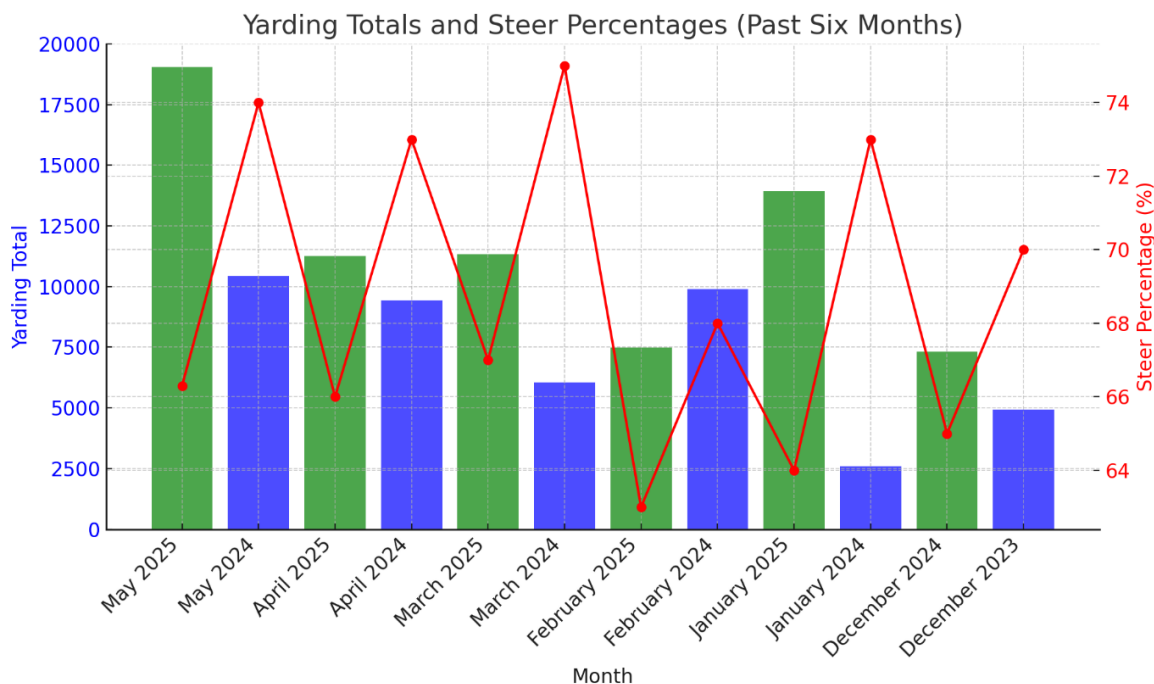




Market Insights

Weather woes spur cattle offload, buyers eager for store steers



May was the biggest month of the year for cattle throughput at the Victorian Livestock Exchange (VLE), with a combination of dry conditions forcing producers to offload stock and an extra sale week hiking numbers.

A total **31,494 cattle** were sold through prime and store markets, a rise of **33 per cent** from April and **47 per cent** more than May 2024 (when there were two VLE sites).

SEJ Leongatha agent **Neil Park** said it was “as busy as ever”. “It’s the same old story, when there’s no moisture people are desperate to sell — they can’t keep them if there’s no hay or no grass,” he said. “Normally at this time of year numbers are backing off but we are as busy as ever.”

Rain in northern cattle regions has encouraged buyers south, searching for cattle to fill feedlot or restocker orders. Mr Park said this underpinned steer demand. “Steers are what feedlotters are chasing; there’s demand for grown steers 400-550 kg,” he said.

Despite the surge in numbers during May, **steers made up 66 per cent** of the store market yarding, down from **74 per cent** in May 2024. Over the past six months, steers have contributed between 63 and 75 per cent of monthly store yardings. Steers averaged **\$1,742** last month, up **22 per cent** from April 2025 and **28 per cent** from May 2024.



Market Insights

Big numbers draw northern buying power to Leongatha

Cattle sourced from across Victoria — and even small lines from Tasmania and NSW — have helped attract buyers to bolster competition at VLE.

SEJ agent Neil Park said “**pure numbers**” bring the “**buying power**” to VLE.

“A bigger number of cattle attracts a bigger buying fraternity — for example, we have more feedlot buyers at VLE because they know there are runs and runs of cattle that suit the feedlot job (between 400-500 kg),” he said.

“Other centres just don’t have enough numbers for what they need.” Cattle quality and condition have also played a part in attracting buyers. Although livestock are lighter this year compared to last year — prime steers are up to **40 kg lighter on average** — cattle are still finished well.

Mr Park said vendors selling cattle at VLE are presenting quality stock despite the season. “Every farmer holding cattle at this time of year, trying to get them to a weight with the reserves of hay and silage running out, it’s a credit to them,” he said. “A lot have had to bite the bullet and sell. We are six to eight weeks off rain, but the good thing is that the ground isn’t soggy and cold, but it doesn’t look like much is changing.”

Where the cattle came from in May 2025

