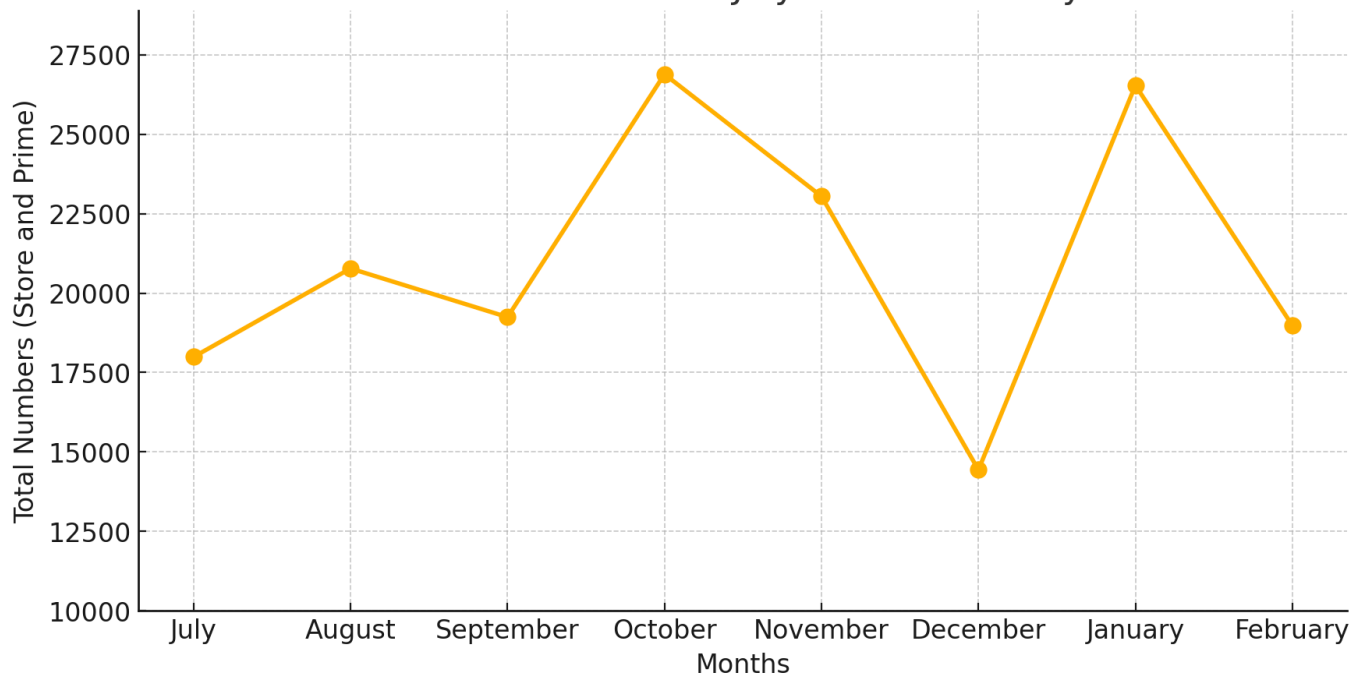




VLE Total Livestock Sold July 2024 - February 2025



## Numbers cop weather whack as prices gain ground

THE trend of big throughput at VLE Leongatha has slowed, as cattle numbers reflect the season and producer's decisions to sell earlier in the year.

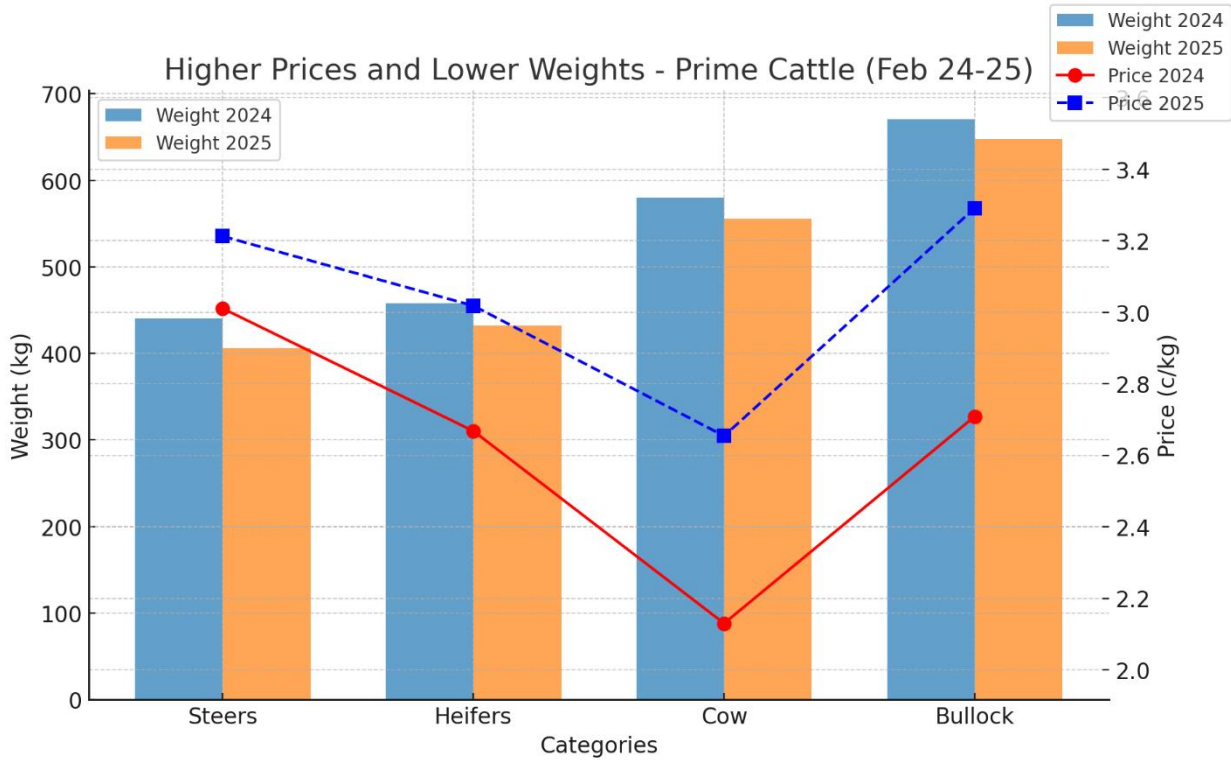
This February the number of cattle sold through VLE Leongatha was below average, when accounting for the combined totals of the former Pakenham yards and VLE Leongatha.

Just less than 7,500 store cattle and almost 11,500 prime animals were sold at VLE Leongatha, down almost 40 per cent from a month earlier.

VLE Managing Director Brian Paynter said producers sold livestock before dry summer conditions began to bite.

"After the incredible first half of the year, which flowed through to January, we've seen a drop off in cattle numbers in February," he said.

"It's still a really strong year for throughput but since November our year-to-date throughput has dropped from the highest in VLE Pakenham and Leongatha combined history to third at the end of February." Cattle prices, on the other hand, have reflected the supply plunge. Store values remain ahead of this time last year, with cows and calves making an average 12 per cent more this February compared to the same month last year. All prime categories were also dearer, except for steers.



## Price hikes buffer lighter cattle values

Cattle weights were up to 7 per cent lighter in February, compared to the same month last year. Steers had the biggest weight drop, with heifers coming in 5.5 per cent lighter at an average liveweight of 432kg and cows down 4 per cent at 555kg. These prime sale weights reflect seasonal conditions but aren't damaging values as tighter supply has increased cattle demand.

Across the February prime markets, bullocks returned an average \$2132/head – a rise of 17 per cent from February 2024 – despite average weights declining almost 3.5 per cent. Steers were the only prime category to have lost value compared to February 2024, dropping just less than 2 per cent for an average price of \$1304/head for a 406kg animal. All store values also tracked ahead of February 2024.

