



# US Imported Beef Market

## A Weekly Update

Prepared Exclusively for Meat & Livestock Australia - Sydney

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### Discussion points this week:

- Imported beef continues to trade mixed, as ample offerings from Australia and other countries helps keep market well supplied. Bull meat prices, however, are firm as New Zealand production seasonally declines in Q2.
- US cow meat prices continue to be well supported. USDA once again revised higher expectations for beef production in 2025, but this was largely due to resumption of trade with Mexico and higher fed beef production.
- We still expect cow slaughter to be down 7% y/y in 2025 and cow meat production is expected to be down by more than 23% vs. just three years ago.
- Australian beef shipments to the US in February are expected to surpass 34k MT, +62% vs. a year ago.
- USDA feedlot survey is expected to show placements down vs. last year. Total on feed inventory on February 1 is expected to be 1.3% lower than a year ago.

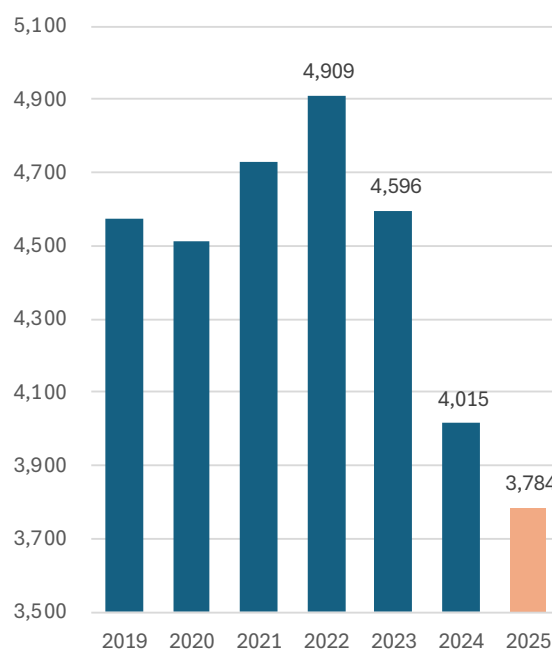
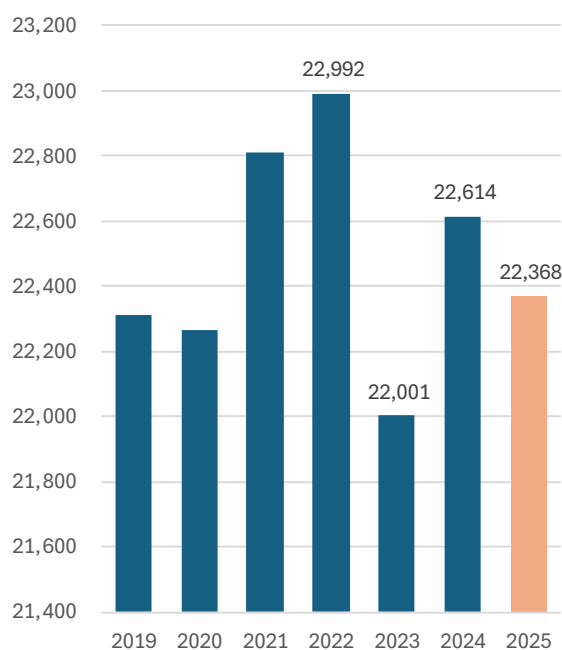
### Imported Market Activity for the Week

The imported beef trade was once again a mixed bag, with lean and extra-lean products holding firm and, in some cases, gaining further, while fat trim remained steady at best. Seasonality in production clearly plays a role. Bull slaughter in New Zealand is past its annual peak and is expected to continue declining over the next three months.

Peak bull meat production for the year likely occurred in the second week of January at just over 25,000 head slaughtered — 4% above the previous year but well below slaughter figures for that time of year in some prior years. If slaughter follows its normal seasonal pattern, New Zealand's bull slaughter is expected to drop to around 10,000–12,000 head per week by the end of February and further decline to approximately 7,000–8,000 met-

### US FI Annual Beef Production. Fed vs. Non Fed. '000 Pounds. CWE

Data source: USDA-NASS and WASDE. Analysis and Projections by Steiner Consulting



ric tons (MT) by the end of March.

U.S. buyers who typically purchase bull meat are aware of this seasonal trend but are now facing increased competition due to the scarcity of extra-lean product in the domestic market. End cuts appear to be well supported in the near term, with some end users securing limited quantities for late April and May at prices below quoted levels.

Overseas suppliers have also sought to lock in orders for Q3 at prices lower than current levels but still above last year's values. Uncertainty in the U.S. cattle market appears to have seeped into the market for imported end cuts. While cow meat availability is expected to remain limited—supporting lean grinding beef values—the supply and pricing of round cuts from fed cattle will depend on what packers are willing to pay for cattle.

On Friday, fed cattle futures closed at their lowest point of the year, down 5% from three weeks prior.

### New Zealand Supply Situation.

Cow slaughter in New Zealand typically rises during the fall months (NZ), and this trend is expected to continue this year. Weather conditions and the dairy market outlook will influence the timing, but overall volume remains a function of the country's cow herd size.

According to the USDA, as of the beginning of the year, New Zealand's dairy cow herd was estimated at 4.575 million head—down 1.1% from the previous year—while the beef cow herd stood at 995,000 head, only marginally higher.

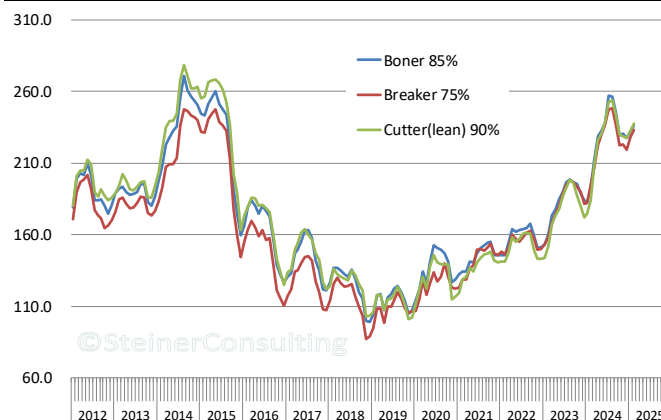
When comparing today's supply potential from New Zealand vs. those in the the previous cattle cycle (2014–15) consider the following:

- New Zealand now exports a larger proportion of its beef to China, and;
- The New Zealand dairy cow herd is currently 11.6% smaller than it was a decade ago.

Increasing imports from New Zealand will likely require higher prices to “buy” product away from other markets.

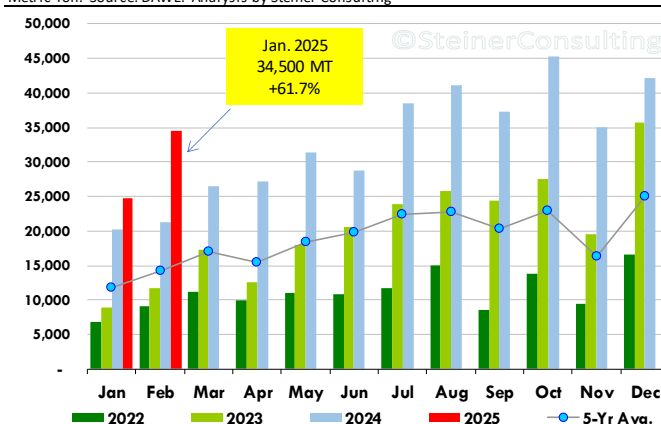
### US Cow Prices, Inflation Adjusted. \$/cwt. Dressed Carcass Basis

Source: USDA Mandatory Price Reporting. Monthly Averages Calculated from USDA Daily Reports



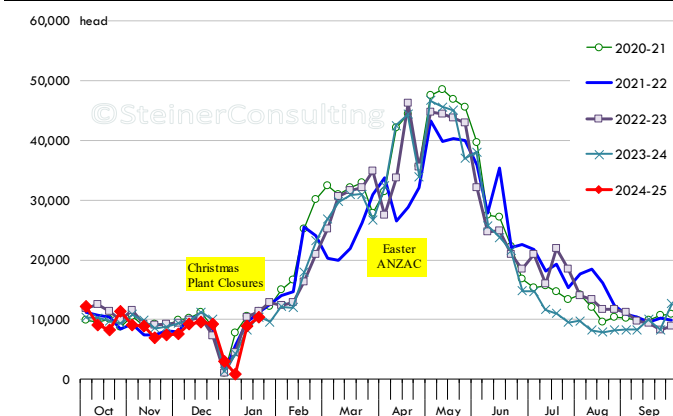
### AUSTRALIAN BEEF EXPORTS TO THE UNITED STATES

Metric Ton. Source: DAWE. Analysis by Steiner Consulting



### New Zealand Weekly Cow Slaughter

Based on Oct - Sep Marketing Year. Source: New Zealand Meat Board. Analysis by Steiner Consulting



### Rising Australian Imports

Australian beef exports to the U.S. market in 2024 reached approximately 395,000 MT—149,000 MT (+60%) higher than a year ago. The strong pace set in the second half of last year has continued into early 2024.

Currently, the U.S. market is paying significantly more than Asian markets, and combined with the strong U.S. dollar and the absence (so far) of tariffs on Australian beef, shipping to the U.S. remains an attractive option for Australian exporters.

January shipments to the U.S. are typically limited as plants resume production after the holidays. However, at 24,685 MT, January shipments were 22% higher than a year ago. Based on the shipping pace in the first two weeks of February, exports for the month are projected to reach 34,500 MT—62% higher than the previous year.

Combined with an expected increase in cow meat supply from New Zealand and strong shipments from South America, this has helped keep imported lean beef prices in check. It has also contributed to a widening price spread between domestic and imported lean beef, which stood at nearly 60 cents at the end of last week.

#### US cow meat supplies vs. feedlot production.

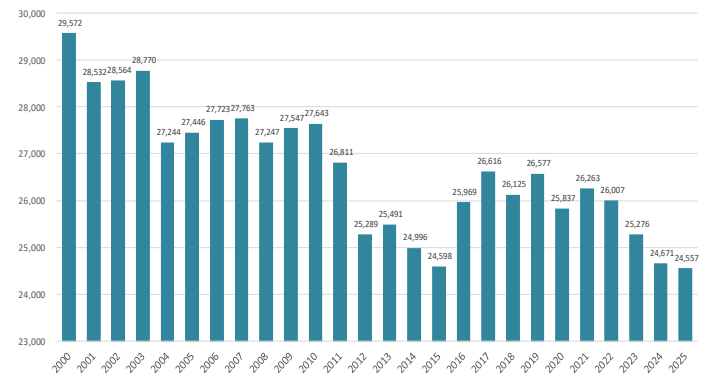
While the USDA reports total annual beef production, there has been a notable shift in the supply of beef from cow slaughter versus beef sourced from steers and heifers finished in feedlots. We aim to provide some insights on this shift and the chart on page 1 illustrates the trend in recent years.

We are accepting the USDA's 2025 beef production forecast as given—this is not our forecast. However, to estimate the breakdown between fed and non-fed beef production, we make certain assumptions regarding cow slaughter rates. Given the current cow herd size and the culling rate in this stage of the cycle, we believe cow slaughter will decline in 2025 compared to 2024. A conservative estimate would be a 7% reduction in cow slaughter. Cow weights are also expected to rise modestly, following last year's 2.1% increase.

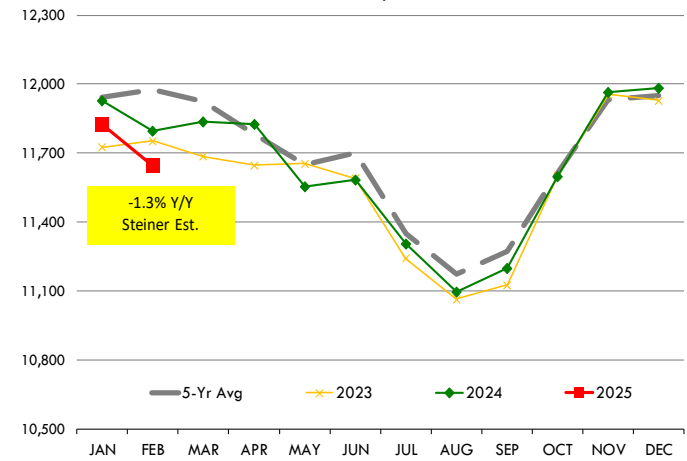
Based on these assumptions, we estimate cow and bull beef supply at 3.784 billion pounds, which is: down 230 million pounds (-5.7%) compared to a year ago; and down 1.125 billion pounds (-23%) from three years ago. This decline helps explain why fresh domestic 90s are currently trading at \$370/cwt. Given these figures, the USDA forecast suggests steer/heifer beef production in 2025 will be down only 245 million pounds (-1.1%) compared to 2024. This should continue to support a higher price ratio of end cuts to middles.

#### Supply of Cattle Outside Feedlots

Data source: USDA-NASS. Analysis by Steiner Consulting



#### MONTHLY FED CATTLE INVENTORIES, +1000 HEAD CAPACITY FEEDLOTS



#### Steiner Feedlot Survey Estimates

Next Friday USDA will issue the results of its January feedlot survey. One thing to note is that last year feedlot placements in January were particularly light and that impacts the y/y comparison. Also, the USDA annual survey indicated that the supply of feeder cattle outside feedlots as of January 1 was estimated to be only 0.5% lower than a year ago. While the above may argue for placements to be near or even higher than a year ago, keep in mind that for all of January no feeder cattle came from Mexico, which impacted feedlot placements in Texas. Some preliminary data shows placements in Texas in January were down 15% from a year ago. With this in mind, below are our numbers:

Placed in January:	98.6%
Marketed in January:	102.2%
Total on Feed Feb. 1:	98.7%

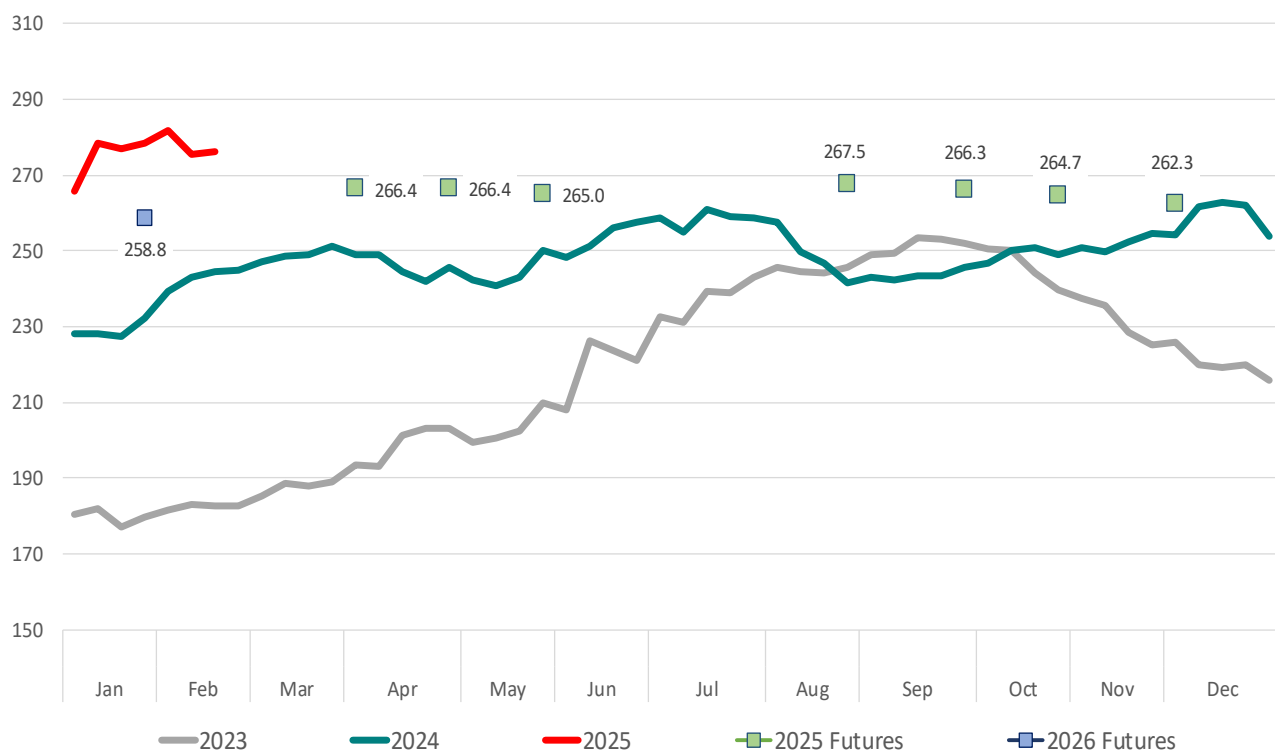
					Change From Last Week			Change From Last Year
Current Week			Prior Week			Last Year		
14-Feb-25			7-Feb-25			16-Feb-24		
<u>US East Coast Australian/NZ Lean, CIF</u>								
95 CL Bull, E. Coast	323.0	325.0	321.0	323.0	2.0	265.0	266.0	59.0
	303.0	305.0	301.0	304.0	1.0	247.0	248.0	57.0
	295.0	300.0	290.0	295.0	5.0		245.0	55.0
	285.0	286.0	284.0	285.0	1.0	237.0	238.0	48.0
		UNQ		UNQ	N/A		UNQ	N/A
	323.0	324.0	321.0	322.0	2.0		265.0	59.0
	Uruguay CFH 90CL, E. Coast		UNQ		UNQ	N/A		UNQ
<u>US East Coast, Trimmings, CIF</u>								
85 CL Trimmings	283.0	284.0	282.0	283.0	1.0		237.0	47.0
	245.0	246.0	245.0	246.0	0.0	200.0	205.0	41.0
	213.0	215.0	212.0	213.0	2.0		UNQ	N/A
		UNQ		UNQ	N/A		UNQ	N/A
<u>US East Coast Australian Cuts, CIF</u>								
Cap Off Steer Insides	370.0	380.0	370.0	380.0	0.0	330.0	335.0	45.0
		UNQ		UNQ	N/A		UNQ	N/A
	325.0	335.0	325.0	335.0	0.0	300.0	305.0	30.0
	330.0	340.0	330.0	340.0	0.0	295.0	300.0	40.0

# CME Cattle Feeder Index and US Cattle Markets

	Current Week	Prior Week	% CHANGE VS. WK AGO	Last Year	Change from Last Year
	13-Feb-25	6-Feb-25		15-Feb-24	
CME FEEDER CATTLE INDEX	276.23	275.59	0.2%	244.58	12.9%
	14-Feb-25	7-Feb-25		16-Feb-24	
FED STEER (5-MKT AVG)	203.82	207.96	-2.0%	180.73	12.8%
CUTTER COW CARCASS, NATIONAL, 90% LEAN, 350-400 LB. (carcass wt.)	243.00	235.50	3.2%	179.50	35.4%
BONER COW CARCASS, NATIONAL, 85% LEAN, 400-500 LB. (carcass wt.)	240.50	236.00	1.9%	194.00	24.0%
BREAKER COW CARCASS, NATIONAL, 75% LEAN, 500+ (carcass wt.)	245.50	235.00	4.5%	195.50	25.6%
CUTTER COW CARCASS CUTOUT, 5-DAY MA, USDA	291.07	287.56	1.2%	236.36	23.1%

## CME Feeder Cattle Index. Actual + Futures for 2025

Source: CME. Analysis by Steiner Consulting



Source: Chicago Mercantile Exchange

**TABLE 3 – IMPORTED BEEF PRICES, 7:45 DAYS, US WAREHOUSE**

					Change From Last Week			Change From Last Year
Current Week			Prior Week			Last Year		
14-Feb-25			7-Feb-25			16-Feb-24		
US East Coast Australian/NZ Lean, FOB US Port								
95 CL Bull, E. Coast	334.0	335.0	332.0	333.0	2.0	278.0	279.0	56.0
90 CL Blended Cow	314.0	315.0	314.0	315.0	0.0	260.0	262.0	53.0
90 CL Shank		305.0		305.0	0.0	255.0	260.0	45.0
85 CL Fores	294.0	295.0	294.0	295.0	0.0		246.0	49.0
85 CL Chucks		UNQ		UNQ	N/A		UNQ	N/A
95 CL Bull, W. Coast	333.0	334.0	332.0	333.0	1.0	276.0	277.0	57.0
Uruguay CFH 90CL, E. Coast		UNQ		UNQ	N/A		UNQ	N/A
US East Coast, Trimmings, FOB US Port								
85 CL Trimmings	293.0	294.0	293.0	294.0	0.0	244.0	245.0	49.0
80 CL Trimmings	254.0	255.0	255.0	257.0	-2.0	212.0	213.0	42.0
75 CL Trimmings	223.0	224.0	220.0	224.0	0.0		UNQ	N/A
65 CL Trimmings		UNQ		UNQ	N/A		UNQ	N/A
US East Coast Australian Cuts, FOB US Port								
Cap Off Steer Insides	385.0	395.0	385.0	395.0	0.0	340.0	345.0	50.0
Steer Insides 14/18		UNQ		UNQ	N/A		UNQ	N/A
Steer Flats	330.0	340.0	335.0	340.0	0.0	315.0	320.0	20.0
Steer Knuckles	355.0	360.0	355.0	360.0	0.0	305.0	310.0	50.0

**TABLE 4 – US DOMESTIC BEEF AND CATTLE PRICES**

	Current Week						Change From Last Week	Last Year			Change from Last Year
	14-Feb-25			7-Feb-25				16-Feb-24			
	Low	High	Wt.Avg	Low	High	Wt.Avg		Low	High	Wt.Avg	
<u>Domestic Cutouts</u>											
Choice Cutout	314.70			321.87			-7.2	296.20			18.5
Select Cutout	307.14			312.90			-5.8	286.66			20.5
<u>Domestic Lean Grinding Beef</u>											
90 CL Boneless	369.0	376.5	373.1	356.0	396.9	369.7	3.4	294.0	320.0	303.9	69.2
85 CL Beef Trimmings	321.0	341.5	333.9	314.0	340.0	327.1	6.8	270.5	299.5	285.2	48.6
50 CL Beef Trim	90.0	125.0	110.4	90.0	125.9	104.2	6.2	65.0	120.0	85.0	25.4
<u>Domestic Pork Trim</u>											
42 CL Pork Trim	49.5	78.0	58.1	38.4	72.5	49.8	8.3	26.4	62.0	32.0	26.0
72 CL Pork Trim	93.0	118.8	101.1	82.5	136.5	96.8	4.3	72.5	106.6	80.5	20.6
<u>Point of Lean Values</u>											
90 CL Domestic	414.5			410.7			3.8	337.6			76.9
50 CL Beef Trimming	220.8			208.4			12.5	170.0			50.8
42 CL Pork Trim	138.3			118.5			19.7	76.3			62.0
72 CL Pork Trim	140.4			134.5			5.9	111.8			28.6
<u>National Direct Fed Steer</u> <u>(5-day accum. wt. avg.</u> <u>price)</u>	203.82			207.96			-4.1	180.73			23.1

**TABLE 5 – FUTURES AND SLAUGHTER INFORMATION**

<i>Futures Contracts</i>	<i>Current Week</i>	<i>Prior Week</i>	<i>Change From Last Week</i>		<i>Last Year</i>	<i>Change From Last Year</i>	
	<b>14-Feb-25</b>	<b>7-Feb-25</b>			<b>16-Feb-24</b>		
<u><b>Live Cattle Futures</b></u>							
<b>February '25</b>	197.750	200.775	↓	-3.03	184.775	↑	12.98
<b>April '25</b>	194.250	196.775	↓	-2.53	187.550	↑	6.70
<b>June '25</b>	190.450	192.100	↓	-1.65	182.825	↑	7.63
<b>August '25</b>	188.775	189.250	↓	-0.47	181.575	↑	7.20
<u><b>Feeder Cattle Futures</b></u>							
<b>March '25</b>	266.350	264.900	↑	1.45	251.025	↑	15.33
<b>April '25</b>	266.425	264.825	↑	1.60	253.550	↑	12.88
<b>May '25</b>	265.000	263.600	↑	1.40	255.625	↑	9.38
<b>August '25</b>	267.525	266.175	↑	1.35	266.975	↑	0.55
<u><b>Corn Futures</b></u>							
<b>March '25</b>	496.250	487.500	↑	8.75	416.500	↑	79.75
<b>May '25</b>	508.750	500.500	↑	8.25	429.500	↑	79.25
<b>July '25</b>	511.250	504.500	↑	6.75	440.250	↑	71.00
<b>September '25</b>	475.250	467.000	↑	8.25	447.000	↑	28.25
<u><b>Ch Wheat Futures</b></u>							
<b>March '25</b>	600	582 3/4	↑	17.25	597 3/4	↑	2.25
<b>May '25</b>	613 1/2	595 1/2	↑	18.00	605	↑	8.50
<b>July '25</b>	625 1/4	606 1/4	↑	19.00	603 3/4	↑	21.50
<b>September '25</b>	638 1/2	619 1/4	↑	19.25	609 1/4	↑	29.25

<i>Slaughter Information</i>	<i>7 Days Ending</i>	<i>7 Days Ending</i>	<i>Change From Last Week</i>		<i>7 Days Ending</i>	<i>Change From Last Year</i>	
	<b>15-Feb-25</b>	<b>8-Feb-25</b>			<b>17-Feb-24</b>		
<u><b>Total Cattle Slaughter</b></u>	561,000	584,000	↓	-23,000	608,466	↓	-47,466
	<b>1-Feb-25</b>	<b>25-Jan-25</b>			<b>3-Feb-24</b>		
<b>Total Cow Slaughter</b>	107,994	100,575	↑	7,419	122,148	↓	-14,154
<b>Dairy Cow Slaughter</b>	57,476	51,463	↑	6,013	60,014	↓	-2,538
<b>Beef Cow Slaughter</b>	50,518	49,112	↑	1,406	62,134	↓	-11,616



## TABLE 7 - US BEEF IMPORTS

(Source: USDA/AMS)

### YTD Imported Fresh/Frz Beef Passed for Entry in the US

week 6	2/10/2024	2/8/2025		
Argentina	1,865	3,289	1,424	76.4%
Australia	42,410	57,671	15,261	36.0%
Brazil	34,241	26,600	(7,641)	-22.3%
Canada	42,242	32,767	(9,475)	-22.4%
Chile	-	-	-	
Costa Rica	977	1,815	838	85.8%
France	-	-	-	
Honduras	-	-	-	
Ireland	967	579	(388)	-40.1%
Japan	222	713	491	221.2%
Mexico	24,881	24,874	(7)	0.0%
Namibia	-	-	-	
Netherlands	-	-	-	
New Zealand	25,181	24,134	(1,047)	-4.2%
Nicaragua	5,486	4,892	(594)	-10.8%
Spain	-	-	-	
Uruguay	9,747	11,913	2,166	22.2%
<i>Not included in USDA Weekly Report</i>				
Paraguay	100	1,761	1,661	1662.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>188,220</b>	<b>189,247</b>	<b>1,027</b>	<b>0.5%</b>

Source: AMS - USDA

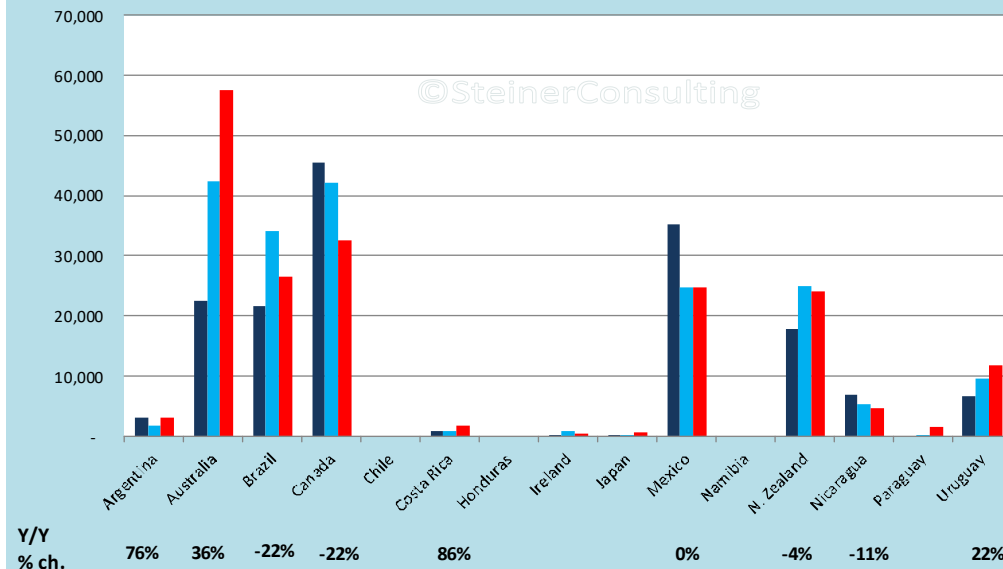
### US Fresh/Frozen Beef Imports. Metric Ton. Data Source: USDA/Agricultural Marketing Service

Imports as of February 8, 2025

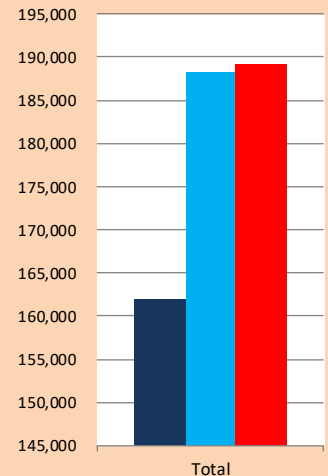
Analysis by Steiner Consulting

Individual Country Volume. MT & Y/Y % Ch.

■ 2023 ■ 2024 ■ 2025



Total

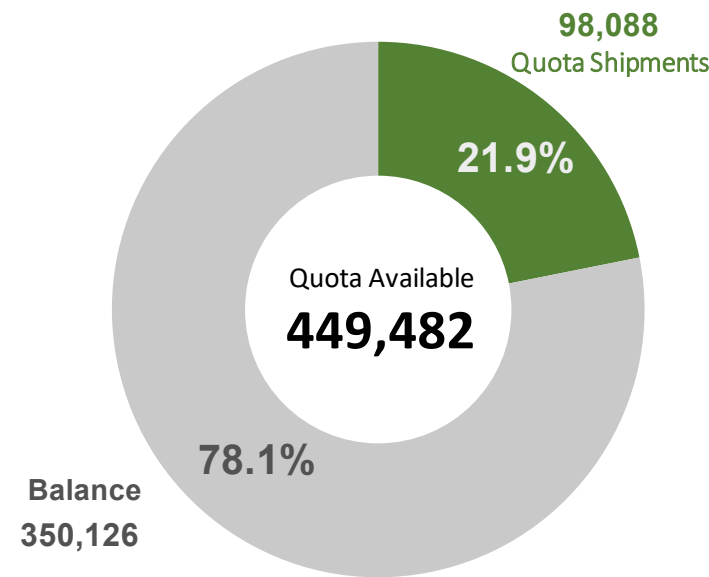


**Total YTD: 0.5%**

## Australian Beef Quota Position

13-Feb-25

Metric Ton. Australian Department of Agriculture Statistics



Note: The US-Australia Free Trade Agreement went into effect in January 2005. The agreement phased out tariffs for Australian beef entering the US market over a 20 year period. At this point Australian beef enters the US with no tariff. However, there is a price based safeguard which US authorities may trigger once the quota allocation has been filled. This safeguard may be triggered if monthly retail index prices decline 6.5% from the previous 24 month average. For more details consult the AUSUS FTA annex at: <https://tinyurl.com/5cb3be8>

There will always be a difference in the volume of Australian beef that has been allocated against US volume quota vs. the imports reported in the previous page. Australian authorities allocate product against US quota at time of shipment. US inspectors count product when it arrives in US and is inspected. Weekly import data reported by inspectors is not official, inspectors are not paid to tabulate statistics. The ultimate source of US trade data is the monthly US Census report.

## USA Quota Entries through Week Ending February 10. Metric Ton

Data source: US Customs. Analysis by Steiner Consulting

