An average small ruminant enterprise in Australia

Large differences between enterprise types with different outputs

Meat

Milk

Fibre

In general the milk production systems currently tend to have lower numbers of stock overall as they are more intensive operations (although some large goat/sheep milk enterprises in planning stage in Australia and some large enterprises here already)

We will look at each enterprise separately comparing sheep and goats given the differences between types

Tend to find these enterprises in different locations e.g. milk enterprises tend to be in high rainfall areas

The average lamb farm

- In 2018–19, around 17,700 Australian farms produced at least 200 lambs for slaughter
- diversified mix of enterprises - wool, lambs, sheep, beef cattle and crops
- produce wool as a co-product
- number of larger grain farms producing lambs for slaughter has increased
- Number of lambs per farm increased over past 30 years from 770 to 1100 lambs
- Increase in lamb marking rate from 86% in 2000 to 94% in 2017
- more offspring per ewe mated on average by using meat sheep genetics g. BL
- Greater reliance on improved pastures and supplementary feeding

Table 10 Physical characteristics, lamb-producing farms, by size, 2018–19

average per farm

Characteristic	Unit	Small (200 to 500 lambs sold)	Medium (500 to 2,000 lambs sold)	Large (2,000 to 4,000 lambs sold)	Very large (more than 4,000 lambs sold)
Area operated	ha.	2,120	3,440	4,660	11,220
Area sown to crops	ha.	400	610	850	1,510
Beef cattle on hand	no.	80	120	180	510
Sheep at 30 June	no.	1,530	2,830	5,430	11,040
Lambs at 30 June	no.	430	870	1,550	3,240
Adult sheep sold	no.	750	1,610	3,690	8,960
Lambs sold	no.	400	1,090	2,810	6,690
Turn-on rate	%	4	4	8	19
Turn-off rate	%	47	55	67	78
Ewes mated	no.	840	1,590	3,420	7,000
Lambs marked	no.	680	1,430	3,300	6,650
Lamb marking rate	%	82	90	96	95
Wool production	kg	7,170	12,350	25,720	46,690

Note: Based on preliminary estimates.

Source: ABARES Australian Agricultural and Grazing Industries Survey

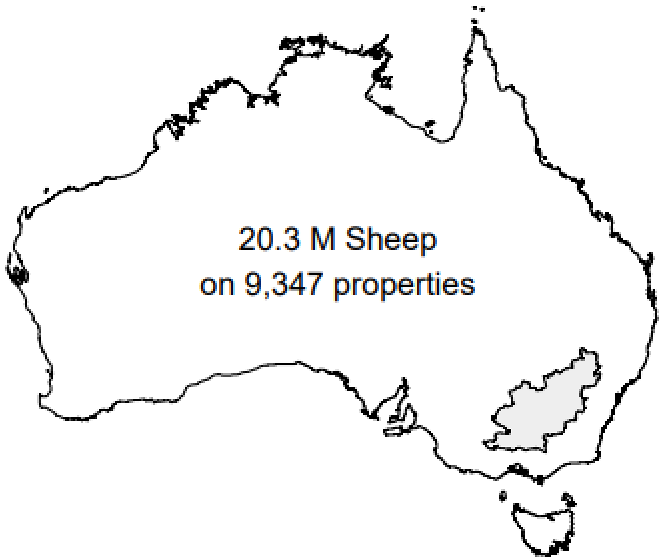


Table 13 Region 9 Average Farm

TABLE A – AVERAGE FARM	Production Sector – Region 9				
	SRW	SRM	W	XB	TO
Numbers of properties	3228	2816	271	893	2229
Movements Off per "average" farm					
Live Export					
to region					
Feedlots	4.4%	5.4%			
to region	9	9			
Saleyard	45.4%	54.9%	69.9%	39.5%	48.4%
to region	9	9	9	9	9
Abattoir	20.8%	28.9%	28.0%	60.5%	46.6%
to region*	80/20 9/10b	9	9	9	9
Property Sales	29.4%	10.8%	2.1%		5.0%
to region	9	9	9		9
Total Movements off	1357	957	708	818	1193
Numbers On per "average" farm					
Purchases	10	7	700	194	5
from region	9	9	9	9	9
Management movements					
Feed Pasture only (Prop of properties %)	85%	75%	100%	80%	60%
Lamb muster frequency	5	7	3	4	4
Ewe Muster frequency	6	7	3	5	3
Ram Muster Frequency	5	5	3	2	2
Never seek agistment (Prop of properties %)	90%	90%	100%	95%	100%
Season agistment sought	Autumn	Autumn	-	Autumn	
Region agistment sought	6	6		6	

Note 1: xx/xx = percentage split, yy/yy = regional split. Note 2: Region 6: Northern wheat/sheet, Region 9: Eastern wheat/sheep and Region 10b: Southern high rainfall.

Typical Farm Management Cycle

- ☆ A summer joining with a winter lambing.
- ☆ Weaning in spring with culling of rams, ewes and hoggets.
- ☆ Ram purchases about the same time as weaning.
- ☆ Lambs/weaner sales vary with climate & season and are usually in spring or autumn.
- ☆ Most of the larger annual ram sales occur in the spring.
- ☆ Shearing tends to be clustered around autumn and spring but can occur at any time.

https://www.agriculture.gov.au/sites/default/files/sitecollectiondocuments/animal-plant/animal-health/livestock-movement/sheep-movement-ead.pdf

Table 17 Region 10b Average Farm

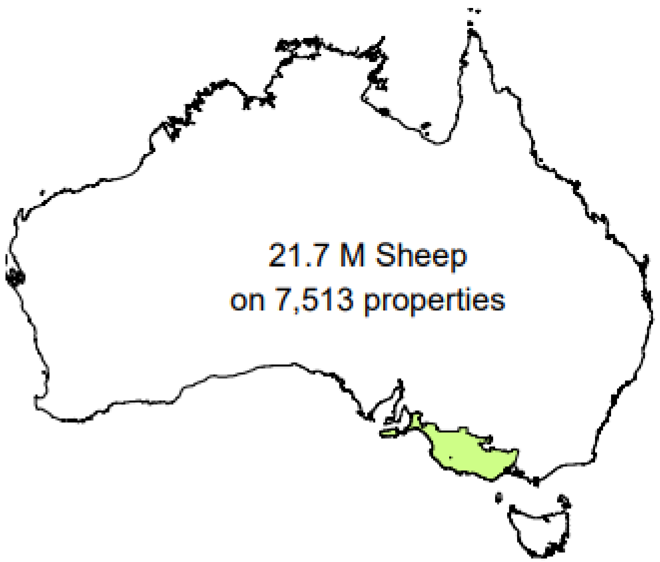


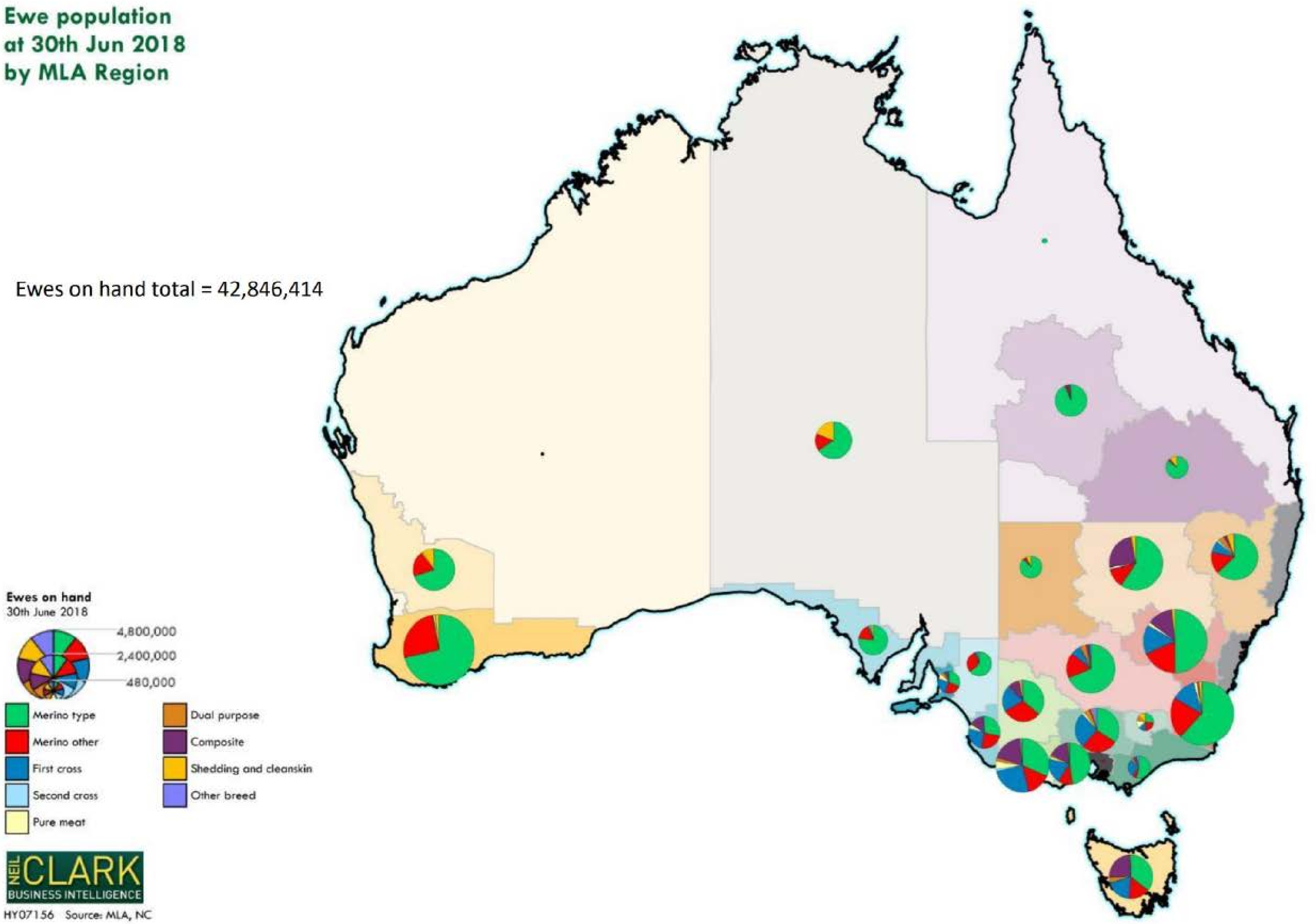
TABLE A – AVERAGE FARM	Production Sector – Region 10b				
	SRW	SRM	W	XB	TO
Numbers of properties	3274	2347		702	1190
Movements Off per "average" farm					
Live Export	6.5%	5.8%			
to region	10b	10b			
Feedlots	4.3%	5.2%		8.7%	7.6%
to region	10b	10b		10b	10b
Saleyard	63.7%	54.4%		45.5%	29.7%
to region	10b	10b		10b	10b
Abattoir	14.1%	30.0%		45.7%	57.9%
to region*	10b	10b		10b	10b
Property Sales	11.5%	4.5%			4.9%
to region	10b	10b			10b
Total Movements off	1205	1335		3435	1545
Numbers On per "average" farm					
Purchases	18	8		615	407
from region	50/50 10a/10b	50/50 10a/10b		10b	10a
Management movements					
Feed Pasture only (Prop of properties %)	70	50		60	60
Lamb muster frequency	4	4		4	4
Ewe Muster frequency	4	4		4	3
Ram Muster Frequency	3	2		3	3
Never seek agistment (Prop of properties %)	65	60		90	70
Season agistment sought	Winter	Autumn		Autumn	Autumn
Region agistment sought	10b	10b		10b	10b

Note 1: xx/xx = percentage split, yy/yy = regional split. Note 2: Region 10a: Southern wheat/sheep and Region 10b: Southern high rainfall.

https://www.agriculture.gov.au/sites/default/files/sitecollectiondocuments/animal-plant/animal-health/livestock-movement/sheep-movement-ead.pdf

Ewes on hand – MLA reporting regions

Ewes on hand total = 42,846,414



Wool and lamb

FARM FLOCK SIZE	SHEEP AND LAMBS (MILLIONS)	FARMS (WITH SHEEP AND LAMBS)	BREEDING EWES (ALL BREEDS, MILLIONS)	BREEDING EWES (MERINO, MILLIONS)	FARMS (WITH BREEDING EWES)
Up to 500	2.74	15,400	1.58	0.83	13,000
501 to 1000	5.00	6,800	2.92	1.81	6,400
1001 to 2000	12.02	8,300	6.98	4.79	8,000
2001 to 4000	20.06	7,100	11.57	8.53	7,000
4001 to 8000	18.45	3,400	10.50	7.98	3,400
8001 to 16000	9.89	900	5.58	4.34	900
OVER 16000	4.71	200	2.56	1.85	200
TOTAL	**72.88**	**42,100**	**41.71**	**30.13**	**38,900**

Table 1: Distribution of sheep, farms, breeding ewes and farms with breeding ewes by farm flock size at 30 June 2011

Source: ABS customised report; Curtis (2014)

Average wool farm – not just wool

1 Financial performance of wool producers

Average per farm

		Specialist sheep and wool farms a				Mixed enterprise wool producers b			
		2002-03	2003-04 p		2004-05 s	2002-03	2003-04 p		2004-05 s
Physical									
Area operated at 30 June	ha	5 553	5 906	(15)	4 802	4 394	3 314	(18)	3 198
Beef cattle at 30 June	no.	84	43	(17)	46	246	169	(31)	183
Sheep at 30 June	no.	3 198	3 191	(9)	2 502	1 495	2 285	(6)	2 316
Adult sheep sold	no.	446	571	(13)	445	303	447	(8)	492
Lambs sold	no.	408	430	(15)	488	339	417	(10)	459
Lambing percentage	%	60.6	78.6	(2)	77	78.9	80.9	(2)	83
Sheep and lambs shorn	no.	3 544	3 316	(8)	2 692	1 684	2 392	(7)	2 199
Wool produced	kg	14 638	14 484	(9)	11 368	7 382	10 841	(6)	9 849
Wool cut per sheep shorn	kg	4.1	4.4	(3)	4.2	4.4	4.5	(2)	5.0
Wool price (greasy)	c/kg	659	532	(6)	486	631	506	(2)	466
Total wool stocks held at 30 June	kg	1 940	1 968	(41)	1 181	2 519	2 653	(16)	1 592

http://data.daff.gov.au/brs/data/warehouse/pe_abarebrs99001233/aw06.1_wool.pdf

Average meat goat farm

- Highly variable – changes from relatively small Boer goat farm with a few hundred animals up to 10,000+ feral goats managed in pastoral country using goat fencing to keep goats in and harvest at regular intervals
- Actual size of feral goat population not entirely certain – working on aerial survey data

Average goat fibre farm

- Average size of Mohair (Angora) farms relatively small ie. Hundreds of goats, frequently peri-urban, although some larger farms
- Size of Cashmere also relatively small for higher quality Cashmere goats albeit cashmere also on feral goats so may be opportunistically collected

Average dairy goat farm

- 68 licensed dairy goat farms in Australia in 2018
- Average herd size 96
- Median number of goats per farm = 150
- Average production per goat = 2.5 litres per day
- 60% sold as cheese, 18% as fresh milk and remaining as powder and other products
- Likely total herd about 30,000 goats in 2018 but some larger operations commencing with 1000s of goats
- These figures are significant increase on 2009 figures and don’t include small goat milking for personal use

Farmer survey to assess the size of the Australian dairy goat industry

E Zalcman, B Cowled

First published: 27 August 2018 | https://doi.org/10.1111/avj.12734 | Citations: 3

Sheep dairying

- Most enterprises milk less than a few hundred ewes and produce specialty cheeses and other products
- https://www.stockandland.com.au/story/6725926/ever-thought-of-milking-sheep/
- https://www.pecoradairy.com.au/about-us-1
- However larger scale enterprises can milk multiple thousand ewes per daymer