being part of the new cuts-based model for sheepmeat.

FY25 highlights

MSA delivered **$409M in additional farm gate returns** to MSA beef producers

4,327 new producers became MSA-registered

53M cattle graded through the beef program since program inception

58.81 national average MSA Index

4.13M cattle presented for MSA grading, representing **47% of the national adult cattle slaughter**

Certified for quality

ISO 9001:2015 and USDA Process Verified

13,824 beef producers consigned cattle for MSA

2,590 producers participated in **43 training and adoption workshops**

94.8% **compliance** to MSA minimum requirements for beef

197 beef brands **22** sheep brands **now MSA-licensed**

Program integrity

During FY25, 159 third party audits were conducted across multiple MSA licensees including processors, independent boning rooms and saleyards.

AUS-MEAT, on behalf of MSA, carried out 90 MSA integrity checks with MSA-licensed processors and independent boning rooms, to help support and maintain the success of MSA Standards across the supply chain.

A total of 74 new MSA carcase graders were accredited around the country, and 267 MSA graders completed the in-person correlation activities. This helps ensure the consistency of MSA carcase grading across Australia.

MSA retained ISO 9001:2015 Standard certification, ensuring the integrity and reputation of the MSA program's Quality Management System.

The USDA maintained its approval of MSA as a Process Verified Program (PVP), allowing MSA brands to continue utilising the USDA PVP shield on product and marketing materials destined for the USA.

Sixteen MSA training courses, including onsite training for MSA processor operatives and MSA grader training, were conducted with 131 processing staff. One meat science course was held, which provides further detailed education of meat science and eating quality to industry participants.

159 MSA audits
conducted

Checks undertaken on
267 graders

74 new graders

90 processor and independent boning rooms
integrity checks completed

MSA beef

In FY25, a record 4.13 million cattle were presented for MSA grading through 41 licensed Australian beef processor sites (Figure 2), with more than 3.91 million cattle meeting the MSA minimum grading requirements.

MSA graded cattle represented 47% of the national adult cattle slaughter in FY25.

The proportion of MSA graded cattle by feed type was 51% grainfed and 49% non-grainfed, with the non-grainfed proportion increasing two percentage points compared to FY24.

The proportion of Hormone Growth Promotant (HGP)-treated cattle in FY25 was 25%, down four percentage points compared with FY24. For MSA graded grainfed cattle, 42% were HGP-treated in FY25, a reduction of five percentage points compared to FY24. Non-grainfed cattle remained at 8% HGP-treated in FY25.

By state, Queensland presented the largest number of cattle for MSA grading, with 1.78 million head from 2,865 producers, or 43% of the total number of cattle presented for MSA-grading in FY25 nationally **(Figure 3)**.

NSW presented the second largest number for MSA grading, at 1.11 million head, from a total of 3,971 producers. Additionally, the largest increase in numbers graded from South Australia and Western Australia was seen in FY25, at a 52% and 9% increase respectively.

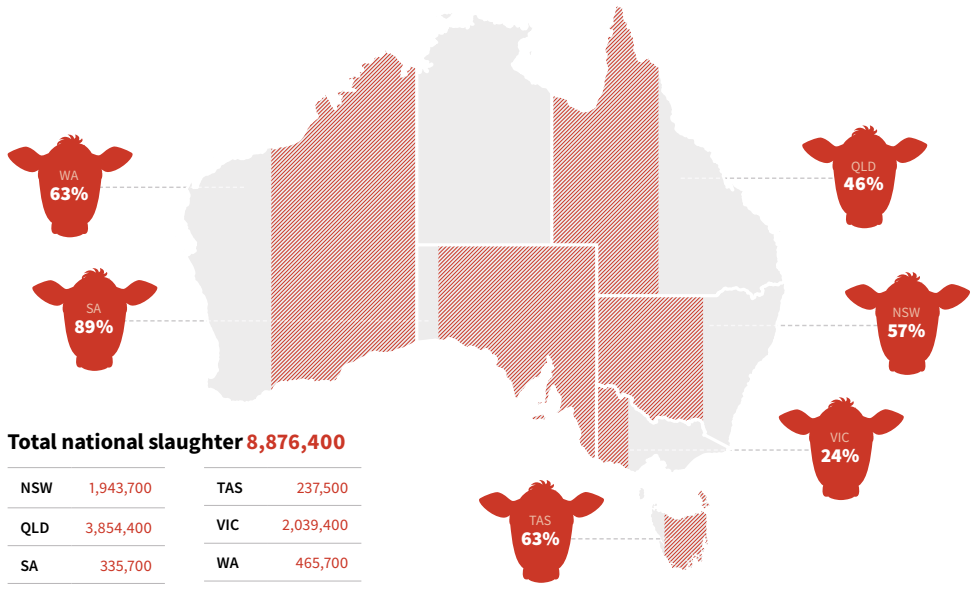
A total of 13,824 beef producers presented cattle for MSA grading in FY25, which was similar to FY24.

South Australia has shown the greatest adoption of MSA at 89% of total state slaughter.

Grainfed cattle are defined as those that were lot fed at a registered National Feedlot Accreditation Scheme (NFAS) feedlot and met the Australian grainfed beef minimum standard specifications.

Non-grainfed cattle are defined as cattle derived from any production system that did not meet the grainfed specifications.

Figure 1: MSA proportion of slaughter by state (FY25)



Total national slaughter 8,876,400

NSW	1,943,700	TAS	237,500
QLD	3,854,400	VIC	2,039,400
SA	335,700	WA	465,700

Figure 2: National MSA beef grading numbers (FY05–FY25)

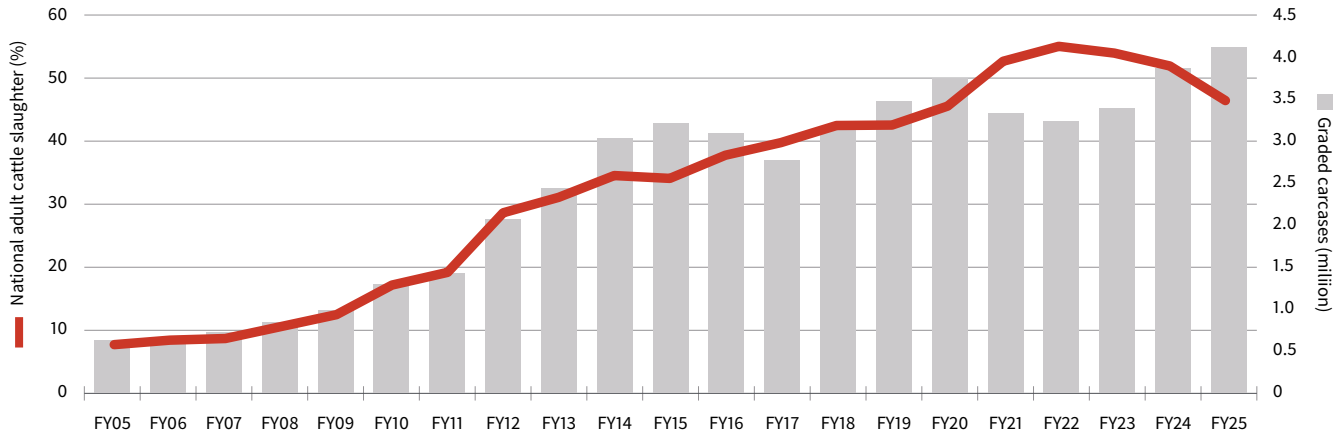
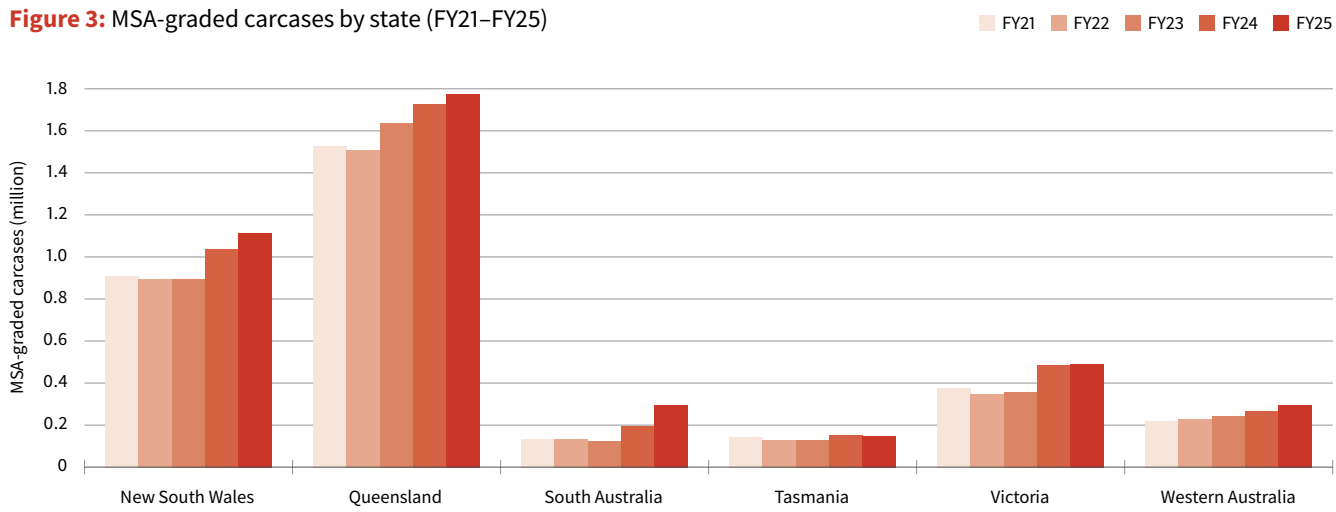


Figure 3: MSA-graded carcases by state (FY21–FY25)



MSA beef carcase compliance

In FY25, national compliance to MSA minimum requirements was 94.8%, improving 0.8% from FY24. Compliance to MSA minimum requirements improved throughout the year, from 94% in July 2024 to 96% in June 2025, as shown in **(Figure 4)**.

By state, in FY25, Queensland compliance improved from 91% in July 2024 to 95% in June 2025. Producers from Victoria continued to have the highest average compliance to MSA minimum requirements at 97.3%, followed by NSW/ACT at 96.7%, up from 96.7% and 96.2% respectively in FY24.

MSA compliance for non-grainfed cattle was 90.8% in FY25 – an increase of 1.5 percentage points from FY24.

MSA compliance for grainfed cattle increased 0.6 percentage points in FY25 to 98.8%.

Figure 4: National non-compliance (FY25)

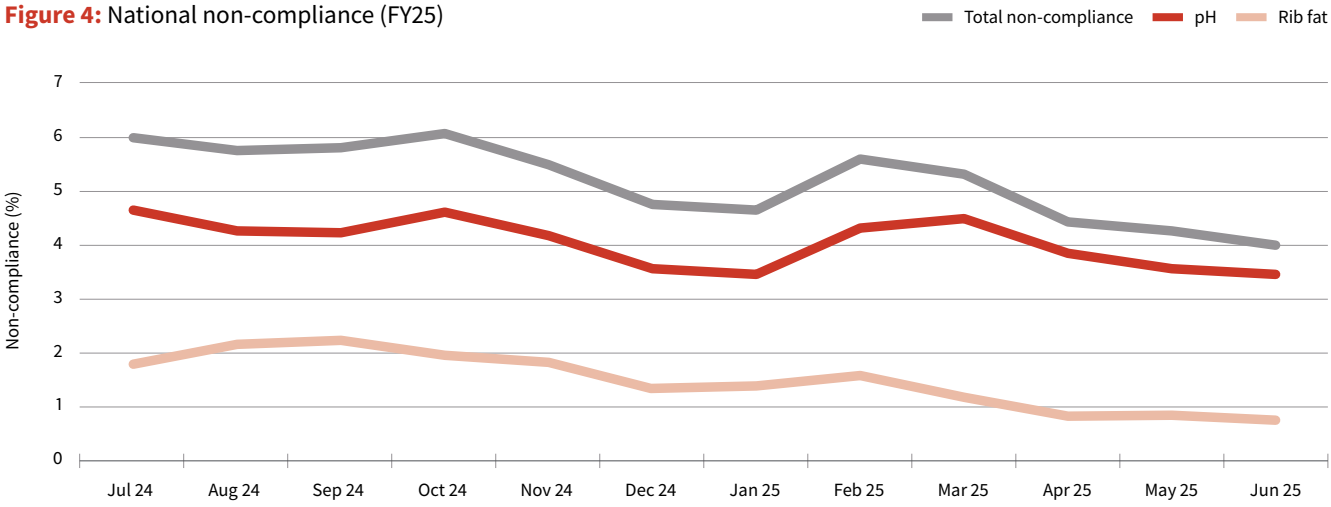
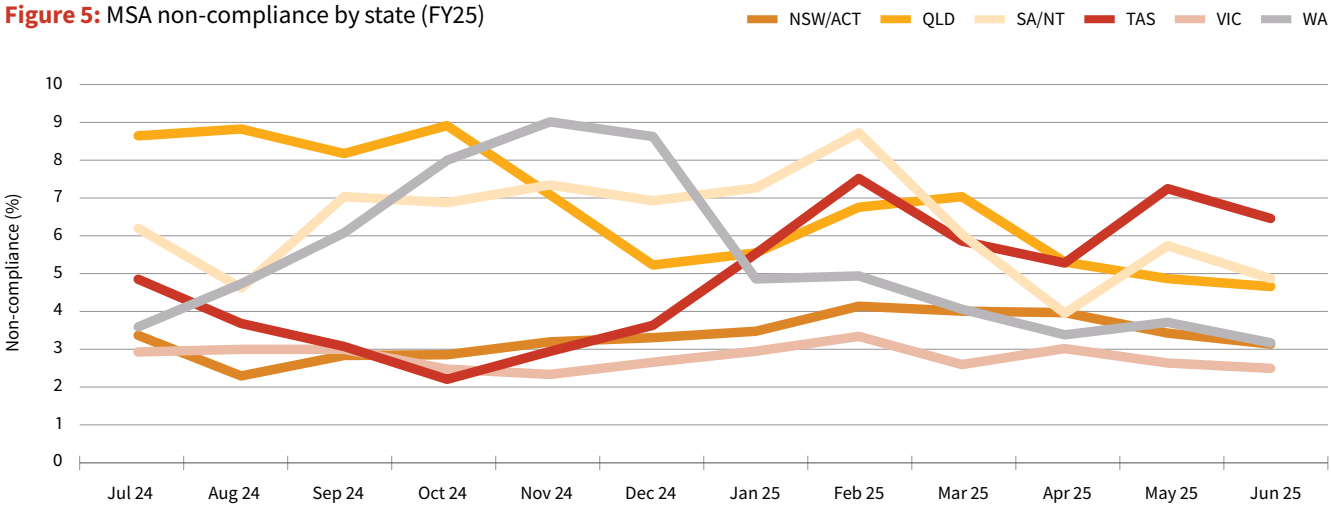


Figure 5: MSA non-compliance by state (FY25)



Compliance to MSA minimum requirements improved throughout the year, from 94% in July 2024 to 96% in June 2025.

MSA Index

The average national MSA Index reached another new record in FY25 following a record high in FY24. Across the 3.19 million carcases which were compliant to MSA requirements, the average national MSA Index was an average of 58.81 – a 0.45 index point increase from FY24.

The average MSA Index for grainfed cattle increased from last year's record high, achieving an average MSA Index of 59.35, a gain of 0.97 index points. In grainfed animals, the improvement in the MSA Index was driven by a decrease in ossification, an increase in MSA marbling, a decrease in hump height and reduced HGP-usage from 47% down to 42%.

The average MSA Index for non-grainfed cattle was 58.22, a decrease of 0.12 points from FY24.

With the exception of NSW, which saw a small decrease of 0.02 points in average MSA Index (averaging 60.07), all states and territories saw an improvement in the average MSA Index in FY25. Queensland had the largest improvement in average MSA Index year-on-year, gaining 0.57 index points from 56.14 to 56.71. WA achieved the highest MSA Index by state/territory, averaging 61.02, gaining 0.47 points from FY24.

Using the MSA Index percentile bands

MSA Index percentile bands provide producers with an indication of where their average MSA Index sits in comparison to the performance of others, ranking national data from the top 1% to the bottom 1%.

For example, if a non-grainfed producer's average MSA Index results are equivalent to or higher than an MSA Index of 61.29, but below an MSA Index of 62.96, **(Table 1)** then they are considered in the top 25% for national MSA Index of MSA-graded, non-grainfed cattle.

Table 1: MSA Index percentile bands (FY25)

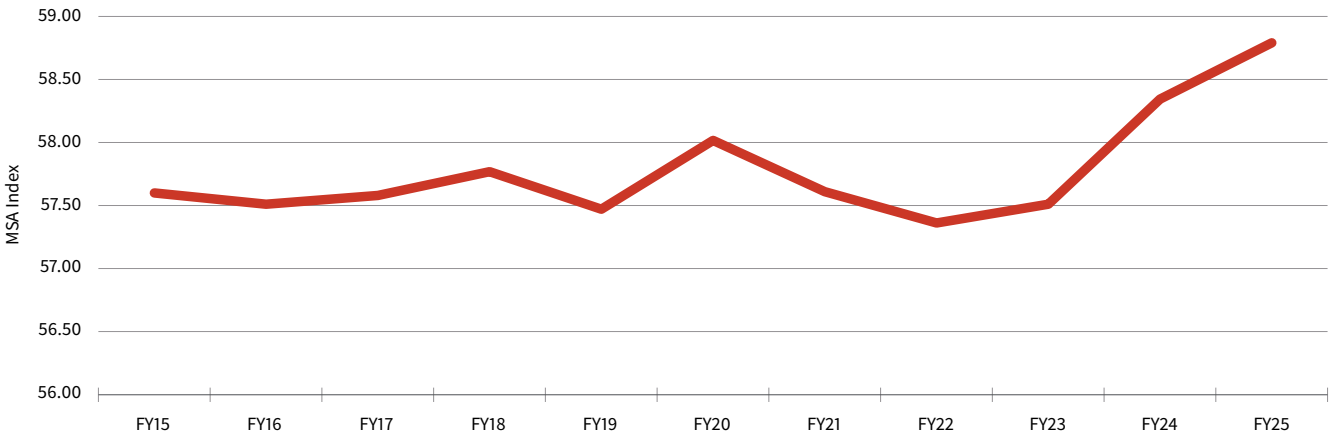
Percentile	National index	Non-grainfed index	Grainfed index
Top 1%	68.46	66.18	68.94
Top 5%	66.32	64.03	67.26
Top 10%	64.84	62.96	66.04
Top 25%	62.16	61.29	63.44
Top 50% (median)	59.34	59.34	59.35
Bottom 25%	55.72	56.09	55.51
Bottom 10%	52.65	51.69	53.21
Bottom 5%	49.55	48.25	50.86
Bottom 1%	45.30	43.42	47.18

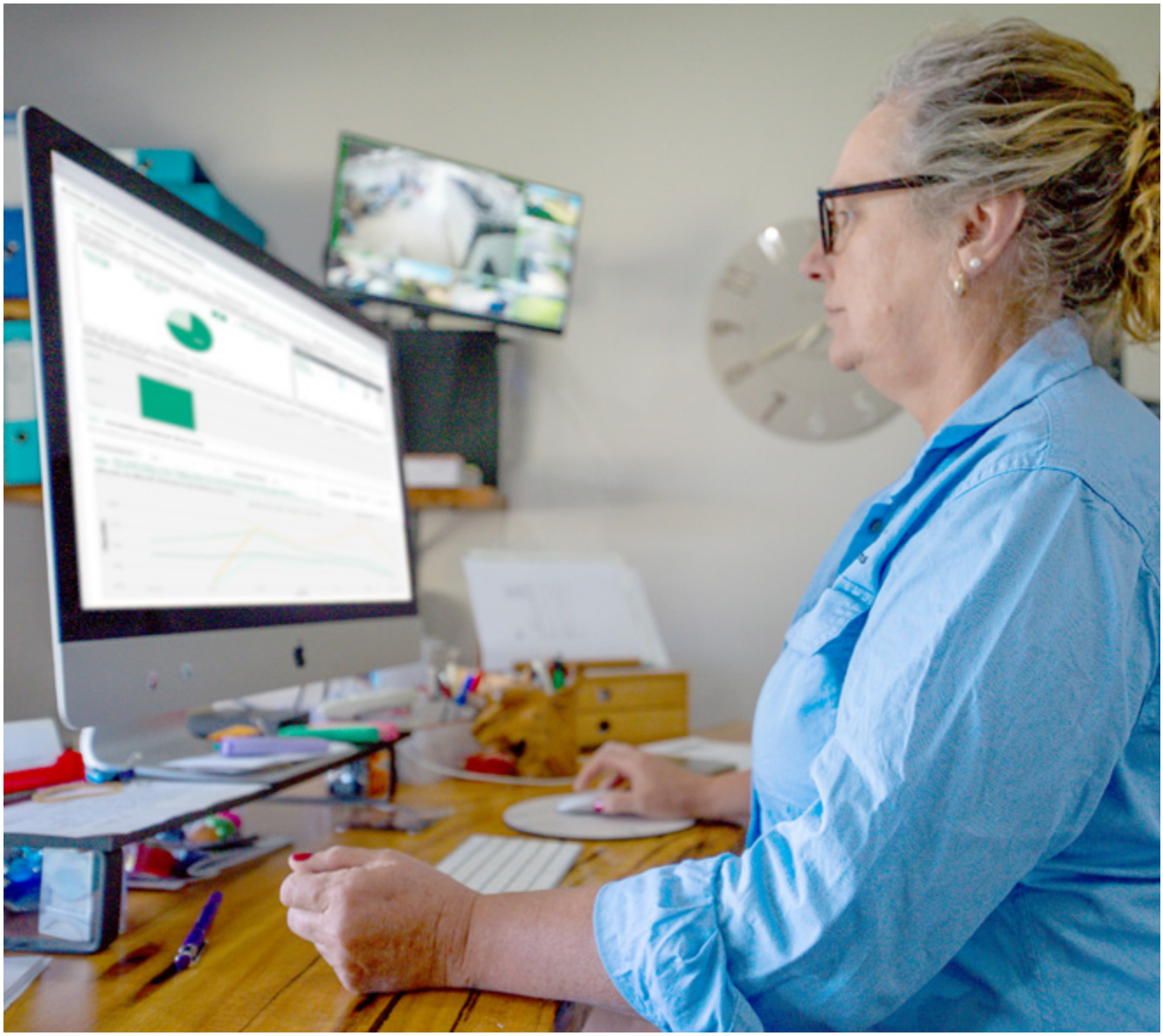
Different carcase attributes will have a varying effect on the MSA Index and ultimately on eating quality outcomes, as shown in **Table 2**. Some traits relate directly to a management decision, such as HGP use or selling MSA-eligible cattle via the saleyard pathway. Other traits, such as marbling and ossification, are influenced by a combination of on-farm decisions, such as genetic selection, nutrition and/or management.

Table 2: The impact of carcase attributes on the MSA Index

Carcase input	Relative importance of trait influencing MSA Index
HGP status	Very high
Milk-fed vealer	Very high
Saleyard	Very high
MSA marbling	High
Hump height	High
Ossification score	High
Rib fat	Medium
Hot standard carcase weight (HSCW)	Low
Sex	Low

Figure 6: MSA Index average (FY15–FY25)





Carcase feedback

By utilising the MSA program, producers and processors have access to detailed feedback on carcase traits and eating quality performance for individual carcases within and across consignments. The MSA feedback platforms include a range of sophisticated benchmarking tools to help identify opportunities for continued improvement.

The myFeedback system, launched in November 2023, also includes predicted lean meat yield percentage and animal health feedback on each carcase for participating supply chains. Another feature is that carcase information is provided back to the original breeding property, adding additional value to breeding and backgrounding operations.

The opportunity to review eating quality performance against an aggregated, national, state or regional level as well as provide insights for improvement enables producers to capture value from the MSA feedback systems.

During FY25, more than 5,000 producers accessed carcase feedback systems.

A continued focus on improving and streamlining systems, such as myFeedback and myMSA, will enable greater value capture from the MSA program.

Review eating quality performance against an aggregated, national, state or regional level at **mymla.com.au**

For additional support in understanding the systems available to access your data, or reviewing your carcase performance, please contact MSA via **msaenquiries@mla.com.au**

MSA sheepmeat

In FY25, 1.25 million lambs, or 4.8% of total lamb slaughter, followed the MSA pathway through 13 licensed processing facilities across NSW, Victoria, WA and SA.

Of the total lambs processed in Australia, 49% were processed through MSA-licensed processing plants that follow interventions to improve eating quality.

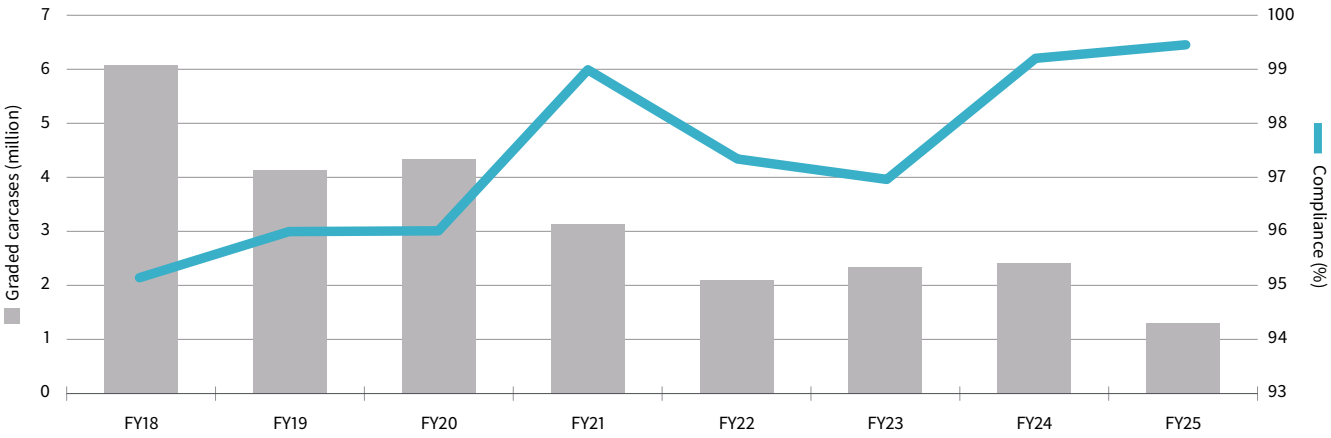
A total of 863 new sheep producers and 1,180 new mixed livestock producers became MSA registered, taking the overall number of sheep producers to 27,521.

WA processed the highest number of lambs through the MSA pathway at 470,000.

NSW had the highest increase in lambs going through the MSA pathway from the previous year, an increase of 18%.

A total of 99.5% of all lambs presented for MSA met the minimum requirements – an increase of 0.2 percentage points on the previous year.

Figure 7: National MSA lamb numbers (FY18–FY25)



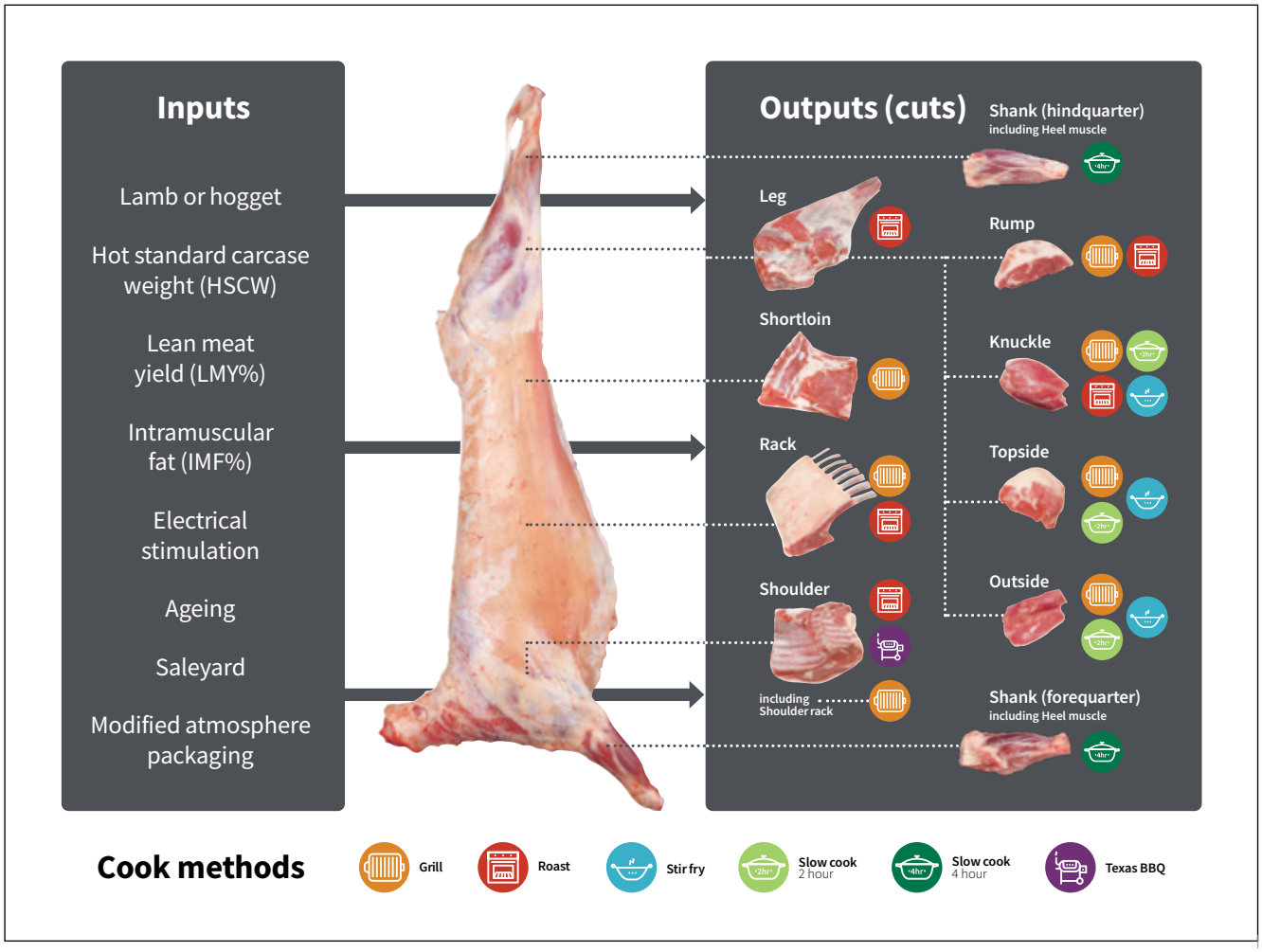
Demonstrating the value of MSA sheepmeat cuts-based model

MSA continues to collaborate with most medium-to-large sheepmeat supply chains to showcase the benefits of the cuts-based model. Two supply chains are in the process of installing the technology along with MSA IT systems to enable cuts-based grading.

The prediction of eating quality of the cuts-based MSA sheepmeat model is driven by key traits including intramuscular fat percentage (IMF%), hot standard carcase weight (HSCW) and lean meat yield percentage (LMY%).

The existing nine cut x cook model has been used to benchmark the eating quality of supply chains and identify opportunities for additional value capture through segregation. Research and development (R&D) investments have underpinned the expansion of the model to 23 cut x cook outputs and inclusion of hoggets and saleyard consignments to increase its commercial relevance and value (Figure 8). See the R&D section of this report for more detail.

Figure 8: The MSA sheepmeat cuts-based model



Supply chain impact

A wide range of educational workshops and business development activities were conducted throughout FY25 to drive increased adoption and deliver the benefits of MSA to stakeholders across the supply chain. These range from producers to end users in Australia and internationally.

Farm gate returns

In FY25, the MSA program delivered a record $409 million in estimated additional farm gate returns to MSA beef producers – a significant increase of 26% on the previous record $326 million delivered in FY24.

This is a result of the year-on-year growth of the program and its increasingly sophisticated use by processors and brand owners, which allows them to capture more value and share it along the supply chain. Producers' continued improvement of their MSA eating quality performance, as shown by increases in the MSA Index and compliance rates with MSA and brand owner specifications, contributed to the increased returns.

The average hot standard carcase weight (HSCW) of MSA graded carcases in FY25 was 320kg, a decrease from the FY24 average of 327kg.

For non-grainfed carcases, the average HSCW in FY25 was 295kg, down from 300kg in FY24.

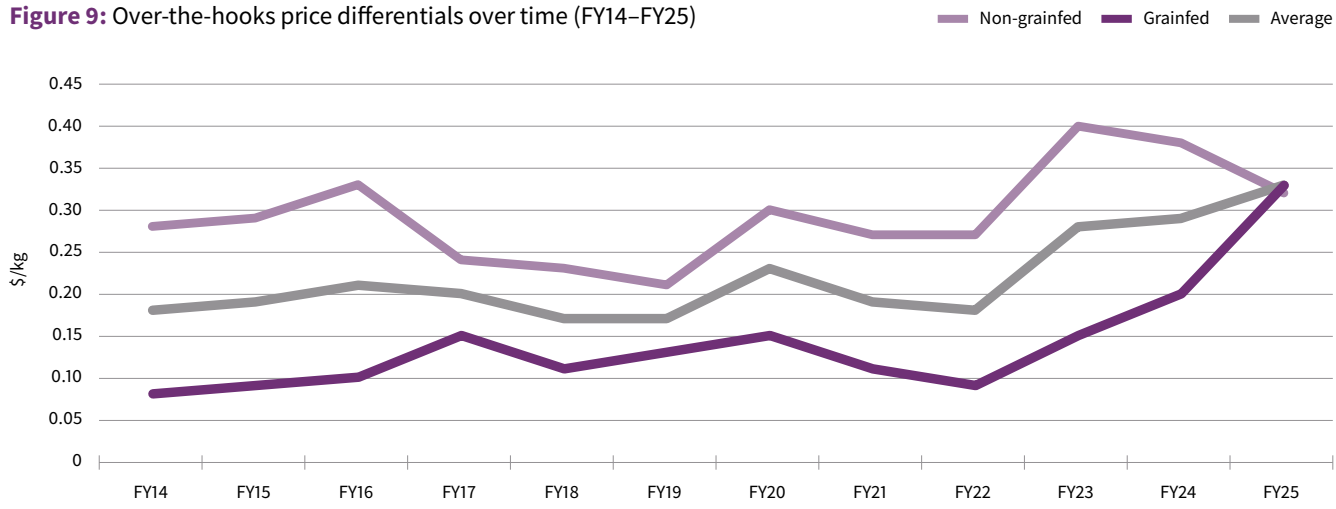
For grainfed carcases, the average HSCW was 344kg, down from 350kg in FY24.

The average price differential for non-grainfed MSA carcases was $0.32/kg, down from $0.38/kg in FY24 **(Figure 9)**.

The average price differential for MSA carcases that met grainfed standards was $0.33/kg, an increase from $0.20/kg in FY24 **(Figure 9)**.

Based on average HSCW of MSA cattle and price differentials in FY25, MSA beef producers received an estimated $94 per head in additional returns for non-grainfed cattle and $114 per head for grainfed cattle.

Figure 9: Over-the-hooks price differentials over time (FY14–FY25)



End users

For more than a decade, MLA has been conducting research with Australian independent butchers and wholesalers to understand their perceptions of and satisfaction with beef and lamb underpinned by MSA.

The latest research in FY25 was conducted with 150 butchers and 50 wholesalers, with questions ranging from awareness and usefulness of the MSA program, to the perceived value of MSA versus non-MSA red meat.

The results showed the percentage of butchers and wholesalers selling MSA beef and lamb has increased over time, reaching a record high of 81% for butchers and 90% for wholesalers (up from 68% and 84% respectively in FY24). Of these, 58% of butchers said more than 50% of their product offer is MSA graded.

Quality and consistency remain the top drivers to stock MSA beef and lamb, which was rated as 'very good to excellent' by 89% of butchers and 100% of wholesalers (up from 80% and 83% respectively in FY24).

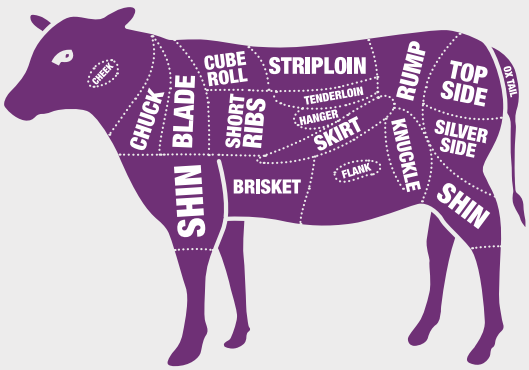
Perceptions of the MSA program have increased in FY25, with seven in 10 butchers and nine in 10 wholesalers saying they find the MSA program useful (both up one point from FY24).

Butchers continue to charge more for MSA beef, with a price gap of 8.1% between MSA and non-MSA beef (up from 6.2% in FY24). Wholesalers also continue to charge more for MSA cuts, though the price gap has reduced since last year (9.0% in FY25 compared to 16.7% in FY24).

Of the brands stocked by butchers, 11 out of 15 named were underpinned by MSA.

> 59% of butchers rated MSA brands as 'very to extremely important' in their product offering, the highest response for the last five years.

Figure 10: Average retail price differentials – MSA beef (FY25)



Butchers

NON-MSA
$39.90

MSA
$43.40

8.8% differential

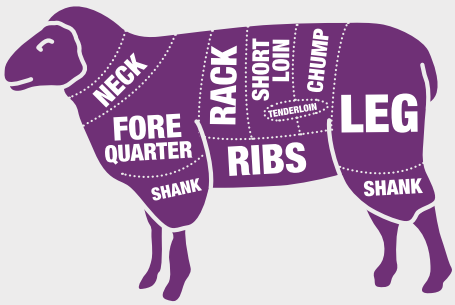
Wholesalers

NON-MSA
$25.10

MSA
$27.60

10% differential

Figure 11: Average retail price differentials – MSA lamb (FY25)



Butchers

NON-MSA
$34.80

MSA
$35.70

2.6% differential

Wholesalers

NON-MSA
$25.30

MSA
$28.00

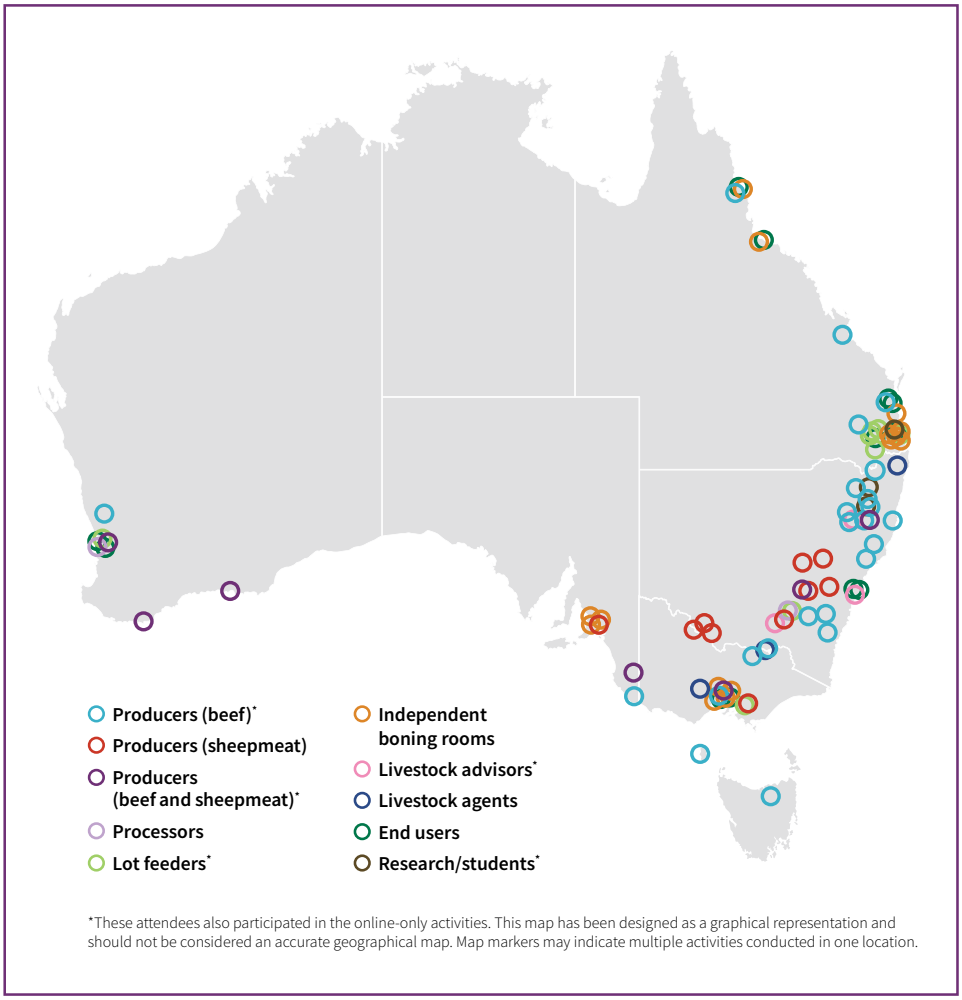
10.7% differential

Education

The MSA team presented at 88 events and workshops in FY25 to more than 3,200 participants from across the supply chain. These included producers, lot feeders, processors, agents and livestock advisors, through to end users in Australia and overseas.

The majority of these MSA educational sessions were targeted at beef and sheep producers, with 2,590 producers participating in 43 workshops across Australia. This included breed-aligned events such as the Brangus and Hereford conferences, and events partnering with organisations including NSW Local Land Services and Agriculture Victoria. Larger scale industry events included Red Meat Updates in Tasmania, LambEx and MeatUp in SA, and MLA Updates and MeatUp in WA. Furthermore, various supply chain events were held in collaboration with processors and their suppliers throughout Australia. Presentation topics included the MSA program, how to improve compliance and carcase performance, myFeedback and animal health traits, and the new MSA sheepmeat cut x cook model. Moreover, 30 producer focus group workshops were conducted with 502 participants, in partnerships with supply chains to support on-farm practice change.

Figure 10: Location of MSA educational activities by attendee type



*These attendees also participated in the online-only activities. This map has been designed as a graphical representation and should not be considered an accurate geographical map. Map markers may indicate multiple activities conducted in one location.

Six awareness activities were conducted with livestock advisors (including agents) to upskill them in MSA, animal health knowledge and myFeedback.

MSA workshops were delivered to four feedlots, with two of these implementing practice change to improve outcomes due to the knowledge gained from these workshops.

MSA-licensed processors and operators participated in MSA workshops and business development activities. This resulted in 11 processors and brand owners increasing their utilisation of the MSA program to improve compliance and expanded cuts utilisation.

Eight business development workshops were held with independent boning rooms, including national food service supply companies and brand owners across Queensland, NSW, Victoria and SA. Workshops included education on secondary cuts utilisation, as well as understanding the cut x cook information on carton labels and opportunities to increase the use of the MSA program.

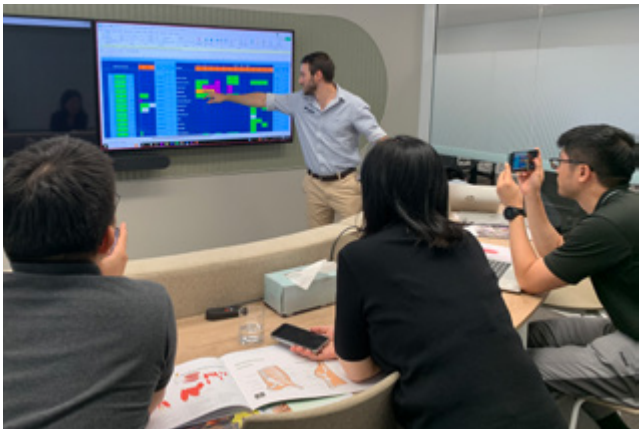
> Twelve workshops were delivered to 162 chefs and staff from foodservice companies on increasing MSA product utilisation and industry insights. Participants included large restaurant chains, a WA mining company, and a large caterer for airlines in collaboration with the MLA international team.

Twelve workshops were delivered to 162 chefs and staff from foodservice companies on increasing MSA product utilisation and industry insights. Participants included large restaurant chains, a WA mining company, and a large caterer for airlines in collaboration with the MLA international team.

Beef producers participated in a NSW Local Land Services supply chain tour, hosted in conjunction with Bindaree Food Group, which included an MSA education session with MSA Business Development Officer, Hannah Kermode

MSA Retail Training Facilitator, Kelly Payne, conducting a cut breakdown education session

Emma Lynch from the University of New England (UNE) and MSA Business Development Officer, Lachlan Jeffers, at a producer event with Gippsland Ag held at UNE Armidale



MSA Business Development Officer, Will Atkinson, explaining to an international delegation alternative cooking methods and eating quality outcomes for individual cuts

MSA Program Manager, David Packer, delivering an MSA education session to feedlot operators and brand owners

International markets

With the increasing demand for Australian beef in international markets, there has been a corresponding demand for MSA educational workshops and activities supporting brand owners to differentiate their brands through the world leading eating quality grading program.

These educational workshops include a range of topics such as the factors that influence eating quality and the MSA grading system.

A key highlight of FY25 were eating quality workshops conducted with two supply chains in China. One of these – a large retailer that conducted an MSA promotion for the first time – resulted in an increased sales volume during the promotional period.

MSA-related activities in Japan and Korea in June 2025 included consumer sensory research with Japanese consumers comparing MSA and USDA graded beef. Results from this research will be released later in 2025.

Additionally, awareness and educational activities occurred with importers, brand owners and industry representatives with the aim of identifying opportunities for using the MSA program as part of their customer offering in these markets.

In February 2025, three Japan Meat Grading Association (JMGA) graders visited Australia for two weeks. While in Queensland, MLA hosted a visit to a feedlot, a processing plant and a producer – all of which are part of the MSA program. A highlight was learning from each other and comparing the similarities and differences between MSA grading and JMGA grading.


食肉に関するニュースを確実、迅速にお届けする日刊紙

食肉速報

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CONTENTS

注目のヘッドライン

世界唯一の食味品質の格付プログラム MSA、豪州産牛肉の一貫した品質を保証

…詳細はP2~3

EU農業食品分野ビジネス使節団来日、食肉団体関係者にきく③

…詳細はP4

信州牛

信州プレミアム牛肉

信州牛生産販売協議会

ビセラル株式会社

http://www.visceral.co.jp

Japanese media covering the MSA and brand owner activities in Japan

MSA Business Development Officer, Will Atkinson and MSA Retail Training Facilitator, Kelly Payne conducting a product utilisation workshop with an international delegation

Research and development

Investments in eating quality R&D resulted in several positive outcomes in FY25. These included more pathways to increase the eligible beef and sheep for MSA grading and the improvement of the accuracy of eating quality prediction and other carcase value traits. New tools and measures to explain carcase value variation were developed and new investments commenced evaluating flavour, new genetic traits for eating quality and intramuscular fat in lamb.

MSA sheepmeat model expansion

A 23 cut x cook model for sheepmeat has been developed using additional MSA consumer sensory research conducted since 2017. It includes additional cuts and cooking methods, as well as saleyard consignment and eating quality predictions for hoggets.

The current MSA sheepmeat model accounts for lambs consigned directly to processors. An opportunity to increase eligibility to a substantial portion of the lamb supply chain sourced through saleyards was investigated. An R&D project was initiated in 2023 to evaluate the impact of different selling methods on the eating quality of sheepmeat.

The project included cohorts of lambs in two states comparing direct consignment to saleyard pathway as well as a saleyard and a five day re-feed option.

The research was recently completed and showed variation between treatments (selling method). The MSA consumer sensory eating quality score (MQ4) score for the saleyard treatment group was lower than direct consignment groups and had a larger variation.

Additionally, an analysis on several MSA eating quality experiments was conducted on the eating quality of hoggets.

Outcomes of the research have resulted in the inclusion of a saleyard pathway for sheepmeat and a hogget category in the MSA sheepmeat model.

Using rail consignment for MSA cattle

The final and most complex component of the project that has been investigating the use of rail transport for MSA cattle was completed in FY25. This involved processing 600 carcases with cuts collected and processed into sensory samples.

The final trial groups of cattle provided a direct comparison between the longest (Winton) and shortest (Morven) rail journeys in conjunction with road transport.

Sensory testing of meat samples from the 40 properties that supplied cattle to this trial is underway and due to be completed in 2025.

New projects aligned with the latest eating quality R&D priorities

New R&D investments commenced in FY25 to align with continuous improvement of eating quality and increasing the value of red meat.

Key research projects initiated include:

- **Beef flavour profiling:** Two projects have been initiated to better understand red meat flavour drivers, including pre and post slaughter influences, with the goal of using flavour as a value add for the beef industry.
- **IMF% in lamb:** A research project will be undertaken to quantify the nutritional impacts on growth path and IMF% development in lambs. Additionally, the project will quantify flavour compounds known to affect consumer acceptance.
- **Generating new eating quality genetic traits for cattle:** One project was implemented with the aim to deliver eating quality estimated breeding values (EBVs) based on MSA consumer sensory evaluation – this will enable producers to breed animals towards the consumer outcome and underpin future genomic products.

MSA Rail transport project

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MLA's *MSA Annual Outcomes Report 2024–25*
is available online at mla.com.au/msa-outcomes-report