Sheep Producers Intentions Survey
MAY 2025

MEAT & LIVESTOCK AUSTRALIA

Australian Wool Innovation Limited

June 2025

intuitive rural

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About the research

The survey, undertaken by MLA and AWI, is used to help industry determine wool and lamb production forecasts and to understand the breed composition of the Australian flock on a national, state and regional basis. It is used by processors for budgeting purposes and allows import markets to ascertain short-term supply estimates.

The research has three primary objectives, namely to:

- ✓ Measure and report on flock population, demographics, sheepmeat and wool supply information and producer production intentions.
- ✓ Ensure estimates are reliable and based on sufficiently large sample sizes to ensure the robustness and accuracy of estimates. The sample should be representative or weighted to be representative of the producer population structure.
- ✓ Provide capacity to explore and investigate results at a smaller area and segment level. This will include – among other things – across states and MLA reporting regions.

The following report provides an overview of results for the MAY 2025 survey.

The May 2025 survey

Feedback was sought from producers over the period 2nd May – 3rd June 2025.Producers were initially invited to complete an online survey with the final sample complemented with a limited number of phone interviews.

A total of 2,374 producers from across Australia respond to the survey invitation. The feedback was then weighted using the latest available information and data to produce industry estimates.

A full breakdown of the sample make up, plus a description of the information and data used to inform the weighting approach is included as an attachment to this report.

Please note that surveys undertaken from October 2022 onward are a significant departure from surveys before October 2022 in terms of design and questions asked. Care should be taken in comparing the results from this survey to surveys undertaken before October 2022.

An overview of the research design

Three separate but integrated surveys will be conducted across the calendar year. Each survey will have a specific focus and purpose and provide the required flock and producer intention estimates required.

FULL SURVEY
Provides an estimate of the total flock size, a profile of the lamb flock and measures of producer intentions for lambs and breeding ewes

PULSE SURVEY
Provides a quick update on produces' actual lamb sales to date and forecasts for future sales.

FULL SURVEY
Provides an estimate of the total flock size, a profile of the breeding ewes flock and measures of producer intentions for lambs and breeding ewes

More detail on the research design is included in the Attachments to this report.

A note on weighting and producer population estimates:

As detailed in the Appendices, the weighting structure was updated with the most recent available information and data on the estimated population of agricultural businesses with sheep and lambs across two factors: State and Total Flock Size. This change was required due to the cessation of the ABS Agricultural Census data.

With this update, the estimated population of businesses has increased from 40,949* to 41,994† (a 2.5% increase). Consideration of this increase in the estimated population of businesses should be taken when interpreting results in this report.

* Source: ABS Ag Census 2020-21 estimate adjusted upwards to account for EVAO under $40k
† Source: Levy Payer Register for the most recent financial year (2023-24)

State of play: an overview of the industry analysis

State of play…

Increasingly challenging operating conditions (with floods and damages in the north and drought in the south) continue to present significant obstacles for all producers.

Pressures on producers noted previously including increasing on-farm costs (input costs), challenges around workforce shortages as well as supply chain and market pressures (domestic and global) remain persistent, even if overshadowed by weather events.

There is however a two-speed environment: Prices for sheepmeat have been increasingly consistently with some recent high levels being achieved. In contrast, wool prices continues to be under significant pressure and remain volatile over the last 12 months making planning more challenging for producers.

The content opposite provides a brief overview of the wool and sheepmeat sectors by the agribusiness units within Rabobank and ANZ Agribusiness.

The background provides a useful context for interpreting the results in the May 2025 Sheep Producers Intentions Survey (SPIS).

RABOBANK Commentary

- ✓ Sheepmeat: Lamb and mutton prices in May jumped to some of the highest levels seen in recent years. Slaughter numbers remain high, but the price spike may be an indication that supplies are about to become more limited..
- ✓ Wool: Recent Australian dollar strength alongside disappointing export data likely played a key role in pushing EMI prices lower over the past month. The Australian Wool Porduction Forecasting Committee releaed its first estimate for the 2025/26 production, forecasting an 8.7% YOY decline in shorn wool production.

ANZ Agribusiness Commentary:

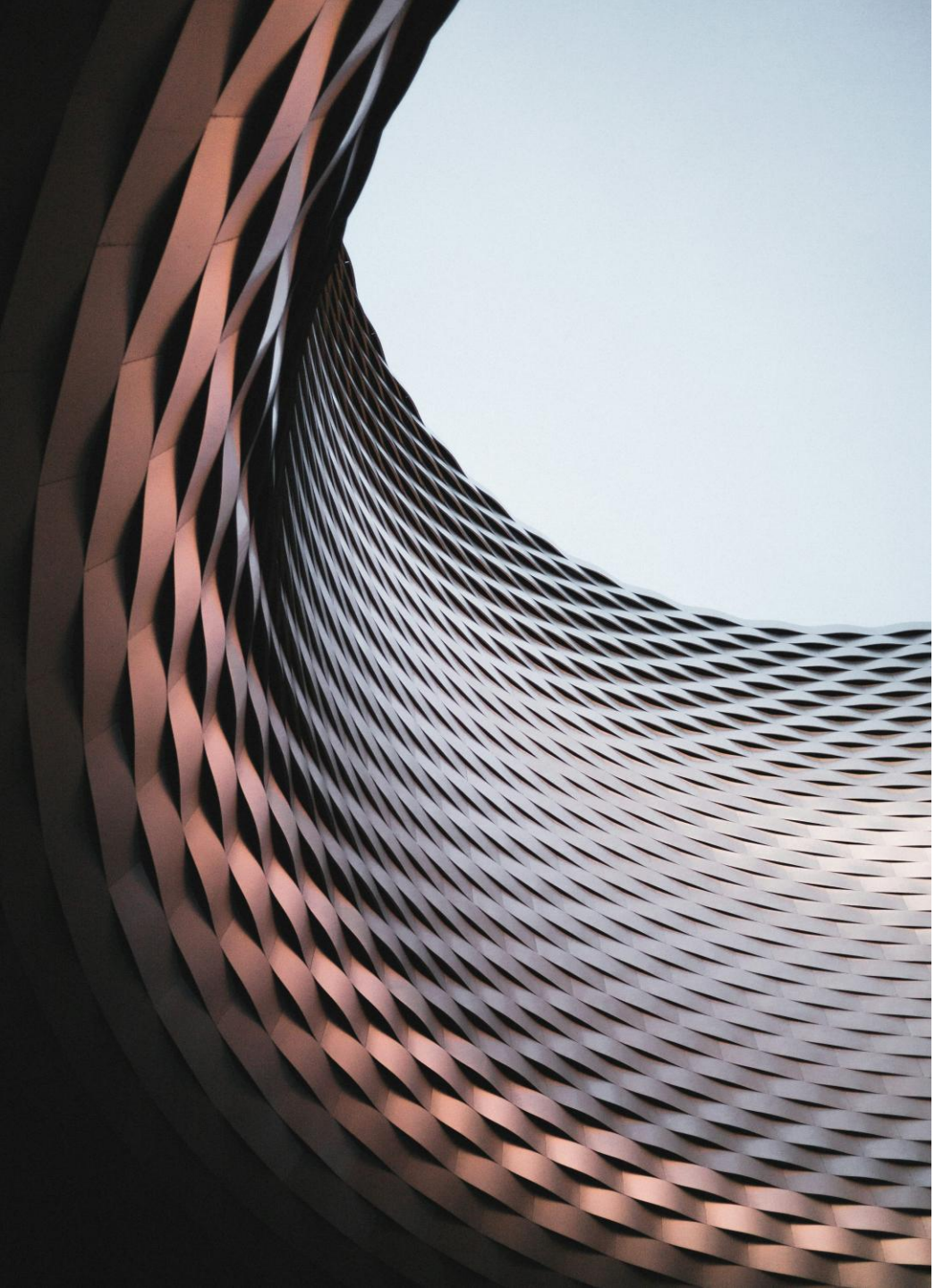
For sheepmeat:

- ✓ Persistent dry conditions continue to plague large areas of sheep production country across Australia;
- ✓ Mutton slaughter is trending up as producers make difficult decisions to feed or hold;
- ✓ Prices have been supportive of high turn-off, with all indicators well up on year ago levels;
- ✓ Finished lamb prices are particularly strong on the back of sound export demand;

For wool:

- ✓ Australian wool volumes continue to trend downward, on the back of flock liquidations and poor seasonal conditions;
- ✓ Prices across all categories peaked in early April, and have since seen a steady decline;
- ✓ Forecasts for the season ahead are for further reductions in greasy wool volumes;
- ✓ Global trade tensions particularly the outcome of US-China tariff negotiations and China's domestic economic conditions are key factors to watch for wool pricing.

Source of Rabobank commentary: Downloads/Rabobank_AU-Agribusiness-Monthly_June_2025.pdf
Source of ANZ Agribusiness commentary: https://www.anz.com.au/content/dam/anzcomau/commodity-insights-winter-2025.pdf



Observations and insights

Sheep Producers Intentions Survey

May 2025

We spoke to 2,374 producers about their industry sentiment and the profile and intentions for their flock...

Sentiment

Nett Sentiment
(% positive - % negative)

-35 Wool industry

Down 11 points on May-24

+52 Sheepmeat industry

Up 48 points on May-24

Breeding Ewe Flock Profile

48.88 million Estimate of total breeding ewes (69% of total flock size)

Dominant breeds on hand in the breeding ewe flock estimate:

- **64%** Merino
- **13%** Prime lamb
- **12%** First cross

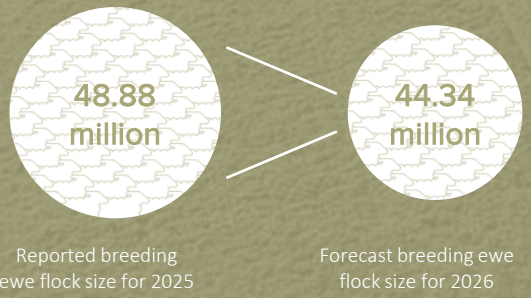
Wether Flock Profile

7.67 million Estimate of total wethers (11% of total flock size)

Dominant breeds on hand in the wether flock estimate:

- **88%** Merino
- **5%** Shedding
- **2%** First cross

Breeding Ewe Flock Intentions

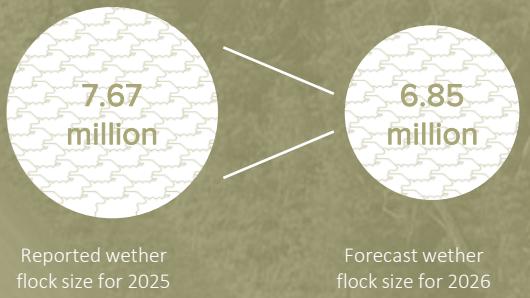


Reported breeding ewe flock size for 2025

Forecast breeding ewe flock size for 2026

- 9% Forecasted change in total breeding ewe flock

Wether Flock Intentions



Reported wether flock size for 2025

Forecast wether flock size for 2026

- 11% Forecasted change in total wether flock

Observations and insights

While the purpose of the research did not include the presentation of an interpretation of the survey results, we provide some initial observations and insights on the feedback and estimates from the May 2025 SPIS.

Producer sentiment

SPIS measures producers outlook over the upcoming 12 months of the wool and sheepmeat sectors.

The outlook for wool

The May 2025 results reflect a significantly more pessimistic outlook from producers about the future of the wool sector (Nett Sentiment: -35, down 16 points since October 2024 and 11 points since May 2024). Almost one in in two (46%) producers had a negative outlook for wool.

The predominant negative outlook is consistent across all states and across farms of all sizes.

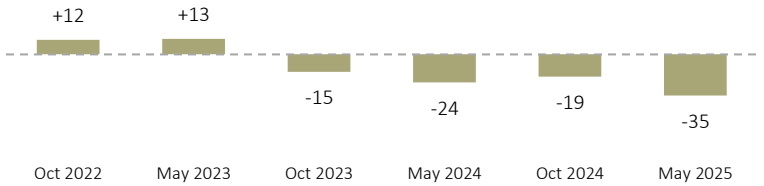
The outlook for sheepmeat

Producers' outlook for the sheepmeat sector reported continues to strengthen (Nett Sentiment: +52, up 10 points from October 2024 and 48 points from the same time last year), a result likely attributable to improved commodity prices.

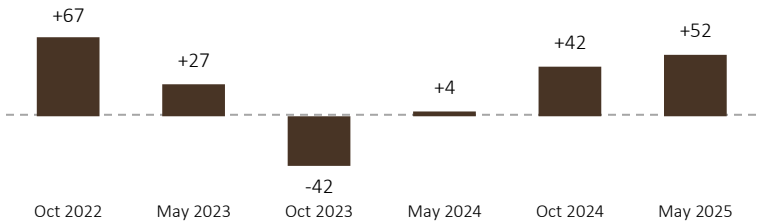
The improving price for sheepmeat is clearly driving producers outlook, despite some challenging operating conditions across Australia (rains, flooding in the north and drought conditions in the south). Year-on-year, all states are reporting uplifts in forward confidence. Western Australian producers' confidence remains subdued although there has been some improvement over the last 12 months (at 0 in May 2025, up from -64 in May 2024).

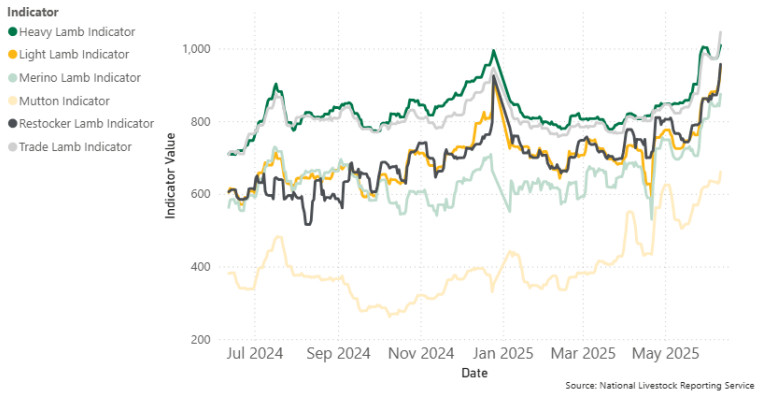
It is evident from the feedback provided and analysis that there is a clear divide in producers' outlook for the wool and sheepmeat sectors. This is likely to translate to different intentions, herd strategies and planning going forward. With the wool sector looking increasingly unattractive for many producers, the future makeup and investment in the wool sector remains uncertain.

Trend of Nett Sentiment of the wool industry



Trend of Nett Sentiment of the sheepmeat industry





Source: National Livestock Reporting Service, https://www.mla.com.au/prices-markets/dailysummary/?species=Sheep

Observations and insights:
Breeding ewes

A profile of the breeding ewes flock

Consistent with previous years, the May 2025 survey had a specific focus on understanding the profile of Australia's breeding ewes and wether flocks. Of the estimated 48M+ breeding ewes on hand:

- Merinos (64% of total breeding ewe flock), prime lambs (13%) and first cross (12%) are the dominant breed types on hand (accounting for 89% of the total breeding ewe flock).
- The breed mix varies across farm businesses with different flock sizes, with the larger farms typically having a greater proportion of Merinos in their flock. Producers in South Australia and Western Australia also have a larger proportion of Merinos, with Tasmania and Victoria reporting lower proportions.

Producer intentions

Analysis of the feedback provided shows that:

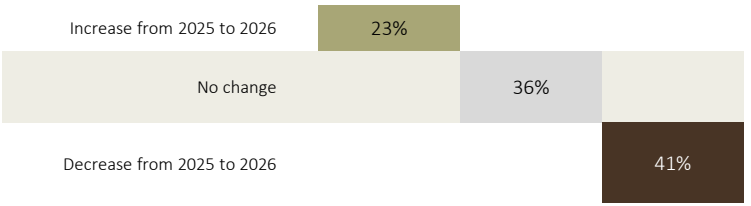
- At the producer level (that is considering each producer equal), there is a more conservative planning posture than in previous surveys with:
  - 23% indicating they would increase their breeding ewe flock size;
  - 36% indicating it would remain unchanged; and
  - 41% indicating they would decrease their breeding ewe flock size.

  Consistent with 2024, the intention to reduce their ewe flock was stronger among producers in Western Australia and South Australia.

- Analysis of the forecast intentions suggests a decrease of approximately 4.54M breeding ewes (9% fall) over the estimated 2025 flock size. This result highlights the importance of considering the reported changes in flock size rather than just producers' disposition to change.

  Details on the forecast change estimate – showing the impact from producers who have reported an increase as well as producers who were forecasting a decrease in their breeding ewe flock – is shown opposite.

  Consistent with the result above, almost six in ten Western Australian producers are reporting an intention to decrease their breeding ewe flock numbers in the next 12 months (forecast to fall 19%), a result which may have ongoing impacts for the national flock. Most other states are reporting more modest declines (ranging from -3% to -8%), highlighting the significant impact Western Australian producers continue to have.



2026 BREEDING EWE FLOCK FORECAST

Total reported flock size for 2025:	48,880,544
Total expected flock size for 2026:	44,344,370
Difference of:	- 4,536,174
% forecast change on 2025:	- 9%

Observations and insights:
Wethers

A profile of the wether flock

The May 2025 survey has estimated there are 7.67M wethers on hand, with Merinos (88% of total flock) being the dominant breed type on hand.

Producer intentions

Analysis of the feedback provided shows that:

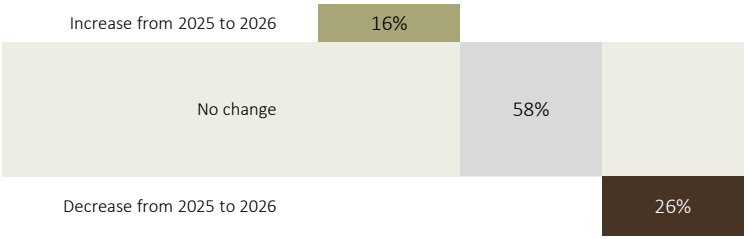
- At the producer level (that is considering each producer equal), there is a net intention to decrease their wether flocks in the next 12 months:
  - 16% indicating they would increase their wether flock size;
  - 58% indicating it would remain unchanged; and
  - 26% indicating they would decrease their wether flock size.

  Western Australian and Queensland producers were more likely to forecast a decrease over the next 12 months (32% and 31% forecast a decrease). Producers from all farm sizes were more likely to report an intention to decrease their wether flocks in the upcoming 12 months.

- Analysis of the forecast intentions suggests a decrease of approximately 0.8M wethers (11% decrease) over the estimated 2025 flock size. This result highlights the importance of considering the reported changes in flock size rather than just producers' disposition to change.

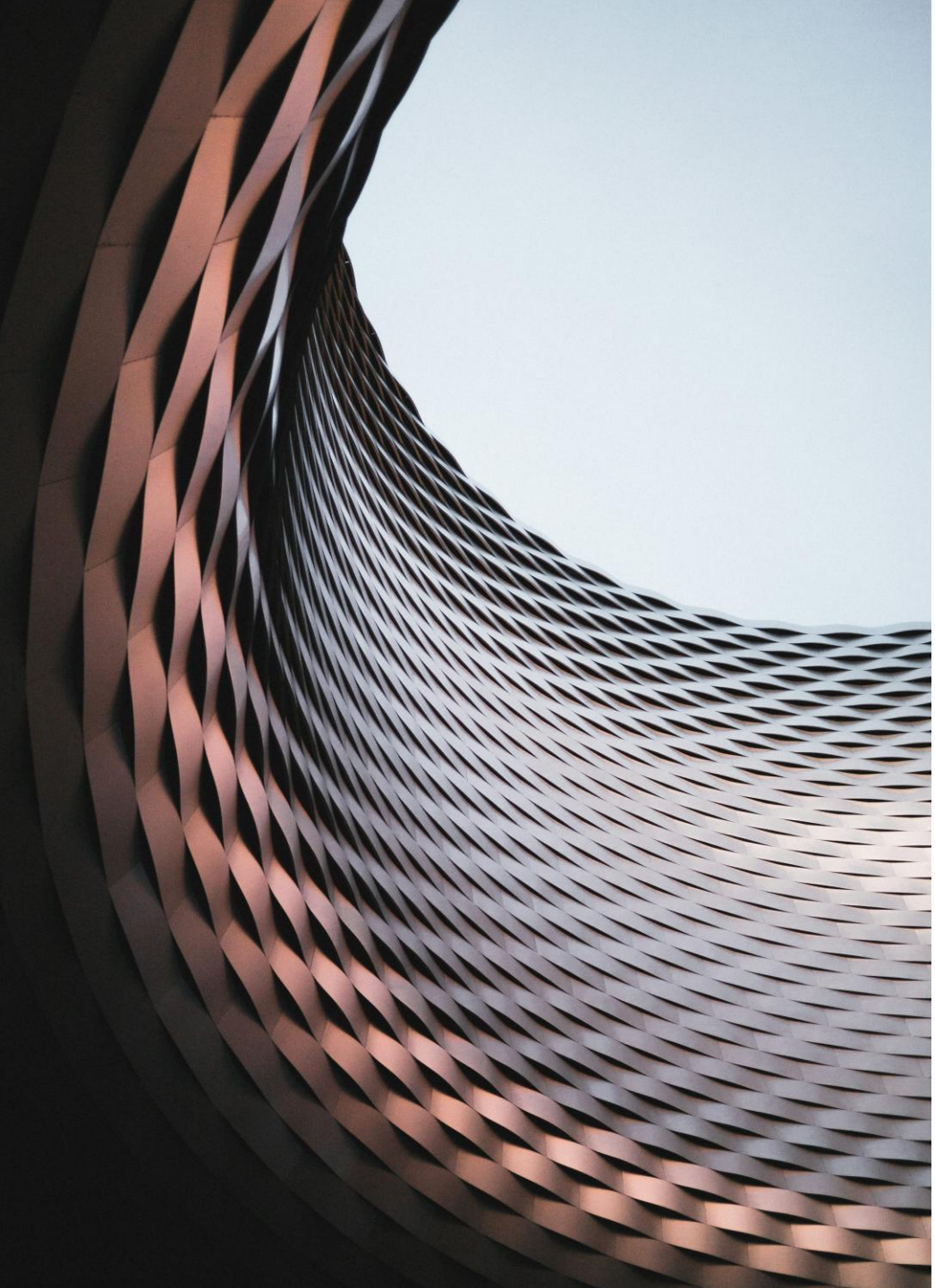
  Details on the forecast change estimate – showing the impact from producers who have reported an increase as well as producers who were forecasting a decrease in their wether flock – is shown opposite.

  Western Australian producers are reporting a strong forecast fall in wether flock numbers in the next 12 months (forecast to fall 24%). Producers in South Australia (down 15%) and Victoria (down 16%) are also reporting notable forecast decreases.



2026 WETHER FLOCK FORECAST

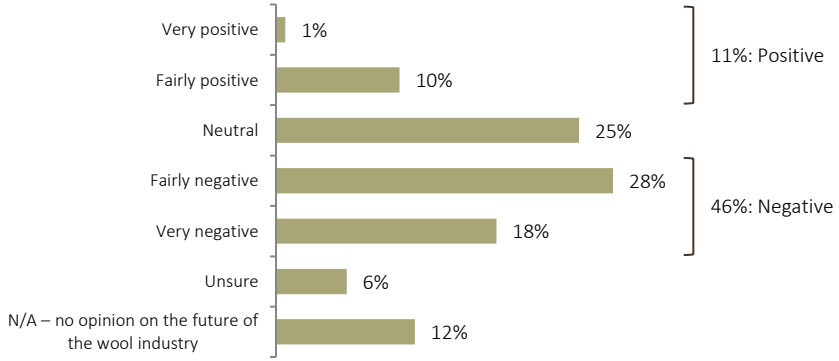
Total reported flock size for 2025:	7,670,086
Total expected flock size for 2026:	6,854,004
Difference of:	- 816,082
% forecast change on 2025:	- 11%



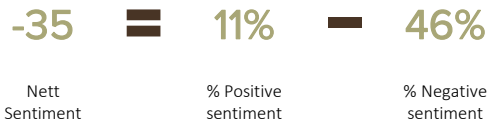
Producer sentiment

Sentiment: outlook for the wool sector

Q6. How do you feel about the future of the wool industry over the next 12 months? Would you say you feel…?
Base: All respondents, n = 2,374



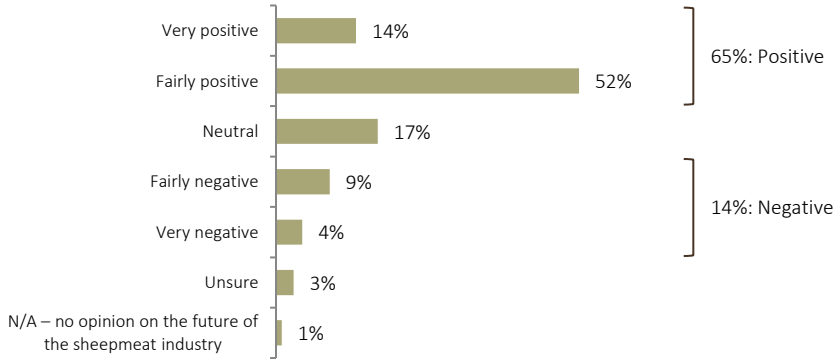
Nett Sentiment
(scale of -100 to +100)



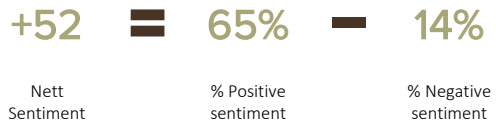
	State						Total Flock Size (sheep and lambs)							
	NSW	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Less than 500	500 – < 1,000	1,000 – < 2,000	2,000 – < 3,000	3,000 – < 5,000	5,000 – < 10,000	10,000 – < 20,000	20,000 or more
Base:	*744*	*83*	*412*	*78*	*585*	*469*	*755*	*354*	*423*	*277*	*262*	*211*	*74*	*18*
Nett Sentiment	-34	-7	-21	-50	-42	-47	-28	-33	-41	-44	-45	-56	-34	-7

Sentiment: outlook for the sheepmeat sector

Q7. And how do you feel about the future of the sheepmeat industry over the next 12 months? Would you say you feel…?
Base: All respondents, n = 2,374



Nett Sentiment
(scale of -100 to +100)



	State						Total Flock Size (sheep and lambs)							
	NSW	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Less than 500	500 – < 1,000	1,000 – < 2,000	2,000 – < 3,000	3,000 – < 5,000	5,000 – < 10,000	10,000 – < 20,000	20,000 or more
Base:	*744*	*83*	*412*	*78*	*585*	*469*	*755*	*354*	*423*	*277*	*262*	*211*	*74*	*18*
Nett Sentiment	+60	+53	+56	+55	+58	0	+44	+54	+59	+61	+55	+62	+65	+90

The comparative Rabobank measure. . . . .

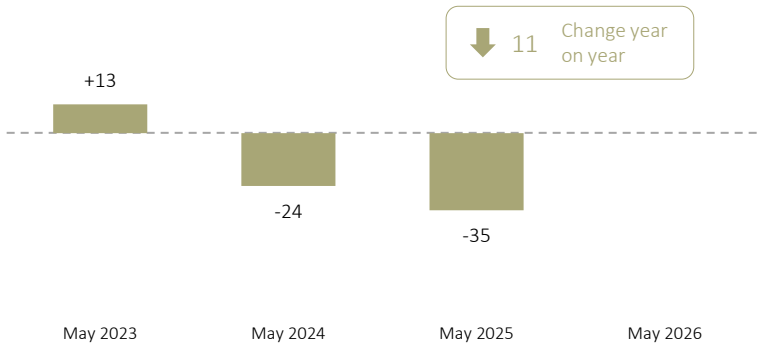
March 2025: 'Sheep producers reported a rebound in confidence, with sentiment now around neutral levels (-2 per cent) after taking a tumble last quarter to -15 per cent. "Dry seasonal conditions continue to weigh on the minds of sheep producers, with more than half (55 per cent) citing the negative impact of drought, the highest percentage across all commodities,"

"We entered March with a slight uptick in national lamb and mutton prices, with finished lambs at or above the five-year average. However, ongoing dry conditions in southern Australia have dampened producer appetite to restock – this contributes to lighter, restocker and Merino lamb prices which, although still higher than last year, are below the five-year average. "Wool prices had found support in recent months due to weakness in the Australian dollar and a tightening production outlook, but there remains a question mark about the repercussions of US tariffs on China, which will have a downstream effect on Chinese import demand for Australian wool.

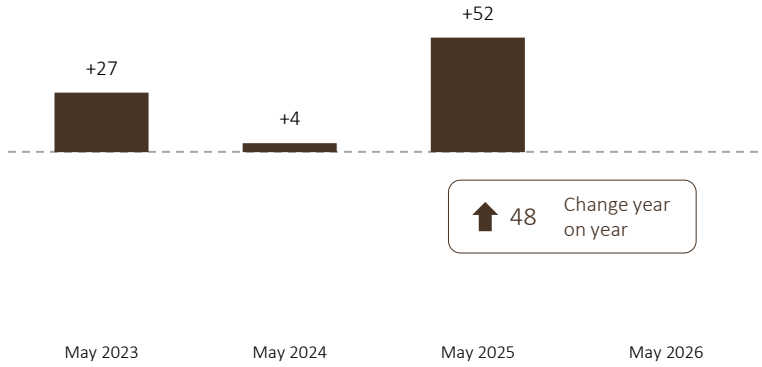
Source of Rabobank commentary: rabobank-rural-confidence-survey-march-25-media-release-national.pdf

Sentiment trend of the wool and sheepmeat sectors

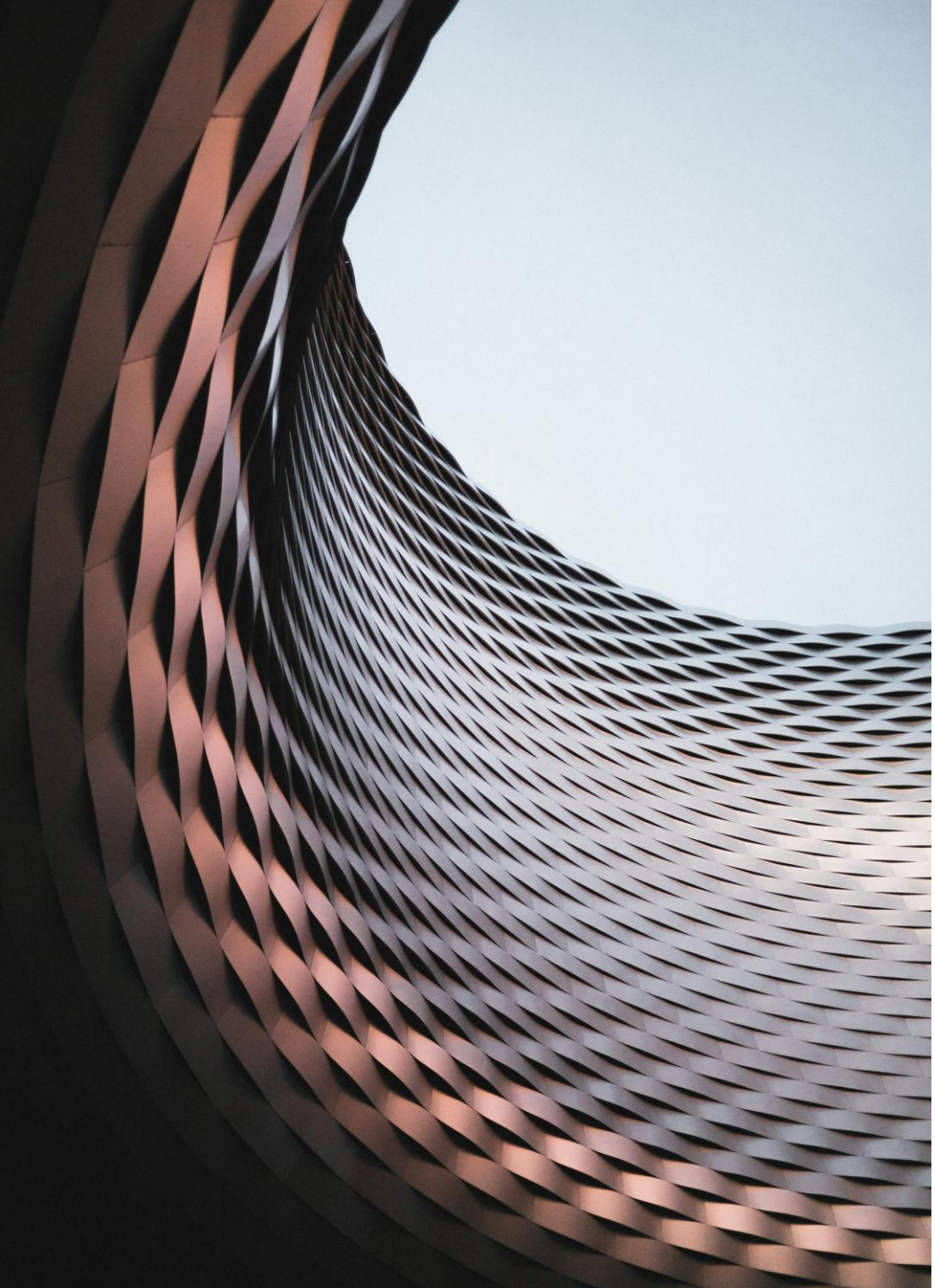
Trend of Nett Sentiment of the wool industry



Trend of Nett Sentiment of the sheepmeat industry



	State						Total Flock Size (sheep and lambs)							
	NSW	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Less than 500	500 – < 1,000	1,000 – < 2,000	2,000 – < 3,000	3,000 – < 5,000	5,000 – < 10,000	10,000 – < 20,000	20,000 or more
Nett Sentiment – Wool – May 2024	-20	+2	-19	-37	-27	-38	-14	-32	-33	-33	-33	-36	-23	-42
Nett Sentiment – Wool – May 2025	-34	-7	-21	-50	-42	-47	-28	-33	-41	-44	-45	-56	-34	-7
Change	↓ 14	↓ 9	↓ 2	↓ 13	↓ 15	↓ 9	↓ 14	↓ 1	↓ 8	↓ 11	↓ 12	↓ 20	↓ 11	↑ 35
Nett Sentiment – Sheepmeat – May 2024	+21	+33	-1	-5	+12	-64	+9	+6	+2	-9	+5	-13	+1	+16
Nett Sentiment – Sheepmeat – May 2025	+60	+53	+56	+55	+58	0	+44	+54	+59	+61	+55	+62	+65	+90
Change	↑ 39	↑ 20	↑ 57	↑ 60	↑ 46	↑ 64	↑ 35	↑ 48	↑ 57	↑ 70	↑ 50	↑ 75	↑ 64	↑ 74



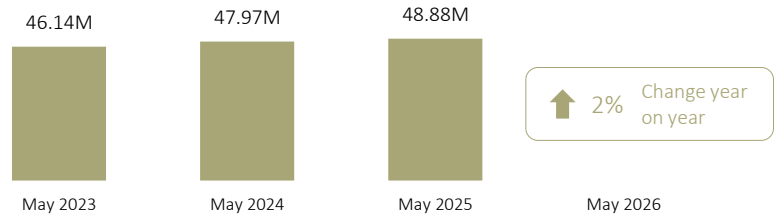
Estimates of the total flock size

Estimates of the total flock size
(breeding ewes + wethers + lambs)

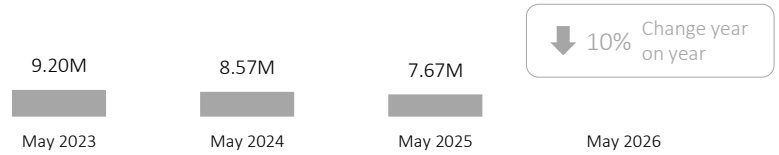
Q8-Q10. What were the total number of breeding ewes (including ewe lambs and hoggets intended for breeding), wethers, and lambs (not including ewe lambs and hoggets intended for breeding) you had on hand at 30 April 2025?
Base: All respondents, n = 2,374

		% of producers with type of flock
Breeding ewes (including ewe lambs and hoggets intended for breeding) on hand at 30 April 2025:	48,880,544	96%
Wethers on hand at 30 April 2025:	7,670,086	52%
Lambs (not including ewe lambs and hoggets intended for breeding) on hand at 30 April 2025:	13,811,356	68%

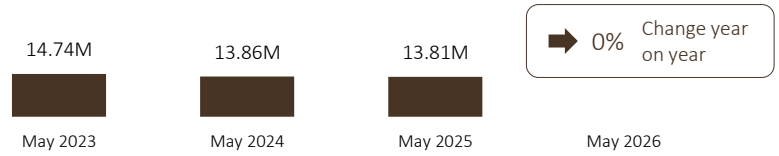
Trend of breeding ewe flock size estimates



Trend of wether flock size estimates

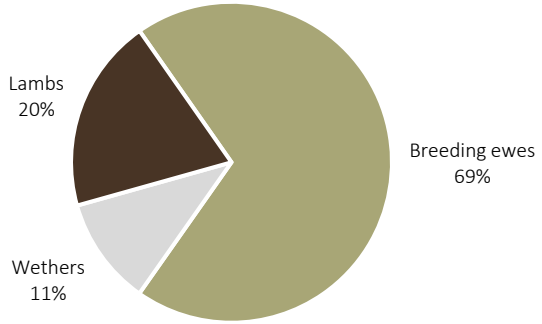


Trend lamb flock size estimates



Estimates of the total flock size
(breeding ewes + wethers + lambs)

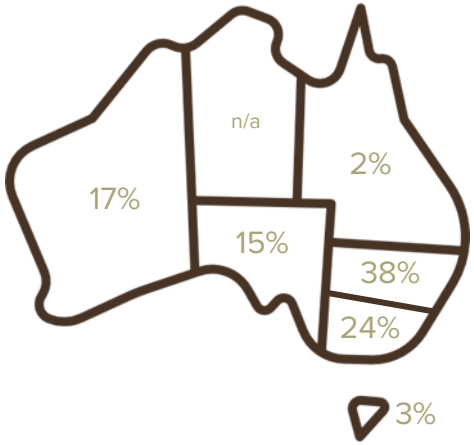
Proportion of breeding ewe, wether and lamb flock sizes



	State						Total Flock Size (sheep and lambs)							
	NSW	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Less than 500	500 – < 1,000	1,000 – < 2,000	2,000 – < 3,000	3,000 – < 5,000	5,000 – < 10,000	10,000 – < 20,000	20,000 or more
Base:	*744*	*83*	*412*	*78*	*585*	*469*	*755*	*354*	*423*	*277*	*262*	*211*	*74*	*18*
% of total flock size														
Breeding ewes	64%	57%	77%	64%	71%	75%	70%	69%	72%	70%	70%	71%	70%	56%
Wethers	12%	25%	7%	14%	11%	9%	10%	11%	9%	10%	10%	11%	11%	16%
Lambs	24%	19%	16%	22%	18%	16%	20%	20%	19%	20%	20%	18%	19%	28%

Estimates of the total flock size
(breeding ewes + wethers + lambs)

Proportion of total flock size across states



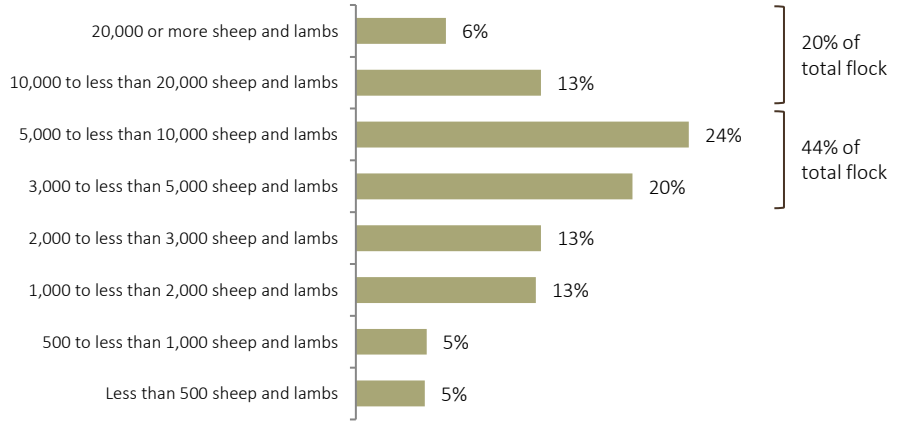
NSW and VIC account for an estimated 62% of the total flock size.

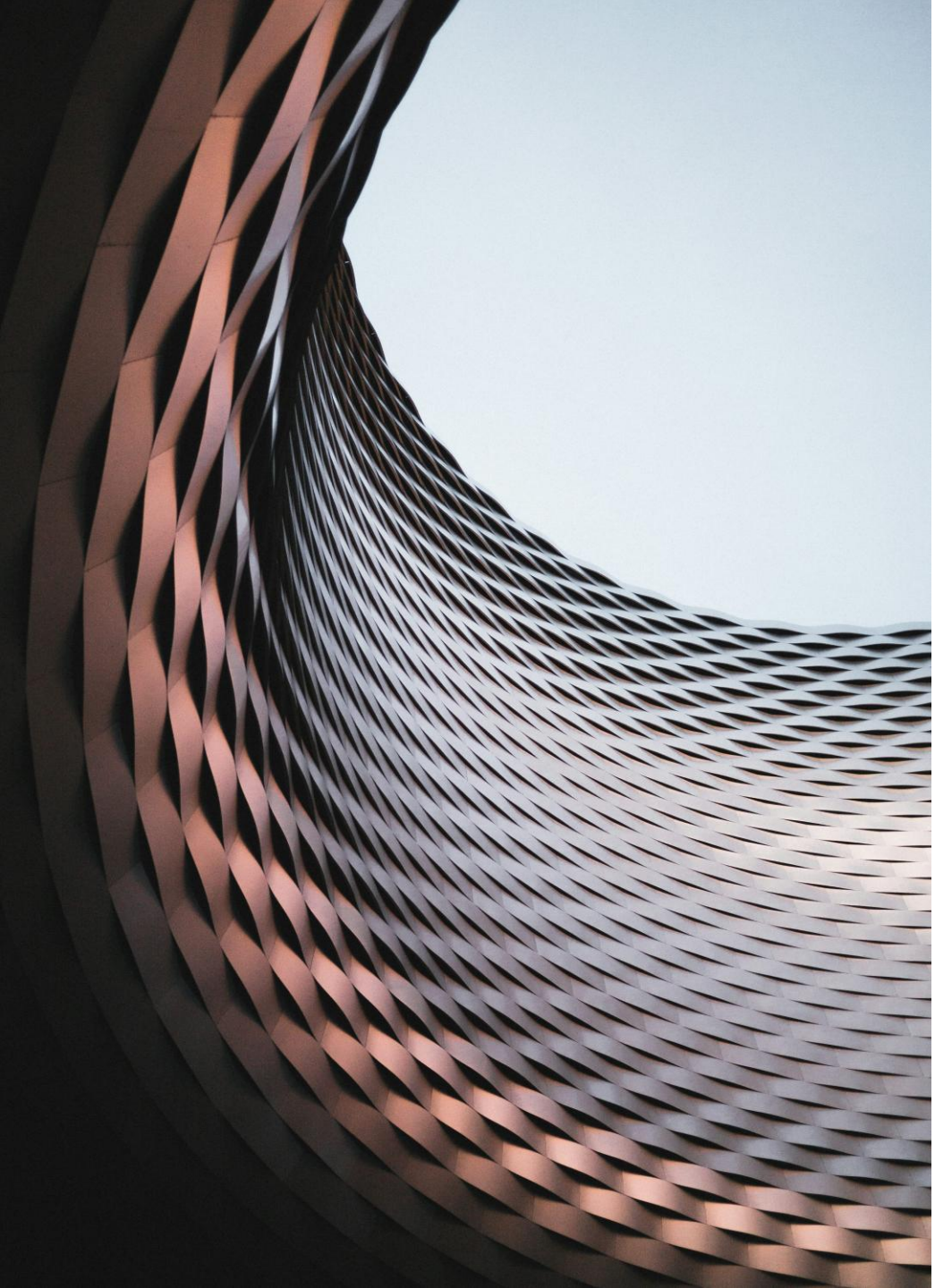
SA and WA account for 32% with QLD, TAS and the territories estimated to account for just a small proportion of the total national flock.

While there are many smaller producers (for example 36% of the estimated total flock is held by producers with less than 3,000 sheep), it is the larger producers which have a greater proportion of the national sheep flock (64% of the estimated total flock is held by producers with 3,000 or more sheep and 20% with producers who have 10,000 or more sheep).

It will inevitably be then the decisions made by these larger producer cohorts that will shape and influence national trends.

Proportion of total flock size across total flock size categories





A focus on: Breeding ewes

This section of the report includes estimates of:

1. Breeding ewe flock profiles, a profile of the breeds on hand, a summary of the Merinos for lamb production and an estimate of the breeding ewes joining rate.

2. Producer intentions over the next 12 months: breeding ewe flock increases or decreases and the number of breeding ewes forecast for 2026.

Breeding ewe flock profile

Breeding ewe flock profiles

Q8. What were the total number of breeding ewes (including ewe lambs and hoggets intended for breeding) you had on hand at 30 April 2025?
Base: All respondents, n = 2,374

Breeding ewes (including ewe lambs and hoggets intended for breeding):	48,880,544
% of total flock size:	69%

	State						Total Flock Size (sheep and lambs)							
	NSW	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Less than 500	500 – < 1,000	1,000 – < 2,000	2,000 – < 3,000	3,000 – < 5,000	5,000 – < 10,000	10,000 – < 20,000	20,000 or more
Base:	*744*	*83*	*412*	*78*	*585*	*469*	*755*	*354*	*423*	*277*	*262*	*211*	*74*	*18*
Breeding ewe flock size	17,345,375	990,761	8,026,638	1,455,949	12,010,484	9,037,845	2,435,784	2,483,700	6,592,603	6,553,024	9,811,342	11,929,897	6,533,061	2,541,134
% of total flock size	64%	57%	77%	64%	71%	75%	70%	69%	72%	70%	70%	71%	70%	56%

Breeding ewe flock – breeds on hand

Q12 and Q13. Of these [Q8 ANSWER] breeding ewes you mentioned earlier, please tell us which of the following types of breeding ewe breeds you have across your properties:
Base: All respondents with breeding ewes, n = 2,287

Total breeding ewe flock size reported:	48,880,544					
		% of total breeding ewe flock	% of producers with breed			*Definitions of breeds presented to producers:*
Merino	31,088,167	64%	49%	---------	Merino	Main breed of sheep for wool production.
Prime lamb	6,463,843	13%	20%	---------	Prime lamb	Animal entirely focused on meat (lamb) production e.g. Composite, Terminal, Suffolk or Dorset.
First cross	5,671,807	12%	23%	---------	First cross	Merino crossed with a long-haired sheep of a different breed.
Shedding	3,507,115	7%	23%	---------	Shedding	Breeds of sheep that shed their wool without shearing e.g. Australian White or Dorper. Could also be referred to as hair sheep.
Dual purpose	1,736,184	4%	6%	---------	Dual purpose	Animal with no more than 50% Merino content geared towards both meat and wool production equally.
Other	413,429	1%	3%	---------	Other	Any breeds that do not fit into the definitions above.

Breeding ewe flock – breeds on hand

Q12 and Q13. Of these [Q8 ANSWER] breeding ewes you mentioned earlier, please tell us which of the following types of breeding ewe breeds you have across your properties:
Base: All respondents with breeding ewes, n = 2,287

Total breeding ewe flock size reported:	48,880,544				
		% of total breeding ewe flock	*May 2024*	% of producers with breed	*May 2024*
Merino	31,088,167	64%	*61%*	49%	*48%*
Prime lamb	6,463,843	13%	*15%*	20%	*19%*
First cross	5,671,807	12%	*12%*	23%	*24%*
Shedding	3,507,115	7%	*7%*	23%	*23%*
Dual purpose	1,736,184	4%	*4%*	6%	*8%*
Other	413,429	1%	*1%*	3%	*3%*

Breeding ewe flock – breeds on hand

Q12 and Q13. Of these [Q8 ANSWER] breeding ewes you mentioned earlier, please tell us which of the following types of breeding ewe breeds you have across your properties:
Base: All respondents with breeding ewes, n = 2,287

	State						Total Flock Size (sheep and lambs)							
	NSW	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Less than 500	500 – < 1,000	1,000 – < 2,000	2,000 – < 3,000	3,000 – < 5,000	5,000 – < 10,000	10,000 – < 20,000	20,000 or more
Base:	*720*	*77*	*400*	*77*	*559*	*451*	*700*	*341*	*415*	*271*	*259*	*209*	*74*	*18*
Total breeding ewe flock size	**17,345,375**	**990,761**	**8,026,638**	**1,455,949**	**12,010,484**	**9,037,845**	**2,435,784**	**2,483,700**	**6,592,603**	**6,553,024**	**9,811,342**	**11,929,897**	**6,533,061**	**2,541,134**
% of total breeding ewe flock														
Merino	64%	64%	74%	53%	43%	83%	30%	51%	58%	63%	68%	65%	73%	76%
Prime lamb	8%	3%	8%	28%	30%	4%	15%	14%	12%	12%	13%	15%	12%	14%
First cross	14%	1%	9%	9%	18%	2%	20%	17%	17%	14%	10%	12%	4%	5%
Shedding	9%	30%	5%	4%	5%	6%	27%	13%	7%	7%	5%	5%	7%	4%
Dual purpose	3%	0%	4%	6%	3%	4%	5%	5%	5%	3%	4%	3%	4%	2%
Other	1%	1%	<1%	1%	1%	1%	3%	<1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	<1%	0%

Breeding ewe flock – Merinos for lamb production

Q14. Of the [Q13 ANSWER] Merino breeding ewes on hand, how many were for pure bred Merino lamb production and how many were for crossbred lamb production?
Base: All respondents with Merino breeding ewes, n = 1,321

		% of Merino breeding ewe flock	*May 2024*
Total Merino breeding ewe flock size:	31,088,167		
Merino ewes for pure bred Merino lamb production	21,508,284	69%	*69%*
Merino ewes for crossbred lamb production	8,540,123	27%	*27%*
Merino ewes - other	1,039,759	3%	*4%*

	State						Total Flock Size (sheep and lambs)							
	NSW	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Less than 500	500 – < 1,000	1,000 – < 2,000	2,000 – < 3,000	3,000 – < 5,000	5,000 – < 10,000	10,000 – < 20,000	20,000 or more
Base:	*720*	*77*	*400*	*77*	*559*	*451*	*700*	*341*	*415*	*271*	*259*	*209*	*74*	*18*
Total Merino breeding ewe flock size	**11,078,309**	**635,960**	**5,925,297**	**770,137**	**5,152,614**	**7,517,820**	**722,185**	**1,274,207**	**3,811,031**	**4,154,780**	**6,652,793**	**7,751,631**	**4,784,222**	**1,937,316**
% of total Merino breeding ewe flock														
Merino ewes for pure bred Merino lamb production	73%	91%	68%	68%	63%	66%	49%	55%	72%	69%	71%	67%	73%	71%
Merino ewes for crossbred lamb production	23%	7%	30%	29%	35%	29%	47%	42%	24%	28%	25%	29%	24%	28%
Merino ewes - other	4%	2%	2%	3%	2%	4%	4%	3%	4%	3%	4%	4%	4%	<1%

Breeding ewe flock – breeding ewes expected to join

Q15. Of the [Q8 ANSWER] total breeding ewes, how many do you expect to join to produce lambs for the upcoming season? Please tell us the breakdown by the following type of breeding ewe breeds across your properties:

Base: All respondents with breeding ewes, n = 2,287

		Expected joining rate	*May 2024*
Total breeding ewes expected to join:	42,258,592		
Merino ewes for pure bred Merino lamb production expected to join	18,766,190	87%	*85%*
Merino ewes for crossbred lamb production expected to join	8,378,255	98%	*95%*
Non-Merino ewes for lamb production expected to join	15,114,147	85%	*87%*

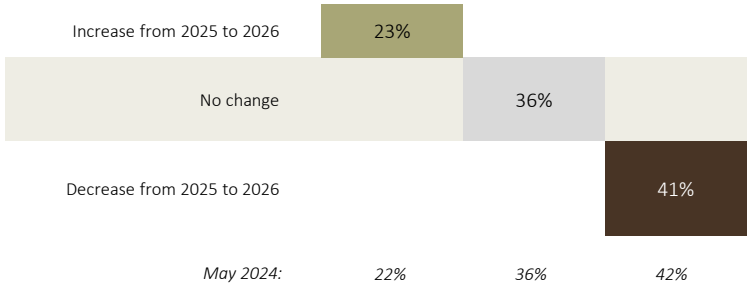
Calculation of joining rate (example: Merino ewes for pure bred Merino lamb production):

Estimate of total number of breeding ewes expected to join:	18,766,190
÷	
Estimated total number of breeding ewes:	21,508,284
=	
Expected joining rate:	87%

Producer intentions: breeding ewe flock

Producer intentions over the next 12 months: breeding ewe flock

Q17. And how many breeding ewes are you expecting to have on hand at the same time next year, in 2026 (30 April 2026)?
Base: All respondents, n = 2,374



Producers provided an indication of their intention for their breeding ewe flock over the next 12 months.

Among the producers responding to the May 2025 survey, just over four in ten producers (41%) reported they intended to downsize their breeding ewe flock over the upcoming 12 months. One in five (23%) were intending to increase their ewe flock and about one in three (36%) were reporting no expected change.

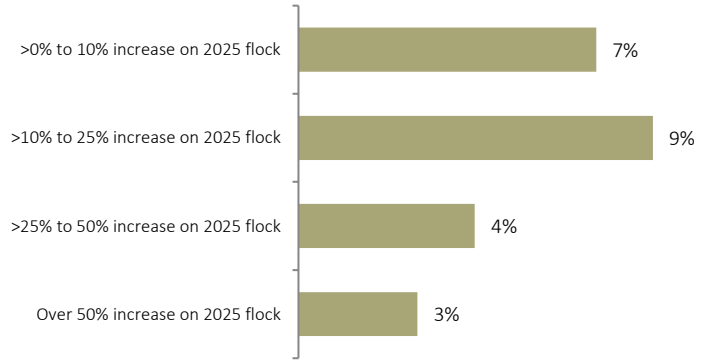
This provides a useful producer sentiment, with the following analysis exploring the impact of this stated intention on the forecast breeding ewe flock sizes (remembering producers have different flock sizes).

	State						Total Flock Size (sheep and lambs)							
	NSW	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Less than 500	500 – < 1,000	1,000 – < 2,000	2,000 – < 3,000	3,000 – < 5,000	5,000 – < 10,000	10,000 – < 20,000	20,000 or more
Base:	*744*	*83*	*412*	*78*	*585*	*469*	*755*	*354*	*423*	*277*	*262*	*211*	*74*	*18*
Increase from 2025 to 2026	27%	24%	19%	26%	23%	13%	23%	25%	22%	23%	22%	22%	29%	25%
No change	37%	46%	35%	38%	37%	29%	40%	36%	30%	30%	38%	34%	29%	58%
Decrease from 2025 to 2026	35%	30%	46%	37%	40%	58%	37%	39%	48%	47%	40%	45%	42%	17%

How the forecast increase translates to breeding ewe flock numbers

23% of producers reported they are likely to have MORE breeding ewes next year

We asked these producers what they forecast the increase in breeding ewe flock numbers would be…



Of those who forecast an **increase** in breeding ewes…

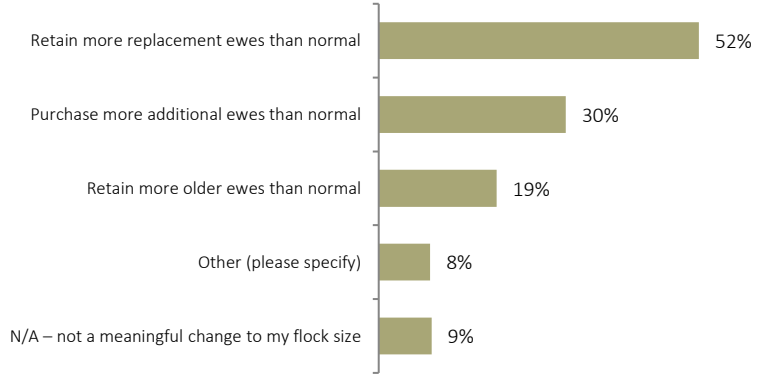
Total reported flock size for 2025:	11,629,970
Total forecast flock size for 2026:	13,251,519
Difference of:	+ 1,621,549

How producers intend to achieve this expected increase in breeding ewes in 2026

23% of producers reported they are likely to have MORE breeding ewes next year

We asked these producers how they intend to achieve this expected increase in their breeding ewe flock numbers…

Q18. You mentioned that you expect to have more breeding ewes on hand as of 30 April 2026. How do you intend to achieve this change?
Base: All respondents who expect an increase in breeding ewe flock size in 2026, n = 525

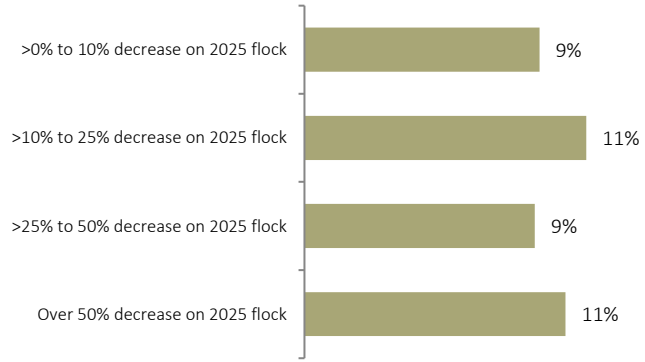


	State						Total Flock Size (sheep and lambs)							
	NSW	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Less than 500	500 – < 1,000	1,000 – < 2,000	2,000 – < 3,000	3,000 – < 5,000	5,000 – < 10,000	10,000 – < 20,000	20,000 or more
Base:	*197*	*26*	*80*	*21*	*138*	*61*	*167*	*83*	*87*	*57*	*59*	*45*	*21*	*6*
Retain more replacement ewes	48%	67%	57%	70%	51%	54%	53%	48%	44%	48%	63%	54%	64%	54%
Purchase more additional ewes	32%	27%	25%	36%	30%	23%	32%	29%	34%	29%	22%	28%	18%	14%
Retain more older ewes	20%	7%	24%	23%	19%	12%	14%	22%	28%	22%	17%	25%	27%	0%
Other (please specify)	9%	16%	8%	2%	6%	11%	8%	10%	7%	8%	7%	11%	16%	0%

How the forecast decrease translates to breeding ewe flock numbers

41% of producers reported they are likely to have FEWER breeding ewes next year

We asked these producers what they forecast the decrease in breeding ewe flock numbers would be…



Of those who forecast a **decrease** in breeding ewes…

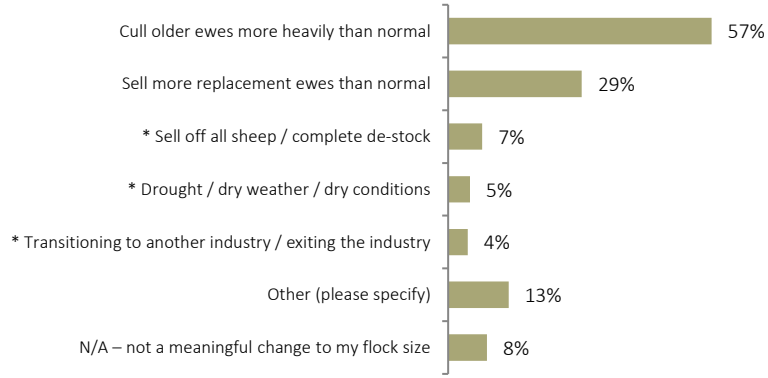
Total reported flock size for 2025:	21,260,106
Total forecast flock size for 2026:	15,102,383
Difference of:	- 6,157,723

How producers intend to achieve this expected decrease in breeding ewes in 2026

41% of producers reported they are likely to have FEWER breeding ewes next year

We asked these producers how they intend to achieve this expected decrease in their breeding ewe flock numbers…

Q19. You mentioned that you expect to have less breeding ewes on hand as of 30 April 2026. How do you intend to achieve this change?
Base: All respondents who expect a decrease in breeding ewe flock size in 2026, n = 1,030



	State						Total Flock Size (sheep and lambs)							
	NSW	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Less than 500	500 – < 1,000	1,000 – < 2,000	2,000 – < 3,000	3,000 – < 5,000	5,000 – < 10,000	10,000 – < 20,000	20,000 or more
Base:	*271*	*27*	*195*	*26*	*234*	*276*	*290*	*148*	*211*	*142*	*110*	*94*	*32*	*3*
Cull older ewes more heavily than normal	55%	69%	57%	67%	58%	59%	50%	56%	61%	69%	58%	76%	57%	100%
Sell more replacement ewes than normal	23%	27%	36%	14%	26%	42%	22%	23%	33%	39%	40%	40%	39%	40%
* Sell off all sheep / complete de-stock	8%	0%	9%	7%	4%	12%	11%	7%	7%	3%	3%	2%	6%	0%
* Drought / dry weather / dry conditions	4%	0%	10%	0%	6%	1%	2%	8%	5%	7%	9%	7%	11%	0%
* Transitioning to another industry / exiting the industry	5%	1%	3%	0%	4%	6%	5%	5%	3%	1%	3%	4%	8%	0%
Other (please specify)	16%	13%	10%	0%	15%	9%	12%	16%	15%	9%	16%	11%	11%	0%

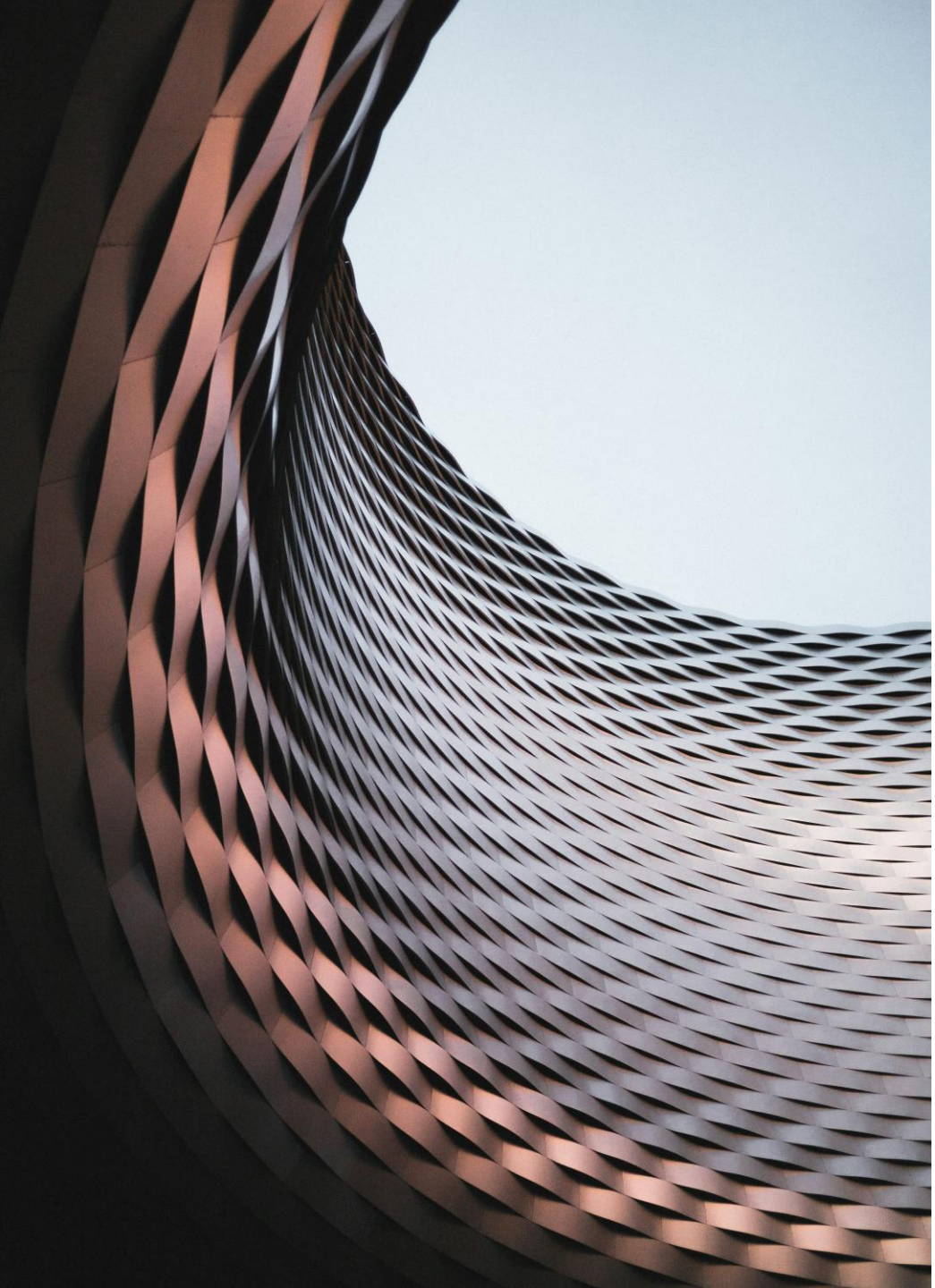
* Response has been coded from open-ended feedback via "Other (please specify)".

Breeding ewes forecast for 2026

Taking into account the forecast size of the breeding ewe flock for those producers who indicated they would be increasing their flock size as well as those producers who indicated they would decrease their flock size, an estimation of the forecast breeding ewe flock for 2026 is shown below…

	2026 BREEDING EWE FLOCK FORECAST		Of those who expect an increase in breeding ewes		Of those who expect no change in breeding ewes		Of those who expect a decrease in breeding ewes
Total reported flock size for 2025:	48,880,544	=	11,629,970	+	15,990,468	+	21,260,106
Total expected flock size for 2026:	44,344,370	=	13,251,519	+	15,990,468	+	15,102,383
Difference of:	- 4,536,174	=	+ 1,621,549	+	0	+	- 6,157,723
% forecast change on 2025:	- 9%						

	State						Total Flock Size (sheep and lambs)							
	NSW	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Less than 500	500 – < 1,000	1,000 – < 2,000	2,000 – < 3,000	3,000 – < 5,000	5,000 – < 10,000	10,000 – < 20,000	20,000 or more
Base:	*744*	*83*	*412*	*78*	*585*	*469*	*755*	*354*	*423*	*277*	*262*	*211*	*74*	*18*
Total reported flock size for 2025:	17,345,375	990,761	8,026,638	1,455,949	12,010,484	9,037,845	2,435,784	2,483,700	6,592,603	6,553,024	9,811,342	11,929,897	6,533,061	2,541,134
Total expected flock size for 2026:	16,117,027	956,916	7,348,082	1,389,390	11,227,318	7,293,483	2,200,839	2,257,071	5,696,136	5,918,466	8,861,809	10,881,261	5,961,139	2,567,649
Difference of:	- 1,228,348	- 33,845	- 678,556	- 66,559	- 783,166	- 1,744,362	- 234,945	- 226,629	- 896,467	- 634,558	- 949,533	- 1,048,636	- 571,922	+ 26,515
% forecast change on 2025:	- 7%	- 3%	- 8%	- 5%	- 7%	- 19%	- 10%	- 9%	- 14%	- 10%	- 10%	- 9%	- 9%	+ 1%



A focus on: Wethers

This section of the report includes estimates of:

1. Wether flock profiles and a profile of the breeds on hand.

2. Producer intentions over the next 12 months: wether flock increases or decreases and the number of wethers forecast for 2026.

Wether flock profile

Wether flock profiles

Q9. What were the total number of wethers you had on hand at 30 April 2025?
Base: All respondents, n = 2,374

Wethers: 7,670,086

% of total flock size: 11%

	State						Total Flock Size (sheep and lambs)							
	NSW	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Less than 500	500 – < 1,000	1,000 – < 2,000	2,000 – < 3,000	3,000 – < 5,000	5,000 – < 10,000	10,000 – < 20,000	20,000 or more
Base:	*744*	*83*	*412*	*78*	*585*	*469*	*755*	*354*	*423*	*277*	*262*	*211*	*74*	*18*
Wether flock size	3,316,716	429,018	703,055	306,153	1,808,664	1,103,558	358,556	382,566	811,700	952,750	1,419,175	1,927,381	1,067,963	749,995
% of total flock size	12%	25%	7%	14%	11%	9%	10%	11%	9%	10%	10%	11%	11%	16%

Wether flock – breeds on hand

Q20 and Q21. Of these [Q9 ANSWER] wethers you mentioned earlier, please tell us which of the following types of wether breeds you have across your properties:
Base: All respondents with wethers, n = 1,249

Total wether flock size reported: 7,670,086

		% of total wether flock	% of producers with breed			*Definitions of breeds presented to producers:*
Merino	6,787,181	88%	54%	---------	Merino	Main breed of sheep for wool production.
Shedding	389,838	5%	23%	---------	Shedding	Breeds of sheep that shed their wool without shearing e.g. Australian White or Dorper. Could also be referred to as hair sheep.
First cross	171,323	2%	10%	---------	First cross	Merino crossed with a long-haired sheep of a different breed.
Prime lamb	164,426	2%	13%	---------	Prime lamb	Animal entirely focused on meat (lamb) production e.g. Composite, Terminal, Suffolk or Dorset.
Dual purpose	116,731	2%	4%	---------	Dual purpose	Animal with no more than 50% Merino content geared towards both meat and wool production equally.
Other	40,588	1%	3%	---------	Other	Any breeds that do not fit into the definitions above.

Wether flock – breeds on hand

Q20 and Q21. Of these [Q9 ANSWER] wethers you mentioned earlier, please tell us which of the following types of wether breeds you have across your properties:
Base: All respondents with wethers, n = 1,249

Total wether flock size reported:	7,670,086				
		% of total wether flock	*May 2024*	% of producers with breed	*May 2024*
Merino	6,787,181	88%	*87%*	54%	*55%*
Shedding	389,838	5%	*5%*	23%	*23%*
First cross	171,323	2%	*2%*	10%	*8%*
Prime lamb	164,426	2%	*3%*	13%	*15%*
Dual purpose	116,731	2%	*3%*	4%	*6%*
Other	40,588	1%	*1%*	3%	*2%*

Wether flock – breeds on hand

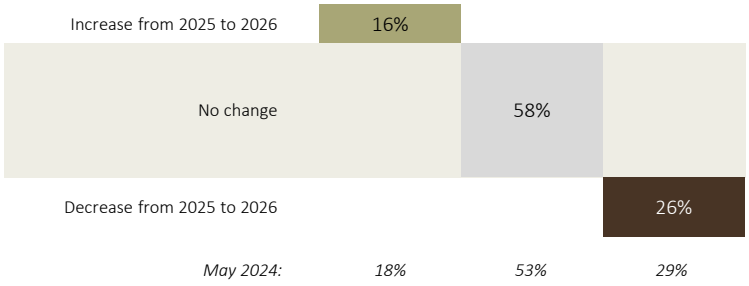
Q20 and Q21. Of these [Q9 ANSWER] wethers you mentioned earlier, please tell us which of the following types of wether breeds you have across your properties:
Base: All respondents with wethers, n = 1,249

	State						Total Flock Size (sheep and lambs)							
	NSW	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Less than 500	500 – < 1,000	1,000 – < 2,000	2,000 – < 3,000	3,000 – < 5,000	5,000 – < 10,000	10,000 – < 20,000	20,000 or more
Base:	*407*	*59*	*181*	*37*	*280*	*284*	*397*	*157*	*195*	*159*	*147*	*129*	*49*	*16*
Total wether flock size	**3,316,716**	**429,018**	**703,055**	**306,153**	**1,808,664**	**1,103,558**	**358,556**	**382,566**	**811,700**	**952,750**	**1,419,175**	**1,927,381**	**1,067,963**	**749,995**
% of total wether flock														
Merino	86%	83%	93%	98%	89%	93%	50%	67%	84%	90%	91%	95%	91%	97%
Shedding	7%	11%	4%	1%	3%	3%	23%	16%	6%	4%	3%	2%	7%	2%
First cross	2%	4%	1%	<1%	3%	1%	5%	7%	2%	2%	2%	1%	3%	<1%
Prime lamb	2%	1%	2%	1%	2%	2%	12%	7%	2%	3%	1%	2%	0%	0%
Dual purpose	1%	<1%	1%	<1%	3%	1%	5%	2%	5%	1%	2%	1%	0%	0%
Other	1%	0%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	6%	1%	1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	0%	<1%

Producer intentions: wether flock

Producer intentions over the next 12 months: wether flock

Q23. And how many wethers are you expecting to have on hand at the same time next year, in 2026 (30 April 2026)?
Base: All respondents, n = 2,374



Producers provided an indication of their intention for their wether flock over the next 12 months.

Among the producers responding to the May 2025 survey, just over half (58%) expect no changed to the size of their wether flock in 2026, with a further 16% expecting more wethers and 26% expecting fewer wethers in 2026.

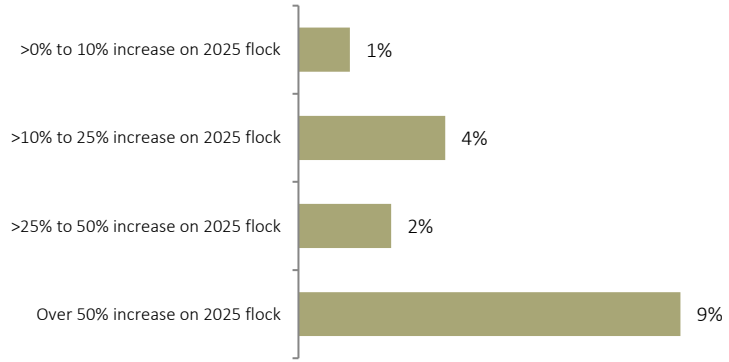
This provides a useful producer sentiment, with the following analysis exploring the impact of this stated intention on the forecast wether flock sizes (remembering producers have different flock sizes).

	State						Total Flock Size (sheep and lambs)							
	NSW	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Less than 500	500 – < 1,000	1,000 – < 2,000	2,000 – < 3,000	3,000 – < 5,000	5,000 – < 10,000	10,000 – < 20,000	20,000 or more
Base:	*744*	*83*	*412*	*78*	*585*	*469*	*755*	*354*	*423*	*277*	*262*	*211*	*74*	*18*
Increase from 2025 to 2026	20%	28%	12%	21%	12%	18%	18%	17%	13%	18%	15%	14%	22%	23%
No change	57%	41%	63%	64%	61%	50%	56%	63%	66%	52%	58%	55%	44%	60%
Decrease from 2025 to 2026	23%	31%	24%	14%	27%	32%	27%	20%	22%	30%	27%	31%	34%	17%

How the forecast increase translates to wether flock numbers

16% of producers reported they are likely to have MORE wethers next year

We asked these producers what they forecast the increase in wether flock numbers would be...



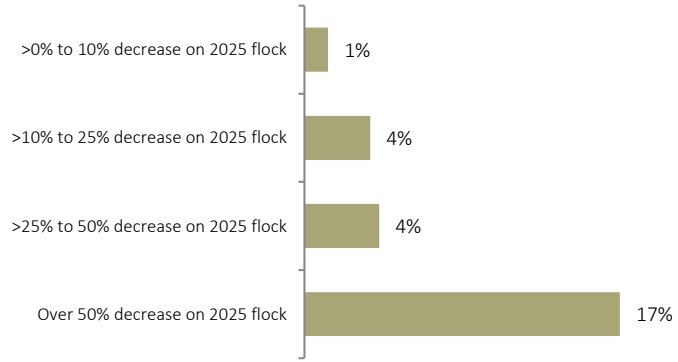
Of those who forecast an **increase** in wethers...

Total reported flock size for 2025:	1,927,164
Total forecast flock size for 2026:	3,026,182
Difference of:	+ 1,099,018

How the forecast decrease translates to wether flock numbers

26% of producers reported they are likely to have FEWER wethers next year

We asked these producers what they forecast the decrease in wether flock numbers would be...



Of those who forecast a **decrease** in wethers...

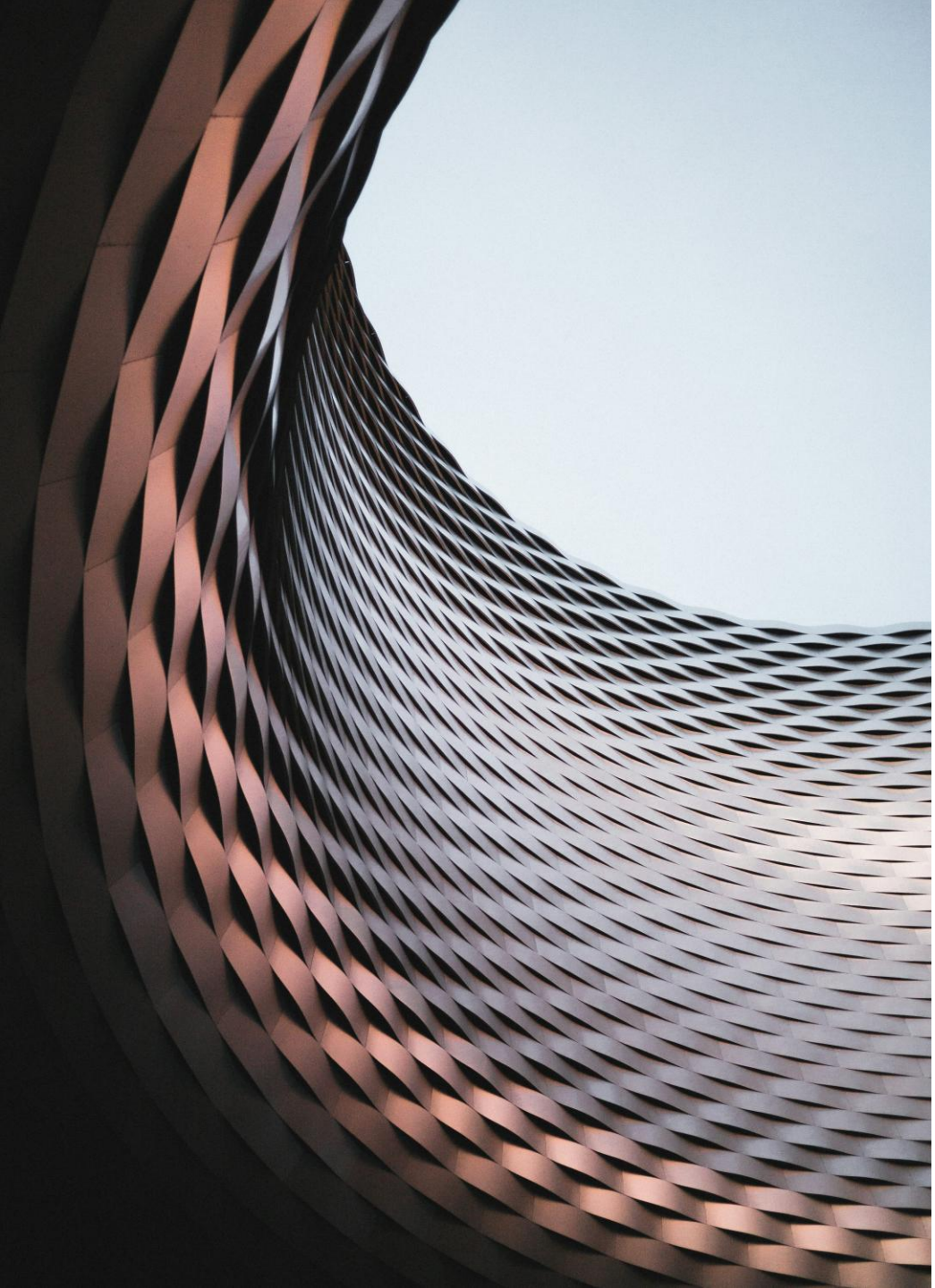
Total reported flock size for 2025:	3,718,985
Total forecast flock size for 2026:	1,803,885
Difference of:	- 1,915,100

Wethers forecast for 2026

Taking into account the forecast size of the wether flock for those producers who indicated they would be increasing their flock size as well as those producers who indicated they would decrease their flock size, an estimation of the forecast wether flock for 2026 is shown below…

	2026 WETHER FLOCK FORECAST		Of those who expect an increase in wethers		Of those who expect no change in wethers		Of those who expect a decrease in wethers
Total reported flock size for 2025:	7,670,086	=	1,927,164	+	2,023,937	+	3,718,985
Total expected flock size for 2026:	6,854,004	=	3,026,182	+	2,023,937	+	1,803,885
Difference of:	- 816,082	=	+ 1,099,018	+	0	+	- 1,915,100
% forecast change on 2025:	- 11%						

	State						Total Flock Size (sheep and lambs)							
	NSW	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Less than 500	500 – < 1,000	1,000 – < 2,000	2,000 – < 3,000	3,000 – < 5,000	5,000 – < 10,000	10,000 – < 20,000	20,000 or more
Base:	*744*	*83*	*412*	*78*	*585*	*469*	*755*	*354*	*423*	*277*	*262*	*211*	*74*	*18*
Total reported flock size for 2025:	3,316,716	429,018	703,055	306,153	1,808,664	1,103,558	358,556	382,566	811,700	952,750	1,419,175	1,927,381	1,067,963	749,995
Total expected flock size for 2026:	3,176,387	453,347	599,529	273,398	1,511,696	838,281	369,679	403,574	732,431	847,612	1,316,207	1,542,859	888,024	753,619
Difference of:	- 140,329	+ 24,329	- 103,526	- 32,755	- 296,968	- 265,277	+ 11,123	+ 21,008	- 79,269	- 105,138	- 102,968	- 384,522	- 179,939	+ 3,624
% forecast change on 2025:	- 4%	+ 6%	- 15%	- 11%	- 16%	- 24%	+ 3%	+ 5%	- 10%	- 11%	- 7%	- 20%	- 17%	0%



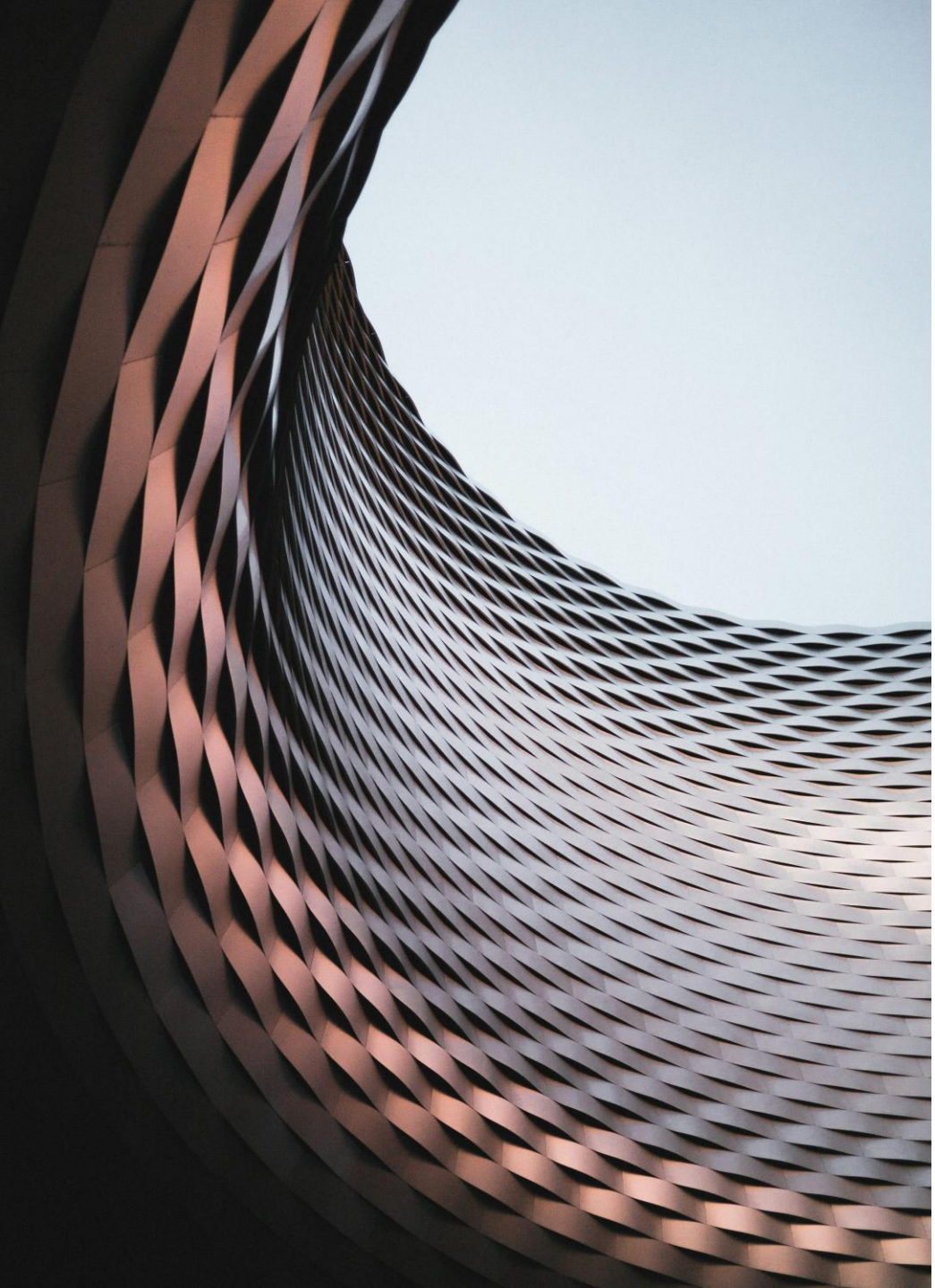
Summary of results: state & flock size

Summary of results by state

	OVERALL	State					
		NSW	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA
Base:	***2,374***	*744*	*83*	*412*	*78*	*585*	*469*
SENTIMENT							
Nett sentiment – wool industry	**-35**	-34	-7	-21	-50	-42	-47
Nett sentiment – sheepmeat industry	**+52**	+60	+53	+56	+55	+58	0
BREEDING EWE flock profile							
Estimate of total breeding ewe flock	**48.88M**	17.35M	0.99M	8.03M	1.46M	12.01M	9.04M
Dominant breeds on hand:							
Merino	**64%**	64%	64%	74%	53%	43%	83%
Prime lamb	**13%**	8%	3%	8%	28%	30%	4%
First cross	**12%**	14%	1%	9%	9%	18%	2%
BREEDING EWE producer intentions							
Reported breeding ewe flock size for 2025	**48.88M**	17.35M	0.99M	8.03M	1.46M	12.01M	9.04M
Forecast breeding ewe flock size for 2026	**44.34M**	16.12M	0.96M	7.35M	1.39M	11.23M	7.29M
Forecast change in total breeding ewe flock	**- 9%**	- 7%	- 3%	- 8%	- 5%	- 7%	- 19%
Producer-level intentions (ignoring size):							
Increase from 2025 to 2026	**23%**	27%	24%	19%	26%	23%	13%
No change	**36%**	37%	46%	35%	38%	37%	29%
Decrease from 2025 to 2026	**41%**	35%	30%	46%	37%	40%	58%
WETHER flock profile							
Estimate of total wether flock	**7.67M**	3.32M	0.43M	0.70M	0.31M	1.81M	1.10M
Dominant breeds on hand:							
Merino	**88%**	86%	83%	93%	98%	89%	93%
Shedding	**5%**	7%	11%	4%	1%	3%	3%
First cross	**2%**	2%	4%	1%	<1%	3%	1%
WETHER producer intentions							
Reported wether flock size for 2025	**7.67M**	3.32M	0.43M	0.70M	0.31M	1.81M	1.10M
Forecast wether flock size for 2026	**6.85M**	3.18M	0.45M	0.60M	0.27M	1.51M	0.84M
Forecast change in total wether flock	**- 11%**	- 4%	+ 6%	- 15%	- 11%	- 16%	- 24%
Producer-level intentions (ignoring size):							
Increase from 2025 to 2026	**16%**	20%	28%	12%	21%	12%	18%
No change	**58%**	57%	41%	63%	64%	61%	50%
Decrease from 2025 to 2026	**26%**	23%	31%	24%	14%	27%	32%

Summary of results by total flock size

	OVERALL	Total Flock Size (sheep and lambs)							
		Less than 500	500 – < 1,000	1,000 – < 2,000	2,000 – < 3,000	3,000 – < 5,000	5,000 – < 10,000	10,000 – < 20,000	20,000 or more
Base:	***2,374***	*755*	*354*	*423*	*277*	*262*	*211*	*74*	*18*
SENTIMENT									
Nett sentiment – wool industry	**-35**	-28	-33	-41	-44	-45	-56	-34	-7
Nett sentiment – sheepmeat industry	**+52**	+44	+54	+59	+61	+55	+62	+65	+90
BREEDING EWE flock profile									
Estimate of total breeding ewe flock	**48.88M**	2.44M	2.48M	6.59M	6.55M	9.81M	11.93M	6.53M	2.54M
Dominant breeds on hand:									
Merino	**64%**	30%	51%	58%	63%	68%	65%	73%	76%
Prime lamb	**13%**	15%	14%	12%	12%	13%	15%	12%	14%
First cross	**12%**	20%	17%	17%	14%	10%	12%	4%	5%
BREEDING EWE producer intentions									
Reported breeding ewe flock size for 2025	**48.88M**	2.44M	2.48M	6.59M	6.55M	9.81M	11.93M	6.53M	2.54M
Forecast breeding ewe flock size for 2026	**44.34M**	2.20M	2.26M	5.70M	5.92M	8.86M	10.88M	5.96M	2.57M
Forecast change in total breeding ewe flock	**- 9%**	- 10%	- 9%	- 14%	- 10%	- 10%	-9%	- 9%	+ 1%
Producer-level intentions (ignoring size):									
Increase from 2025 to 2026	**23%**	23%	25%	22%	23%	22%	22%	29%	25%
No change	**36%**	40%	36%	30%	30%	38%	34%	29%	58%
Decrease from 2025 to 2026	**41%**	37%	39%	48%	47%	40%	45%	42%	17%
WETHER flock profile									
Estimate of total wether flock	**7.67M**	0.36M	0.38M	0.81M	0.95M	1.42M	1.93M	1.07M	0.75M
Dominant breeds on hand:									
Merino	**88%**	50%	67%	84%	90%	91%	95%	91%	97%
Shedding	**5%**	23%	16%	6%	4%	3%	2%	7%	2%
First cross	**2%**	5%	7%	2%	2%	2%	1%	3%	<1%
WETHER producer intentions									
Reported wether flock size for 2025	**7.67M**	0.36M	0.38M	0.81M	0.95M	1.42M	1.93M	1.07M	0.75M
Forecast wether flock size for 2026	**6.85M**	0.37M	0.40M	0.73M	0.85M	1.32M	1.54M	0.89M	0.75M
Forecast change in total wether flock	**- 11%**	+ 3%	+ 5%	- 10%	- 11%	- 7%	- 20%	- 17%	0%
Producer-level intentions (ignoring size):									
Increase from 2025 to 2026	**16%**	18%	17%	13%	18%	15%	14%	22%	23%
No change	**58%**	56%	63%	66%	52%	58%	55%	44%	60%
Decrease from 2025 to 2026	**26%**	27%	20%	22%	30%	27%	31%	34%	17%

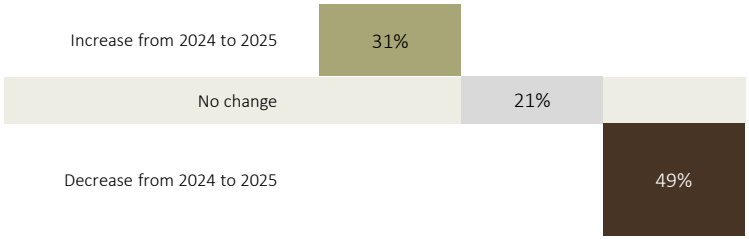


Additional analysis

Breeding ewe flock size: a 3-year perspective

As part of the May 2025 Sheep Producers Intentions Survey, producers were asked to look back and estimate what their breeding ewe flock was in 2024 as well as to look forward and forecast their breeding ewe flock size for 2026. This then provided 3 points in time – the 2024 flock size, the current 2025 flock size and the forecast flock size for 2026. An analysis of this data is shown below.

We asked producers to look back and estimate what their breeding ewe flock was in 2024

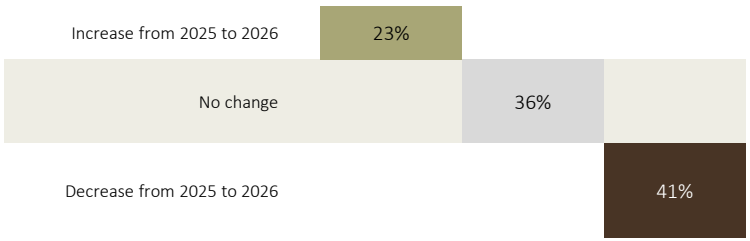


MAY 2025

Reported number of breeding ewes on hand

These diagrams represent the change from 2025 breeding ewe flock – looking back and then forecasting forward

We asked producers to look forward and forecast their breeding ewe flock in 2026



Breeding ewe flock size: a 3-year perspective

	State						Total Flock Size (sheep and lambs)							
	NSW	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Less than 500	500 – < 1,000	1,000 – < 2,000	2,000 – < 3,000	3,000 – < 5,000	5,000 – < 10,000	10,000 – < 20,000	20,000 or more
Base:	*744*	*83*	*412*	*78*	*585*	*469*	*755*	*354*	*423*	*277*	*262*	*211*	*74*	*18*
Increase from 2025 to 2026	**27%**	**24%**	**19%**	**26%**	**23%**	**13%**	**23%**	**25%**	**22%**	**23%**	**22%**	**22%**	**29%**	**25%**
2024 -> Increase 2025 -> Increase 2026	11%	15%	4%	13%	9%	7%	8%	9%	10%	9%	10%	10%	20%	17%
2024 -> Same 2025 -> Increase 2026	3%	<1%	1%	3%	2%	3%	3%	2%	1%	3%	3%	3%	3%	0%
2024 -> Decrease 2025 -> Increase 2026	13%	9%	15%	10%	12%	4%	13%	14%	11%	11%	9%	9%	6%	8%
No change	**37%**	**46%**	**35%**	**38%**	**37%**	**29%**	**40%**	**36%**	**30%**	**30%**	**38%**	**34%**	**29%**	**58%**
2024 -> Increase 2025 -> Same 2026	12%	18%	8%	7%	7%	7%	9%	8%	9%	10%	11%	13%	18%	37%
2024 -> Same 2025 -> Same 2026	14%	16%	10%	21%	14%	10%	14%	13%	11%	11%	17%	14%	7%	17%
2024 -> Decrease 2025 -> Same 2026	11%	12%	17%	10%	16%	12%	17%	15%	10%	9%	11%	7%	5%	3%
Decrease from 2025 to 2026	**35%**	**30%**	**46%**	**37%**	**40%**	**58%**	**37%**	**39%**	**48%**	**47%**	**40%**	**45%**	**42%**	**17%**
2024 -> Increase 2025 -> Decrease 2026	14%	8%	12%	9%	10%	15%	9%	10%	14%	19%	15%	16%	15%	7%
2024 -> Same 2025 -> Decrease 2026	5%	6%	4%	6%	5%	6%	4%	5%	6%	8%	7%	6%	9%	0%
2024 -> Decrease 2025 -> Decrease 2026	17%	16%	30%	21%	25%	37%	24%	24%	28%	20%	18%	23%	18%	10%

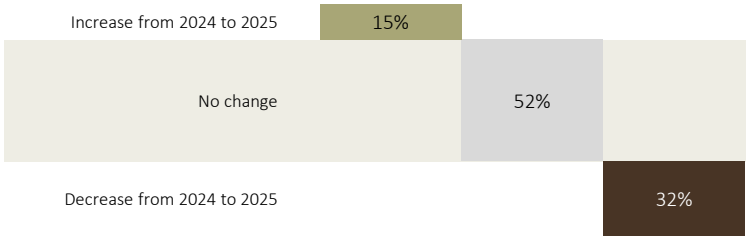
Wether flock size: a 3-year perspective

As part of the May 2025 Sheep Producers Intentions Survey, producers were asked to look back and estimate what their wether flock was in 2024 as well as to look forward and forecast their wether flock size for 2026. This then provided 3 points in time – the 2024 flock size, the current 2025 flock size and the forecast flock size for 2026. An analysis of this data is shown below.

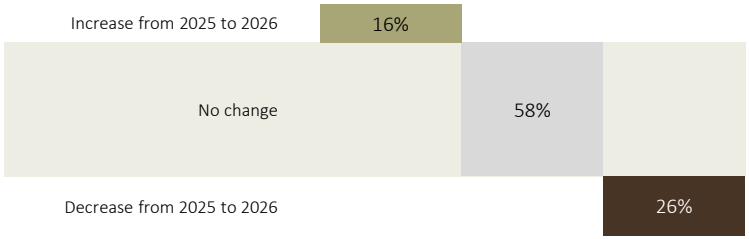
We asked producers to look back and estimate what their wether flock was in 2024

MAY 2025
Reported number of wethers on hand

We asked producers to look forward and forecast their wether flock in 2026

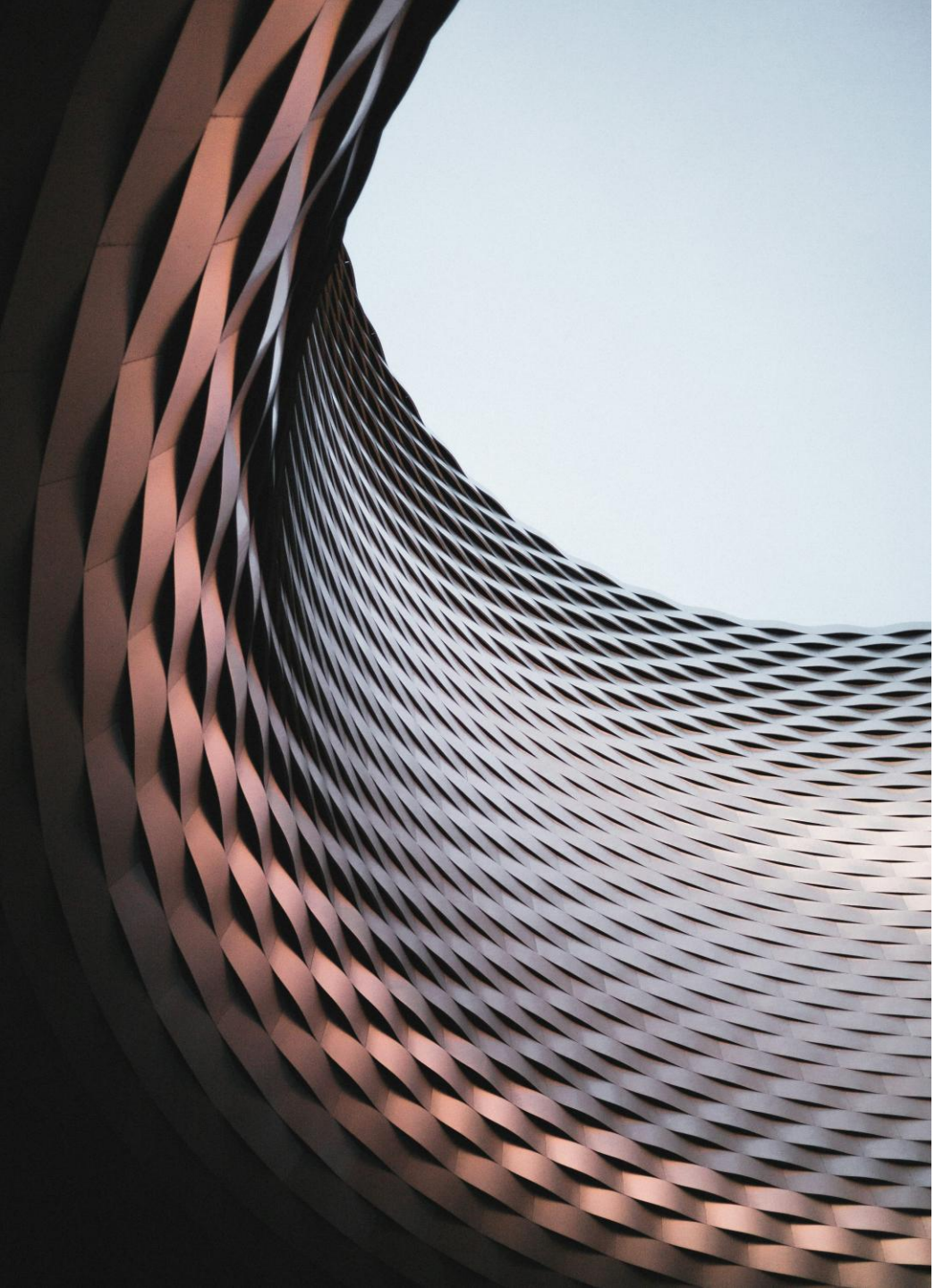


These diagrams represent the change from 2025 wether flock – looking back and then forecasting forward



Wether flock size: a 3-year perspective

	State						Total Flock Size (sheep and lambs)							
	NSW	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Less than 500	500 – < 1,000	1,000 – < 2,000	2,000 – < 3,000	3,000 – < 5,000	5,000 – < 10,000	10,000 – < 20,000	20,000 or more
Base:	*744*	*83*	*412*	*78*	*585*	*469*	*755*	*354*	*423*	*277*	*262*	*211*	*74*	*18*
Increase from 2025 to 2026	**20%**	**28%**	**12%**	**21%**	**12%**	**18%**	**18%**	**17%**	**13%**	**18%**	**15%**	**14%**	**22%**	**23%**
2024 -> Increase 2025 -> Increase 2026	5%	8%	2%	4%	1%	1%	3%	5%	2%	2%	3%	4%	12%	0%
2024 -> Same 2025 -> Increase 2026	3%	3%	1%	5%	1%	1%	2%	2%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	0%
2024 -> Decrease 2025 -> Increase 2026	12%	17%	10%	13%	9%	15%	12%	10%	10%	14%	10%	9%	9%	23%
No change	**57%**	**41%**	**63%**	**64%**	**61%**	**50%**	**56%**	**63%**	**66%**	**52%**	**58%**	**55%**	**44%**	**60%**
2024 -> Increase 2025 -> Same 2026	3%	2%	2%	6%	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%	2%	3%	1%	4%	0%
2024 -> Same 2025 -> Same 2026	47%	31%	52%	57%	51%	34%	44%	55%	53%	44%	49%	45%	30%	46%
2024 -> Decrease 2025 -> Same 2026	7%	8%	10%	1%	8%	14%	9%	7%	10%	5%	6%	8%	10%	14%
Decrease from 2025 to 2026	**23%**	**31%**	**24%**	**14%**	**27%**	**32%**	**27%**	**20%**	**22%**	**30%**	**27%**	**31%**	**34%**	**17%**
2024 -> Increase 2025 -> Decrease 2026	10%	8%	9%	3%	11%	12%	10%	7%	8%	11%	11%	11%	19%	3%
2024 -> Same 2025 -> Decrease 2026	3%	10%	2%	6%	4%	4%	4%	3%	4%	2%	4%	4%	5%	0%
2024 -> Decrease 2025 -> Decrease 2026	10%	13%	14%	5%	13%	16%	12%	10%	10%	17%	12%	15%	9%	14%



Focus area: factors impacting on-farm decision making

Factors impacting on-farm decision making: an overview of the feedback

A special focus topic included in the May Sheep Producer Intentions Survey were two open ended questions asking producers to identify and describe the factors that would impact their on-farm decisions.

The survey sought to understand two different factors sets – firstly the off farm external factors and secondly the on-farm factors (see actual questions opposite). A summary of these two questions follows.

From the feedback we would note that:

Q27. What off-farm external factors, other than prices (for wool, lambs and sheep meat), are likely to have the most impact on your on-farm decision making over the next 6 months?
Base: All respondents who provided a response, n = 2,145

Q28. What on-farm factors are likely to have the most impact on your on-farm decision making over the next 6 months?
Base: All respondents who provided a response, n = 2,190

We note that there was no single off-farm external factor that dominated the response from producers. The range and diversity of feedback form producers suggests that there are likely to be a range of off-farm external influences that will shape the decision making on-farm. This is likely to vary by region and by farm size.

That said, there were five off-farm external factors that producers identified as likely to have a significant influence on their on-farm decisions:

- *Weather – articulated in various forms including the effects of drought (more prominently mentioned in SA and VIC) and the amount of rainfall (not as prominent in QLD and WA). The weather conditions obviously play on to impact feed availability, cost and access to feed, damages and loss of stock in specific circumstances (such as during floods, heavy rainfall and cyclone in southern QLD / northern NSW).*
- *Regulation – the impact of government decisions and continued mention of the live export ban – not just in WA but the flow-on effects to other states. The feedback around this issue had a significantly more direct and harsher tone than that seen with other comments.*
- *Input costs – generally across the board, and then also specifically for feed (more prominent in SA and VIC), production, fertiliser and the day-to-day expenses like fuel and maintenance supplies (i.e. fencing).*
- *Personal circumstances – there was a recognition from some producers that their age, health, ambition to achieve more work/life balance, family factors and decisions on the future of the farm were all active influences on their forward planning.*
- *Labour – mentioned in two ways, being the shortage of / access to / availability of labour (generally and also specifically shearers), and also the cost of this labour (again relating generally and also specifically shearers).*

Factors impacting on-farm decision making: an overview of the feedback

Regarding on-farm factors, again we note that there was no single factor that dominated the response from producers.

That said, there were five on-farm factors that producers identified as likely to have a significant influence on their on-farm decisions:

- *Weather – not surprisingly, producers identified weather as both an off-farm and on-farm factor. It clearly signals a top-of-mind focus and was the number one mentioned on-farm factor in all states and territories.*
- *Feed – some producers identified the production of their feed/pastures, the access/availability of feed and the availability of water as key influences on their on-farm decision making in the next six months. Outside of QLD, this was the number two mentioned on-farm factor for all other states and territories.*
- *Personal circumstances – there was a recognition from some producers that their age, health, ambition to achieve more balance, family factors and decisions on the future of the farm were all active influences on their forward planning.*
- *Input costs – generally across the board, and then also specifically for feed, cost of production and cost of farm supplies (i.e. fencing, more prominently mentioned in QLD)*
- *Sales and prices – for some producers, the commodity prices (generally and also specifically wool, lamb, etc.), together with concerns about the volatility of these prices were seen as influences on their planning and decision making.*

Off-farm external factors impacting on-farm decision making

Q27. What off-farm external factors, other than prices (for wool, lambs and sheep meat), are likely to have the most impact on your on-farm decision making over the next 6 months?
Base: All respondents who provided a response, n = 2,145

50% - Weather / seasonal conditions
- 19% - Amount of rainfall / access to water
- 15% - Weather (NFI)
- 15% - Drought / dry conditions
- 3% - Seasonal conditions (NFI)
- 2% - Climate / climate change (NFI)
- 1% - Floods / wet conditions

24% - Other factors
- 16% - Government policy / regulations / taxes / levies / election
- 7% - Live export trade/ban
- 3% - Abattoir/processor issues
- 2% - Ear tags / EID tags
- 1% - Feral animals

16% - Input costs
- 7% - Input costs (NFI)
- 6% - Feed costs
- 2% - Cost of production
- 2% - Fertiliser costs
- 1% - Cost of drench
- 1% - Cost of chemicals

10% - Sheep sales & prices
- 4% - Sheep prices
- 2% - Wool prices
- 2% - Ability to sell sheep
- 1% - Demand (domestic and global)
- 1% - Availability / cost of replacements / stores
- 1% - Lamb prices
- 1% - Cattle prices

8% - Personal circumstances
- 2% - Age / Retirement
- 2% - Workload
- 1% - Health
- 1% - Change in direction
- 1% - Family factors
- 1% - Sale of farm / land

7% - Labour
- 2% - Shortage of / access to / availability of labour
- 2% - Cost of shearers
- 2% - Shortage / availability of shearers
- 2% - Labour costs

6% - Feed
- 6% - Amount of feed available

6% - Markets
- 3% - Geopolitics / tariff-related market instability / uncertainty
- 2% - Australia / global instability / economy
- 1% - Market (NFI)
- 1% - Cost of living

6% - Business factors
- 4% - Interest rates
- 1% - Cash flow / finance
- 1% - Access to more land / land prices

Results shown if mentioned by at least 1% of respondents.
Results are provided unweighted and are a subjective coding of the open-ended questions.

On-farm factors impacting on-farm decision making

Q28. What on-farm factors are likely to have the most impact on your on-farm decision making over the next 6 months?

Base: All respondents who provided a response, n = 2,190

57% - Weather / seasonal conditions
- 24% - Amount of rainfall
- 16% - Drought / dry conditions
- 13% - Weather (NFI)
- 6% - Seasonal conditions (NFI)
- 1% - Climate / climate change (NFI)
- 1% - Floods / wet conditions

30% - Feed
- 9% - Access/availability of feed
- 8% - Amount of feed / production
- 6% - Pasture growth
- 6% - Availability of water
- 4% - Feed NFI
- 1% - Cropping (NFI)
- 1% - Cropping success
- 1% - Cropping margins

8% - Personal circumstances
- 2% - Workload / scaling back
- 2% - Age / Retirement
- 2% - Health
- 1% - Change in direction
- 1% - Family factors
- 1% - Sale of farm / land

8% - Input costs
- 3% - Input costs (NFI)
- 2% - Feed costs
- 1% - Cost of production
- 1% - Cost of farm supplies

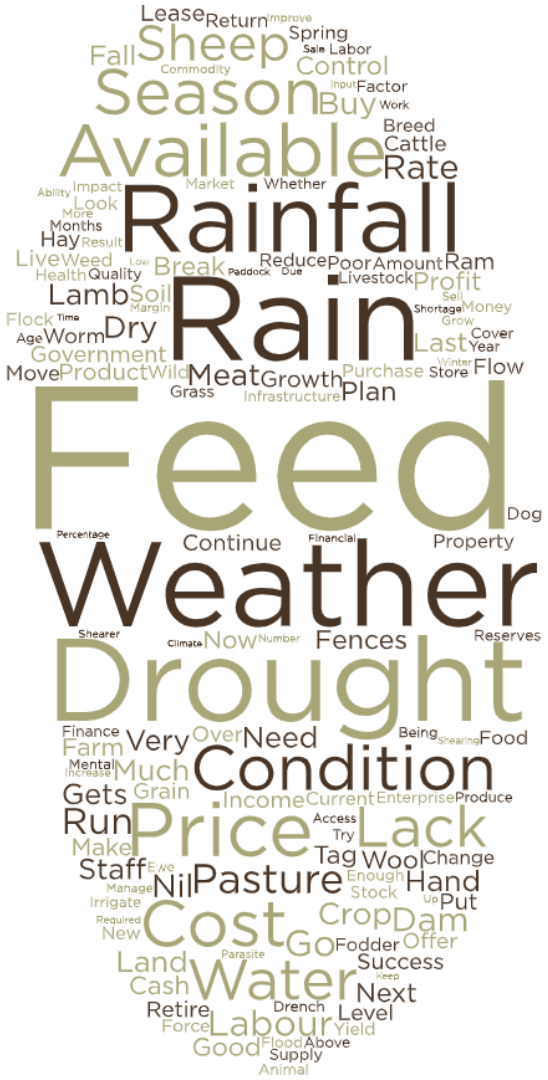
7% - Sheep sales & prices
- 2% - Wool prices
- 2% - Price (NFI)
- 2% - Sheep prices
- 1% - Lamb prices
- 1% - Commodity prices
- 1% - Availability / cost of replacements / stores

7% - Labour
- 3% - Shortage of / access to / availability of labour
- 2% - Labour (NFI)
- 1% - Labour costs
- 1% - Cost of shearers
- 1% - Shortage / availability of shearers

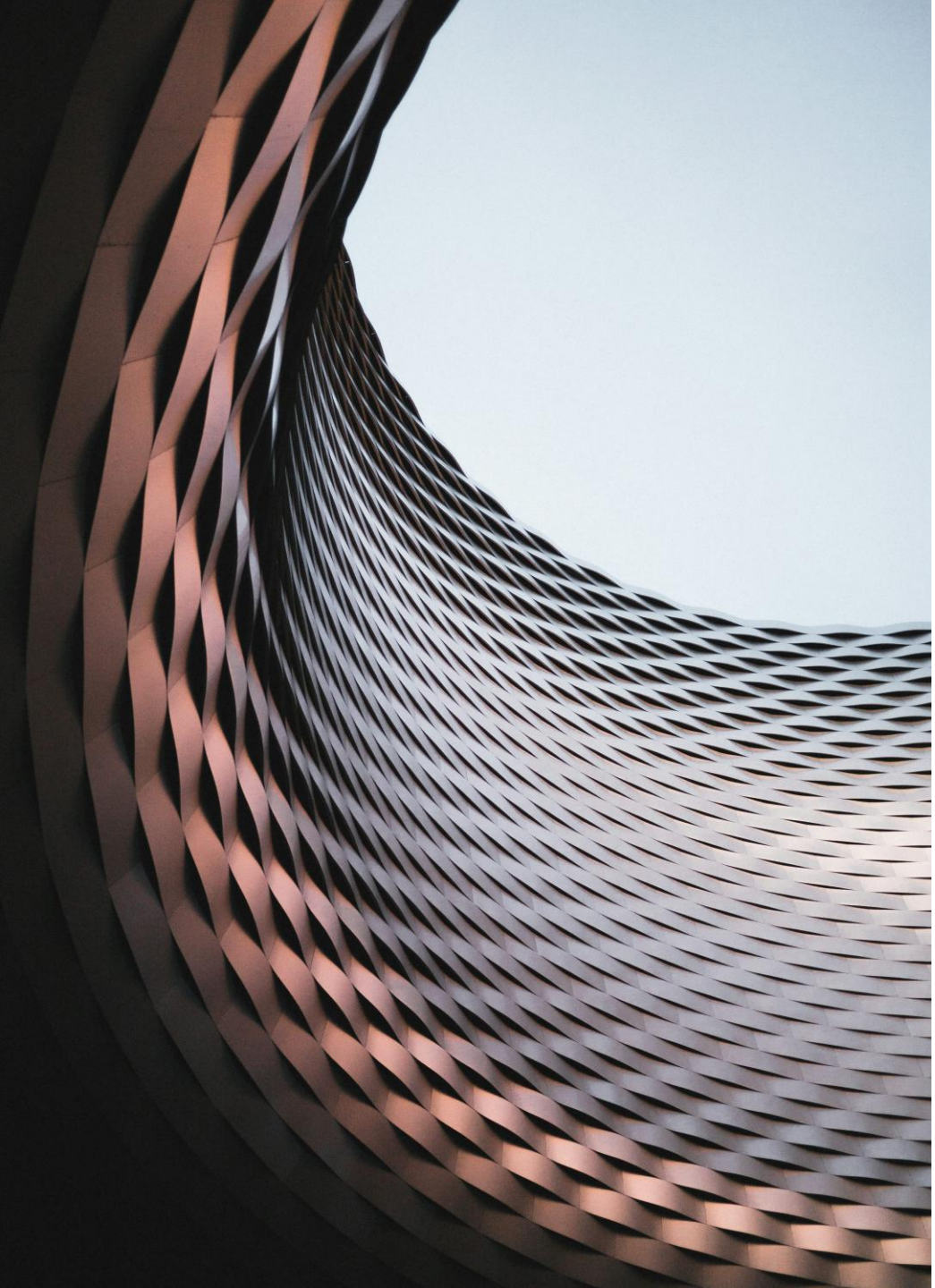
6% - Other factors
- 2% - Insects / pests / parasites / diseases
- 2% - Government policy / regulations / taxes / levies / election
- 2% - Feral animals
- 1% - Ear tags / EID tags

5% - Business factors
- 3% - Cash flow / finance
- 2% - Margins / profitability

2% - Fertility
- 2% - Lambing %
- 1% - Herd health



Results shown if mentioned by at least 1% of respondents.
Results are provided unweighted and are a subjective coding of the open-ended questions.



Attachments

Survey definitions

There were several definitions and specifications provided to producers in the survey. An outline of the key definitions used in the survey are provided below.

Flock Categories

Breeding ewes	Breeding ewes (including ewe lambs and hoggets intended for breeding).
Lambs	Lambs (not including ewe lambs and hoggets intended for breeding).

Sheep Breeds (breeding ewes and wethers)

Merino	Main breed of sheep for wool production.
First cross	Merino crossed with a long-haired sheep of a different breed.
Shedding	Breeds of sheep that shed their wool without shearing e.g. Australian White or Dorper. Could also be referred to as hair sheep.
Prime lamb	Animal entirely focused on meat (lamb) production e.g. Composite, Terminal, Suffolk or Dorset.
Dual purpose	Animal with no more than 50% Merino content geared towards both meat and wool production equally.
Other	Any breeds that do not fit into the definitions above.

Sheep Breeds (rams)

Merino	Main breed of sheep for wool production. Mainly used to provide pure-bred Merino lambs.
Poll Dorset	Short wool, meat producing sheep and is Australia's No.1 terminal sire in the prime lamb industry.
Maternal composite	Examples are Prime Line maternals, White Suffolk, East Friesian, etc.
Shedding	Examples are Dorpers, Ultrawhites, Aussie Whites and other derivatives of shedding type breeds.
Other	Any breeds that do not fit into the definitions above.

Research design

Survey Program

The Sheep Producers Intentions Survey, undertaken by MLA and AWI, is used to help industry determine wool and lamb production forecasts, and to understand the breed composition of the Australian flock on a national, state and regional basis. The results are used by processors for budgeting purposes and allows import markets to ascertain short-term supply estimates.

Methodology

The May 2025 survey used a mixed-method approach. Producers with email contact details were provided with the opportunity to respond to an online survey invitation. Up to three invitations (one initial and two reminders) were sent to producers.

Sample lists

Approval was sought and received to use the MLA Levy Payer Register as the sample. This data was cleaned for any duplicates by email and phone number before use in the research.

Questionnaire

A 10-minute questionnaire was used to collected the required information. The survey questionnaire covered, amongst others, the following topic areas:

- Producer sentiment – on the wool sector and on the sheepmeat sector;
- Flock size estimates (flock estimates included breeding ewes, wethers and lambs)
- Breeding ewe, wether and ram flock profiles
- Producer intentions (for their breeding ewe flock and wether flock)

Sample size

A total of n = 2,374 responses were provided by producers as follows:

	Overall	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA
# of surveys	**n = 2,374**	n = 3	n = 744	n = 0	n = 83	n = 412	n = 78	n = 585	n = 469

Timing

The interviewing was undertaken between the 2nd May – 3rd June 2025.

Weighting

The survey results were weighted. A description of the weighting process used for the May 2025 Sheep Producers Intentions Survey follows next.

Weighting of survey data

Survey data is often weighted to ensure estimates provide a representative match of the population being estimated and the estimates deliver statistical reliable measures.

For the Sheep Producers Intentions Survey, data has been weighted to ensure the sample provides a strong representation of the population of producers as possible. For this survey, it was considered important to weight the survey data to ensure we have:

- Coverage across the various regions as producers will have different operating conditions. For our purposes, a region is a state – so we need to weight so that our final sample is representative of the distribution of producers across states.

- Coverage across farm businesses of different sizes – obviously, the larger businesses have larger flocks so ensuring we have an appropriate mix of small, medium, large and very large producers is vital for the estimation process.

There may be other variables that help describe the possible differences across producers, but these two variables (state and flock size) will more than likely account for the likely differences that exist in the population of all producers.

For this survey, an updated weighting approach was utilised using the most recent available information. The weighting approach involved two factors:

- **State:** the estimate of the total number of agricultural businesses with sheep and lambs in each state from the Levy Payer Register for the most recent financial year (2023-24), totalling just under 42k producers (up from the ABS Ag Census 2020-21 estimate adjusted upwards to account for EVAO under $40k of just under 41k, a 2.5% increase).

- **Total Flock Size**: With no recent data available to adjust or inform this factor, the proportional breakdown of the total flock size categories across each state from the previous weighting matrix was used (based on the most recent ABS Ag Census data available, 2020-21).

This final weighting matrix was then used to weight the May 2025 Sheep Producers Intentions survey data.

Estimated total number of agricultural businesses with sheep and lambs

	ALL FLOCK SIZES	Less than 500	500 – < 1,000	1,000 – < 2,000	2,000 – < 3,000	3,000 – < 5,000	5,000 – < 10,000	10,000 – < 20,000	20,000 or more
AUSTRALIA	**41,994**	**19,653**	**4,983**	**6,394**	**3,891**	**3,651**	**2,547**	**716**	**159**
NSW	**15,978**	7,218	2,001	2,574	1,526	1,430	908	255	65
VIC	**12,043**	6,384	1,463	1,643	1,014	807	567	134	32
SA	**6,185**	2,384	857	1,233	648	575	358	105	25
WA	**4,770**	1,622	442	719	571	687	551	160	19
QLD	**1,600**	1,148	79	105	72	82	82	25	6
TAS	**1,299**	811	126	115	60	65	77	34	12
ACT	**115**	82	15	4	0	5	5	4	0
NT	**4**	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Confidence intervals for survey estimates

Reliability of the estimates

The estimates in this report are based on information obtained from a sample survey. Any data collection may encounter factors, known as non-sampling error, which can impact on the reliability of the resulting statistics. In addition, the reliability of estimates based on sample surveys are also subject to sampling variability. That is, the estimates may differ from those that would have been produced had all persons in the population been included in the survey.

Non-sampling error

Non-sampling error may occur in any collection, whether it is based on a sample or a full count such as a census. Sources of non-sampling error include non-response, errors in reporting by respondents or recording of answers by interviewers and errors in coding and processing data. Every effort is made to reduce non-sampling error by careful design of survey questionnaires and quality control procedures at all stages of data processing.

Sampling error

One measure of the likely difference is given by the standard error (SE), which indicates the extent to which an estimate might have varied by chance because only a sample of persons was included. There are about two chances in three (67%) that a sample estimate will differ by less than one SE from the number that would have been obtained if all persons had been surveyed, and about 19 chances in 20 (95%) that the difference will be less than two SEs.

Calculation of confidence interval

If 50% of all the people in a population of 20,000 people drink coffee in the morning, and if you were repeat the survey of 377 people ("Did you drink coffee this morning?") many times, then 95% of the time, your survey would find that between 45% and 55% of the people in your sample answered "Yes".

The remaining 5% of the time, or for 1 in 20 survey questions, you would expect the survey response to more than the margin of error away from the true answer.

When you survey a sample of the population, you don't know that you've found the correct answer, but you do know that there's a 95% chance that you're within the margin of error of the correct answer.

In terms of the numbers selected above, the margin of error *MoE* is given by:

$$MoE = z * \sqrt{\frac{\hat{p}(1-\hat{p})}{n}}$$

where n is the sample size, $\hat{p}$ is the fraction of responses that you are interested in, and z is the critical value for the 95% confidence level (in this case, 1.96).

This calculation is based on the Normal distribution and assumes you have more than about 30 samples.

Margin of Error for a given sample size and survey estimate	Sample SIze
Survey Estimate	2,374 (total surveys completed)
10%	± 1.17%
20%	± 1.56%
30%	± 1.79%
40%	± 1.91%
50%	± 1.95%
60%	± 1.91%
70%	± 1.79%
80%	± 1.56%
90%	± 1.17%

	Estimated Population	Sample Size	Margin of Error (assuming max survey estimate of 50%)
Australia	**41,994**	**2,374**	**± 1.95%**
NSW	15,978	744	± 3.59%
VIC	12,043	585	± 4.05%
SA	6,185	412	± 4.66%
WA	4,770	469	± 4.30%
QLD	1,600	83	± 10.48%
TAS	1,299	78	± 10.76%
ACT	115	3	n/a
NT	4	0	n/a

Note. Margin of Errors are provided at the 95% confidence level on the assumption of a large population size (non-finite) and normally distributed.
Results labelled "n/a" are due to the assumption of the normal distribution not being upheld ($n\hat{p} < 10$ or $n(1-\hat{p}) < 10$).<

Sheep Producers Intentions Survey MAY 2025

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This research was conducted by Intuitive Solutions on behalf of MLA and AWI. For more information, please contact:

Michael Sparks
Intuitive Solutions
Phone: 0412 868 918
Email: msparks@intuitivesolutions.com.au

Erin Lukey
Meat and Livestock Australia
Phone: (02) 9463 9210
Email: elukey@mla.com.au

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