



Records tumble as supply surges

The VLE has recorded its highest cattle throughput on record for the first 5 months of a financial year, despite only selling through Leongatha.

Livestock throughput at the South Gippsland yards exceeded past total yardings, during the same period, of Pakenham and Leongatha combined.

The last time VLE recorded a financial year-to-November yarding of anywhere close to this year's 107,941 head was in 2015-16 and it included both VLE selling centres.

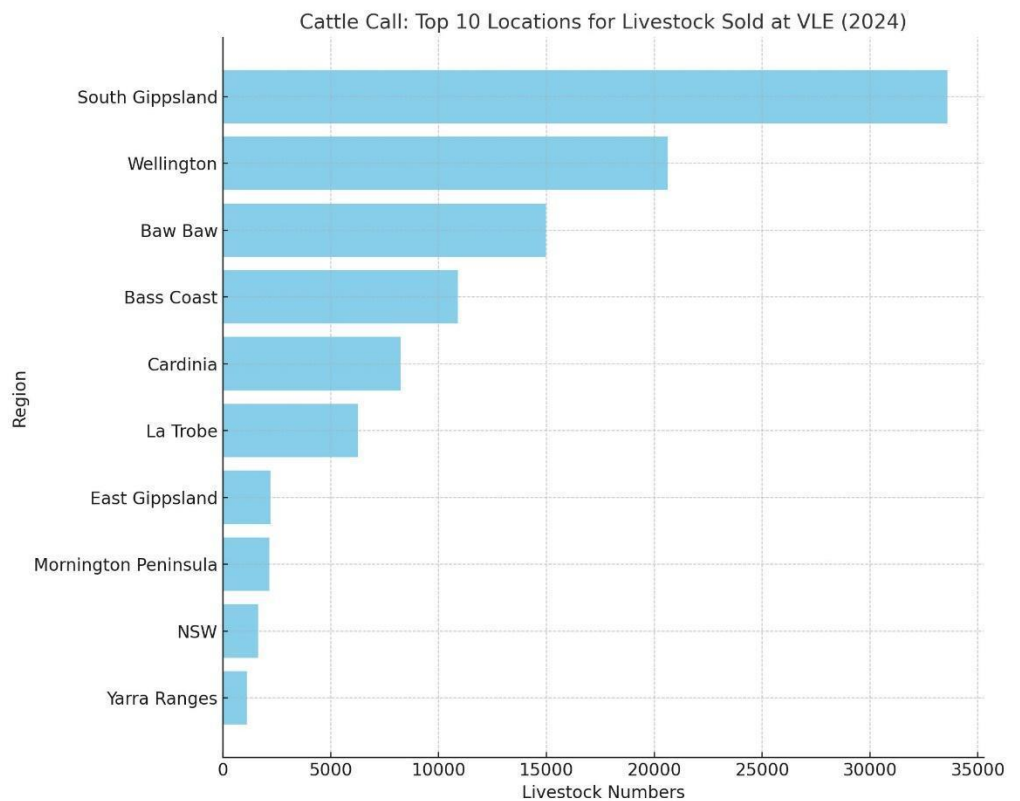
This surge in cattle numbers comes as South Gippsland continues to supply most of the cattle into VLE Leongatha.

Up to 44 per cent of the livestock were sourced locally, down slightly from South Gippsland's traditional 50 per cent share of the Leongatha yarding. Supply from the Wellington Shire also surged, while the numbers sourced from localities closer to Pakenham have increased at Leongatha. While there's been an uptick in livestock sourced from West Gippsland, VLE data suggests that not all cattle previously sold through Pakenham has necessarily moved across to the Leongatha facility. Pakenham VLE closed in June after 25 years of operation.

VLE Managing Director Brian Paynter said it was early days with the transition away from Pakenham to a larger, single Leongatha sale facility.

"Leongatha sale results speak for themselves, with high quality and large numbers selling to dearer rates when compared to other markets," he said.

"Time will be the best judge of whether VLE Leongatha is the chosen saleyard for the bulk of the cattle previously sold at Pakenham and I think for an accurate comparison we need at least a year's worth of data before a clear trend emerges. However, we know cattle are coming to Leongatha from interstate and Victoria's Western District and bigger numbers always attract plenty of buyers."



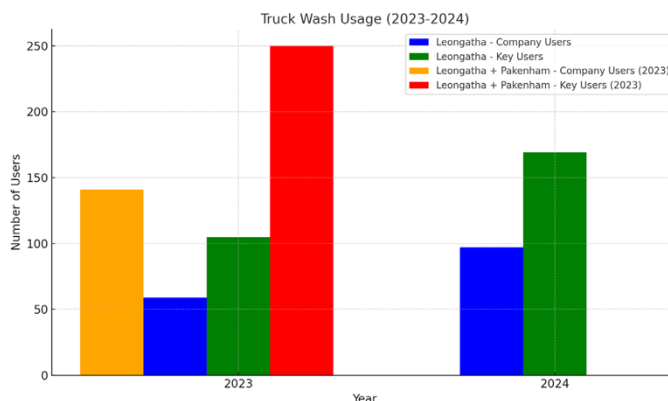


Clean as a truck.....

Use of the VLE truck wash at Leongatha has increased 64 per cent, year-to-date.

The VLE number crunches pulled out the data according to truck company use as well as individual driver use (key), following media articles about the lack of truck washes in the Melbourne region.

The waste from the truck wash is used to irrigate and fertilise the VLE farm, next door to the saleyards.



Fodder production maximises waste

High-energy, homemade silage is now on offer for cattle that have travelled to VLE or those that are awaiting transport post-sale.

This year wasn't the first time Gippsland's premier saleyards cut its own fodder, but this year most silage was harvested from improved annual ryegrass and clover pastures.

VLE Maintenance Supervisor Scott Methven said safe effluent dispersal is the primary objective of the 32-hectare property adjacent to the yards, but if it's possible to grow high quality feed - that's a "bonus".

"We've had two cuts off it already," he said in early December.

"And ideally we'd get another by Christmas and then depending on the season, after that, we are hoping to get one more cut of hay."

This silage has been fed to cattle arriving at VLE from Western Victoria - especially during the recent drought - and has also provided vital energy for cattle sold before transport.

In addition to providing fodder for VLE, the neighbouring farm enables the saleyards to capture and store carbon in the soil.

Scott said baseline carbon soil samples were completed three years ago, when VLE took over the property, and additional testing will be completed soon.

"We don't fertilise at all, the only waste is what comes off the truck wash," he said.

"No effluent comes out of the yards because the soft flooring - woodchips - is consuming all the waste we would have in the yards."

Some soft flooring is reused throughout different areas of the saleyards. This soft floor recycling process relies on "good" bacteria eating the "bad" bacteria in the flooring and in some cases, if this works efficiently, flooring can be used four times before its processed for sale to bulk garden suppliers or farmers. A co-product of the saleyard waste called 'fines' is sold from VLE every Thursday from 10am until midday.



Good conditions for annual F1 sale



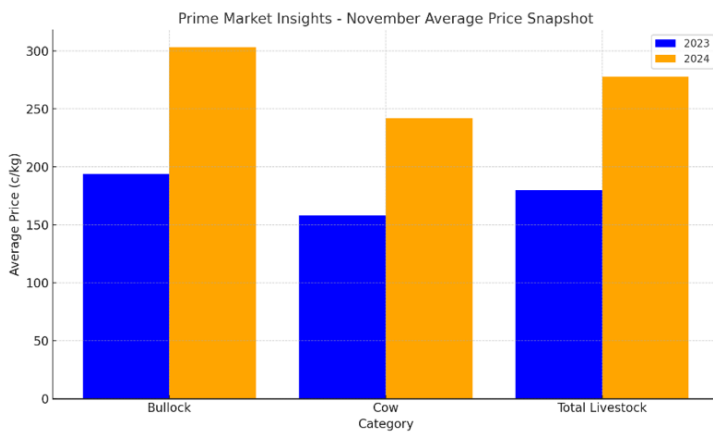
LIVESTOCK agents are expecting to sell up to 800 F1 females at the annual Victorian Livestock Exchange specialist sale.

And the season is ripe for those wanting to purchase numbers to fatten. Nutrien Auctioneer and Livestock Agent Brian McCormack said the F1 sale caters for traditional vealer breeders and those supplying into grassfed programs.

“F1 numbers have been declining each year because of the way the vealer market has been going and we are becoming more of a breeding and grass fattening area,” he explained.

“But the season has turned a corner and it’s back to being nearly perfect for us, with rain at the right time and a bit of heat. For those buying F1, looking to calve them down in January-February, they are set up.” The F1 sale will offer un-joined and joined females as well as heifers and cows with calves-at-foot.

Brian said the bulk of the offering will be Angus-Friesian, with the joined portion mostly bred to Limousins to calve in January-February. All seven VLE agents will sell cattle in the sale. The VLE F1 sale will be held on January 6, 2025 and kick-off at a new start time of 9am. For more information: Contact your agent or the VLE (03) 56642395



November Prime Statistics - 23 vs 24

Bullock numbers increased 75%, steer sales increased 63%, heifer sales 66% and bulls were up 73% for a total of 330 for the month.

Cattle were heavier - Cows had the biggest weight increase of 4.5% to an average of 569.32kg/cow, while bullocks were up 4% to average 655.05kg/bullock.

Bullocks were 56% more expensive to an average of \$3.03c/kg, while steers were 44% dearer at an average of \$2.99c/kg and heifers 51% up to average \$2.88c/kg.



Holding yards provide drought cattle relief

NEW outdoor yards have added cattle holding capacity of up to 2000 head to the Victorian Livestock Exchange at Leongatha. The yards will also enable cattle to rest, and consume quality feed, after travel and before sales.

VLE Maintenance Manager Andrew Van Raay said the 12 pens all have 150mm of woodchip flooring – made from timber salvaged from the freak-storm event at Mirboo North earlier this year - and feed stations capable of holding up to three silage bales.

Most yards are about 20 metres by 50 metres but two are double the standard size.

“Cattle that have travelled a long way need time on good green feed - especially recently with cattle from Western Victoria where feed supplies are low,” Andrew said.

The yards recently conducted a trial enabling the feeding and housing of cattle from drought regions. “It’s been good to be able to help farmers out in a time of need, and provide beautiful green feed, in comfort, for their animals.”

Cattle won’t be housed in the outdoor pens for long periods of time, rather it’s a short-term measure for pre or post sale. Feed stations enable cattle adlib access to silage, while the roof across the top of the stations, ensures the feed is protected from the weather, reducing losses and costs.



On the Rails action....



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