



Market Insights

Welcome to the first VLE “Market Insights”

Each month VLE will delve into its data, providing buyers, sellers and other stakeholders with market information.

Buyers chase weight, numbers and quality

A COW price hike of 82 per cent at the VLE comes as almost twice as many prime cattle were sold at Leongatha last month compared to September 2023.

Extra numbers also coincided with a rise in average liveweights for most livestock categories and substantial year-on-year price increases. Cows - which made up 50 per cent the prime market sales for September 2024 - averaged \$2.83/kg, weighed an average of 540 kilograms liveweight and returned \$1527/head.

In September 2023, on average, cows made \$837 or \$1.60/kg and weighed 521kg.

It was a similar story for bullocks, they recorded a 71 per cent year-on-year price increase.

Bullocks were 23 per cent of the prime sales, during September 2024, with average weights of 626kg and selling for \$2.22/kg or \$1285/head. Nutrien Leongatha Auctioneer Brian McCormack said a favourable autumn and winter enabled Gippsland farmers to capitalise on stronger prices with heavier cattle.

“We’ve had a good winter, it wasn’t extremely wet,” he said.

“But before that, it had been a good season, flowing from autumn (last year) and into the drier months - this winter’s – coming out the other side.

“Now, we probably need continuous sunshine and rain to keep it moving forward.”

September cow and bullock prices have come off the back of tight supply throughout the Eastern States and - particularly - a lack of quality, well finished cows, according to Brian.

“(Prices) really depend on what they are yarding everywhere else, it’s about supply and demand and we’ve had supply of better cattle,” he said.

Looking at the store market, there were more steers sold in September 2024 at VLE Leongatha than all store livestock categories in 2023.

Last month, 6,706 steers sold at VLE Leongatha for an average price of \$1,455.

There were 6,690 cattle - in total - sold at VLE store markets in September 2023.

Steers averaged \$856 in September 2023.

Cows and calves averaged \$1,983 last month, a 114 per cent increase from the \$928 average in September 2023.

A total of 4067 store heifers averaged \$991 last month. In September 2023 1,924 heifers averaged \$538.

September 2024 sales snapshot

- A total of 7,922 cattle were sold at VLE Leongatha in September 2024 for an average price of \$3.11/kg and weighed 542kg.
- Steers sold in the September 2024 prime market averaged 358kg/head, slightly less than the 368kg/head September 2023 average.
- The number of cattle sold from the Baw Baw Shire at VLE Leongatha rose 331 per cent in September 2024 compared a year earlier to a total of 2221 head.
- A 1229 per cent increase was recorded from the Cardinia Shire to a total of 1183 head.

Boosting bull stocks at VLE

DEMAND for commercial bulls remains strong in South Gippsland with locals paying more for a slightly smaller offering at the annual Nutrien and Alex Scott & Staff sales.

This year Nutrien offered 44 bulls and Alex Scott & Staff 50, representing most dairy and southern beef breeds. These were sold to a field of local producers.

South Gippsland and Baw Baw Shire farmers fielded the bulk of the sale offering, a similar story to last year.

Alex Scott & Staff sold 50 bulls averaging \$3035, while Nutrien sold 44 for \$2,500.