



Australian Government
**Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry**

Live animal export cost recovery arrangement: financial performance 2024–25



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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the continuous connection of First Nations Traditional Owners and Custodians to the lands, seas and waters of Australia. We recognise their care for and cultivation of Country. We pay respect to Elders past and present, and recognise their knowledge and contribution to the productivity, innovation and sustainability of Australia's agriculture, fisheries and forestry industries.

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Introduction

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry performs a range of regulatory activities in support of our producers and exporters who take their high-quality products to global markets. Australian agriculture, fisheries and forestry is a substantial part of the Australian economy. According to [ABARES Agricultural commodities report: December quarter 2024](#), agricultural production contributed around \$1.7 billion every week (\$88.4 billion in total) to our economy in 2024–25.

Cost recovery plays a key role in the way the Australian Government charges non-government sectors for some or all the efficient costs necessary for a specific government activity. It is an important funding source to support Australian producers in accessing markets and protecting the reputation of Australian agricultural goods.

Since 2019, the Australian Government has been supporting industry through the *Busting Congestion for Agricultural Exporters* package (DAWE 2020) and *Securing the future of agricultural trade* measures (DAFF 2023). This demonstrates the continued investment in regulatory export trade and commitment to meeting the needs of exporters and the expectations of our trading partners.

This report describes the financial performance of the live animal export cost recovery arrangement against the department's budget and [Cost recovery implementation statement live animal exports 2024–25](#).

Summary of financial position

The *Cost recovery implementation statement: live animal exports 2024–25* projected a surplus of \$6.4 million for the 2024–25 financial year. The department's actual spend was \$23.9 million against revenue of \$14.1 million resulting in a deficit of \$9.8 million (Table 1). This was supplemented with \$9.8 million in appropriation as part of the *Securing the future of agricultural trade* measures (DAFF 2023).

Table 1 Live animal export arrangement financial position, 2024–25

Category	Actual (\$)	Budget (\$)	Budget variance (\$)	CRIS (\$)	CRIS variance (\$)
Revenue	14,154,282	12,624,771	1,529,511	15,797,256	(1,642,974)
Expenses	23,905,019	25,201,246	(1,296,228)	21,209,883	2,695,136
Net surplus/(deficit)	(9,750,737)	(12,576,475)	2,825,739	(5,412,627)	(4,338,110)
Appropriation	9,750,737	–	9,750,737	n/a	n/a
Accumulated result	(33,822,117)	(33,822,117)	(0)	n/a	n/a

Note: Numbers in brackets are negative. Total revenue figures are inclusive of other revenue that is not recovered through regulatory fees and charges.

Securing the future of agricultural trade

The government announced the *Busting Congestion for Agricultural Exporters* package (DAWE 2020) as part of the 2020–21 Budget. The package froze export certification fees and charges in 2020–21 and increased prices in steps to reach full cost recovery in 2023–24. In recent years, the rate of change in Australia's export trade landscape has accelerated. Our market access requirements are changing, and the global agricultural trade environment is becoming more complex. It has become clear that the modelling and assumptions used to form the prices now in legislation differ from reality.

In the *2023–24 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook*, the Australian Government committed \$91.8 million over 2 years through the *Securing the future of agricultural trade* measures (DAFF 2023) to sustain delivery of key department export trade and regulatory functions. A further \$3.7 million was provided over 3 years to enable development of an ongoing sustainable funding model. This will assist the department to remain appropriately resourced through both cost recovery and appropriation funding to carry out its agricultural trade and export functions into the future. The Sustainable Trade Funding Taskforce was established in 2023 to progress the design and implementation of an ongoing sustainable funding model that supports the department's export regulatory and trade activities.

CRIS cost modelling

The key objectives of the department's cost recovery arrangements are to:

- safeguard Australia's animal and plant health status to maintain overseas markets and protect the economy and environment from the impact of exotic pests and diseases, through risk assessment, inspection and certification, and the implementation of emergency response arrangements for Australian agricultural, food and fibre industries.
- support more sustainable, productive, internationally competitive and profitable Australian agricultural, food and fibre industries through policies and initiatives that promote better resource management practices, innovation, self-reliance and improved market access.

We use resources such as people, IT, property and equipment to meet these objectives and undertake the corresponding business processes (regulatory activities). These activities enable us to provide outputs that meet the department's policy objectives.

The largest portion of the department's regulatory activity cost is employee related. The time and effort spent on regulatory activities, such as permits, and assessment-based output has been reflected in the fees and charges. This, along with external suppliers and operating support for our export IT systems make up other major direct costs.

The [Australian Government Charging Framework](#) allows government agencies to plan, implement and review their charging activities. Our charging is split between regulatory fees and regulatory levies. Fees are imposed when an activity and its costs can be attributed to a specific individual or organisation. A levy is imposed when a good, service or regulation is provided to a group of individuals or organisations rather than to a specific individual or organisation.

The cost base is modelled to reflect the full costs to deliver regulatory services that support the live animal export industry. The department's [Cost recovery implementation statement live animal exports 2024–25](#) describes this in further detail.

The [Expenses](#) chapter describes the costs involved in providing our services, by division. For descriptions of the services provided by these divisions, see [Appendix A](#).

Volume and revenue

Revenue for the Live animal exports arrangement was \$14.1 million in 2024–25, \$1.5 million more than budget and \$1.4 million less than CRIS projections. The primary drivers of the result were:

- Strong global demand for Australian cattle has driven higher throughput volumes for 2024–25, compared to budget. This also corresponds with higher volumes across permits and assessments.
- The independent observer space continues to be challenging to budget due to the actual deployments being undertaken (time sensitive).

The independent observer and inspection program experienced a significant decline in activity in 2024–25 compared to 2023–24, with only 5% of eligible voyages having an independent observer deployed. A revised independent observer policy is currently under development.

Table 2 and Table 3 detail the volumes and equivalent revenue generated for each regulatory charge and fee.

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Table 2 Live animal export volumes, by charge point, 2024–25

Type of charge	Cost recovery charges	Actual volume (units)	Budget (units)	Variance (units)	Variance (%)	CRIS estimated volume (units)
Charges	Throughput sea – sheep/goat	403,144	404,578	(1,434)	0	633,366
	Throughput sea – cattle/buffalo/camel	771,728	571,304	200,424	35	780,000
	Throughput air – sheep/goat	34,398	19,116	15,282	80	36,514
	Throughput air – cattle/buffalo/camel	3,935	3,343	592	18	7,719
	Approved arrangement – air	10	9	–	–	10
	Approved arrangement – sea	23	24	–	–	26

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Type of charge	Cost recovery charges	Actual volume (units)	Budget (units)	Variance (units)	Variance (%)	CRIS estimated volume (units)
	Establishment (premises) registration	50	50	–	–	74
	Licence – livestock	37	36	1	3	40
	Export permit non – livestock	9,617	9,173	444	5	7,500
	TRQ certificates	473	166	307	>100	0
Fees — audit and inspection	Standard audit	1,309	1,312	(3)	(0)	1,461
	Specialist audit	687	932	(245)	(26)	445
	Inspection	4,969	5,556	(587)	(11)	3,525
Fees — documentation	Specialist assessment	22,123	20,387	1,736	9	24,873
	Standard assessment	20,235	18,164	2,071	11	19,624
	TRQ certificates	473	166	307	>100	0
	Replacement certificate	14	15	(1)	(7)	66
Fees — independent observer	Independent observer	2,944,824	4,005,007	(1,060,183)	(26)	916

Table 3 Live animal export revenue, by charge point, 2024–25

Type of charge	Cost recovery charges	Actual revenue (\$)	Budget revenue (\$)	Variance (\$)	Variance (%)	CRIS estimated revenue (\$)
Charges	Throughput sea – sheep/goat	616,945	619,144	(2,199)	0	969,050
	Throughput sea – cattle/buffalo/camel	4,598,118	3,403,710	1,194,408	35	4,648,800
	Throughput air – sheep/goat	44,705	24,839	19,866	80	47,468
	Throughput air – cattle/buffalo/camel	19,980	16,973	3,007	18	39,213
	Approved arrangement – air	248,225	223,357	24,868	11	248,680
	Approved arrangement – sea	1,144,837	1,194,573	(49,736)	(4)	1,293,136
	Establishment (premises) registration	621,700	621,700	–	–	920,116
	Licence – livestock	353,350	343,800	9,550	3	382,000
	Export permit non – livestock	2,932,931	2,796,919	136,012	5	2,287,500
	TRQ certificates	21,756	7,634	14,122	>100	0
Total charges	–	10,602,547	9,252,649	1,349,898	15	10,835,963
Fees – audit and inspection	Standard audit	83,776	83,968	(192)	(0)	93,504
	Specialist audit	74,658	101,363	(26,705)	(26)	48,505
	Inspection	342,931	391,793	(48,862)	(12)	264,375
Fees – documentation	Specialist assessment	1,761,526	1,553,890	207,636	13	1,865,475
	Standard assessment	989,637	888,853	100,784	11	961,586
	TRQ certificates	19,393	6,806	12,587	>100	0
	Replacement certificate	7,736	8,265	(529)	(6)	36,365
Fees – independent observer	Independent observer	225,229	328,181	(102,952)	(31)	1,691,483
Total fees	–	3,504,886	3,363,119	141,767	4	4,961,293
Total fees and charges	–	14,107,433	12,615,768	1,491,665	12	15,797,256

Note: Independent observer - miscellaneous relate to travel reimbursement for flights and onboard vessel costs.

Expenses

Expenditure in 2024–25 was \$24 million, \$1.3 million lower than budget (Table 4).

The primary driver of the direct budget underspend was in employee expenses due to delays in recruitment. The combined impact of lower-than-budgeted expenditure in consultancy, legal and travel further contributed to the overall budget underspend in both direct and indirect expenditure.

The savings achieved helped to offset overspend in both the direct and indirect digital business functions. Cost pressures in the digital space are being driven by ongoing inflationary pressures for digital products, which is particularly being observed in the contractor space.

Table 4 Live animal export arrangement cost base, by division, 2024–25

Expenses	Division	Actual cost (\$)	Budget cost (\$)	Variance (\$)	Variance (%)
Direct	Plant & LAE Welfare & Regulation	10,261,746	10,685,094	(423,348)	(4)
	Export & Veterinary Services Division	4,702,153	5,319,878	(617,725)	(12)
	Biosecurity Animal	410,083	437,677	(27,594)	(6)
	Digital Business	326,715	305,081	21,634	7
	Compliance & Enforcement	325,605	347,076	(21,471)	(6)
	Trade and International	84,641	91,238	(6,598)	(7)
	Biosecurity Operations	26,928	24,409	2,519	10
Total direct expenses	–	16,137,871	17,210,453	(1,072,582)	(6)
Indirect	Digital Services	3,427,231	3,445,839	(18,608)	(1)
	People, Property & Security	2,791,602	2,833,059	(41,458)	(1)
	Finance and Investment	1,032,619	1,138,106	(105,487)	(9)
	Legal	305,864	324,077	(18,213)	(6)
	Strategy Performance and Engagement	172,365	196,557	(24,193)	(12)
	Central Funds	26,402	42,131	(15,729)	(37)
	Transformation Taskforce	11,065	11,023	42	0
Total indirect expenses	–	7,767,147	7,990,793	(223,646)	(3)
Total expenses	–	23,905,019	25,201,246	(1,296,228)	(5)

Note: Totals are rounded.

The gradual increase in staffing levels throughout 2023–24 and into 2024–25 is enabling the department, at a whole-of-service level to return to an optimal and efficient workforce Table 5. This has resulted in a 9% rise in staffing associated with full departmental cost of supporting the live animal export arrangement, translating to a \$1.6 million increase compared to 2023–24.

Table 5 Live animal export arrangement financial performance, 2021–22 to 2024–25

Finance element	2021–22 (\$)	2022–23 (\$)	2023–24 (\$)	2024–25 (\$)
Revenue = X	7,741,005	12,151,984	14,504,319	14,154,282
Expenses = Y	19,797,593	19,902,029	21,258,658	23,905,019
Balance = X – Y	(12,056,588)	(7,750,045)	(6,754,339)	(9,750,737)
Remissions, rebates and adjustments = Z	12,056,588	4,303,364	6,754,339	9,750,737
Net balance = balance + Z	(0)	(3,446,681)	(0)	(0)
Accumulated result	(30,375,436)	(33,822,117)	(33,822,117)	(33,822,117)

Non-financial performance

The [Annual report 2024–25](#) provides comprehensive information on performance measures and performance results. Non-financial performance measures are given as high-level objectives and are not reported at a level specific to each cost recovery arrangement.

Objective 1 Sector growth

Support Australia’s agricultural sector, including the food and fibre industries, to be increasingly prosperous and internationally competitive in an ever-changing world.

Key activity 1.1

Support sector productivity growth and innovation.

Measure SG-01

Measure SG-01	Greater growth in average agricultural productivity (adjusted for climate and weather effects) for the past 10 years, compared to average annual market sector productivity growth over the same period.
Measure type	Quantitative effectiveness
Target	Greater than or equal to 0% difference over the past 10 years.
Sources	<i>Corporate Plan 2024–25</i> <i>Portfolio Budget Statements 2024–25</i> Programs: 1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9, 1.10, 1.12
2024–25 outcome	Achieved
Result	Agricultural productivity growth was 0.61 percentage points higher than the market sector growth rate.
Tolerances	Achieved: Average annual growth in agricultural productivity (climate-adjusted) exceeds average annual market sector productivity growth over the same period. Partially achieved: Not applicable. Not achieved: Average annual growth in agricultural productivity (climate adjusted) is lower than average annual market sector productivity growth over the same period.

Measure SG-02

Measure SG-02	Equal or reduced cost of levies administration compared with levies disbursed.
Measure type	Quantitative efficiency and regulatory.
Target	Levies administration cost is less than or equal to 1.2% of levies disbursed.
Sources	<i>Corporate Plan 2024–25</i> <i>Portfolio Budget Statements 2024–25</i> Programs: 1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9, 1.10, 1.12
2024–25 outcome	Achieved
Result	Cost was \$6.94 million or 1.10% of levies disbursed
Tolerances	Achieved: Levies administration cost is less than or equal to 1.2% of levies disbursed. Partially achieved: Not applicable. Not achieved: Levies administration cost is more than 1.2% of levies disbursed.

Key activity 1.2

Regulate exports and enable, improve and protect access to international markets.

Measure SG-04

Measure SG-04	Grow access to a diverse range of international markets for Australian exporters of agricultural, fisheries and forestry products.
Measure type	Quantitative output
Target	Each year, the department can qualitatively describe the impact of technical market access achievements and how these achievements grow access for Australian AFF producers. Achievements may include opening, improving, maintaining or restoring access. Examples need to be provided to demonstrate that different markets and commodities have had their technical access progressed.
Sources	<i>Corporate Plan 2024–25</i> <i>Portfolio Budget Statements 2024–25</i> Programs: 1.13
2024–25 outcome	Achieved
Result	Examples of new, improved, maintained and restored market access have been achieved, with a clear beneficial impact for Australian producers. Examples cover a range of different markets and commodities.
Tolerances	Achieved: If the department provides examples of opening, improving, maintaining and restoring technical market access for different markets, and different commodities. Examples of market access changes have been implemented and are available to AFF exporters. Partially achieved: If the department provides examples of opening, improving, maintaining or restoring access but not all four. Alternatively, if the examples do not demonstrate that clear benefits have been achieved for different markets and commodities (i.e. examples are all focused on a single market or commodity, or the achievements are not of value to Australian exporters). Examples of market access changes have been implemented and are available to AFF exporters. Not achieved: If the department cannot provide any examples of opening, improving, maintaining or restoring access to any markets or commodities.

Measure SG-06

Measure SG-06	Effective delivery of regulatory responsibilities for relevant export applications under the <i>Export Control Act 2020</i> .
Measure type	Quantitative, effectiveness and regulatory.
Target	Establish a baseline.
Sources	<i>Corporate Plan 2024–25</i> <i>Portfolio Budget Statements 2024–25</i> Programs: 1.13
2024–25 outcome	Achieved
Result	99.83% of all relevant export applications were completed within the requisite consideration period. This sets the baseline.
Tolerances	Achieved: Over 95% of all relevant export applications are completed within the requisite consideration period specified by the <i>Export Control Act 2020</i> . Partially achieved: Over 85% of all relevant export applications are completed within the requisite consideration period specified by the <i>Export Control Act 2020</i> . Not achieved: Under 85% of all relevant export applications are completed within the requisite consideration period specified by the <i>Export Control Act 2020</i> .

Measure SG-07

Measure SG-07	Increase in the number of electronic certificates issued for export.
Measure type	Quantitative efficiency and regulatory.
Target	Plus 2% of what the final 2023–24 eCert number is.
Sources	<i>Corporate Plan 2024–25</i> <i>Portfolio Budget Statements 2024–25</i> Programs: 1.13
2024–25 outcome	Achieved
Result	84,180 electronic certificates issued for paperless trading across multiple commodities and importing countries. (12.5% increase from 2023–24 when 74,661 were issued).
Tolerances	Achieved: 2% or more increase. Partially achieved: 1% – 1.99% increase. Not achieved: Less than 1% increase.

Appendix A: Divisional activities

Table A1 Department activities, by division

Group	Division	Description of activities
Agricultural Trade and Regulation Group	Trade and International	Engages in bilateral, regional and multilateral opportunities to advance Australia's agriculture trade and international diplomatic interests. Pursue agricultural trade and market access through multilateral negotiations, high-level bilateral meetings and counsellor network engagement and negotiations with trading partners. Invest in the department's culture and capability to deliver policies and initiatives reflecting international interest.
	Exports and Veterinary Services	Manage export inspection, audit and certification services for food, non-food commodities and live animal operations. Negotiate technical markets access for food and non-food commodities. Manage agricultural quotas negotiated under Free trade agreements and lead Australia's positions at the Codex Alimentarius Commission for international food standards.
	Digital Business	The Digital Business Division is leading the digital transformation of Australia's agricultural export systems to help get produce to the market faster and cheaper while maintaining the levels of quality that makes Australia's exports world class. Working closely with business teams across the Agriculture Trade Group and across government, they are delivering digital reform by streamlining, improving and overhauling the export experience and internal agency processes. These enhancements will allow digital interaction with the agency and reduce regulatory and cost burden for Australian agricultural exporters.
	Plant and Live Animal Exports, Welfare & Regulation	Supports Australian agriculture industries and the government through export regulatory integrity assurance, export assessment services, food market access, certification management group, development of animal welfare policy for export and domestic issues; management of policy, operations and certification for the export of live animals, animal reproductive material, plants, and plant products; and fostering regulatory stewardship across the export related functions.
Biosecurity, Operations and Compliance Group	Biosecurity Plant and Science Services	Safeguarding Australia's plant health status to achieve, maintain and expand access to overseas markets, while protecting the economy and environment from biosecurity risks on imports. The division provides scientific analysis and technical advice, regulates the safe imports of plants and plant products, conducts surveillance, diagnostics and response activities, and provides quarantine services at the world class Post Entry Quarantine facility at Mickleham. Our technical expertise is called upon for a range of national and international purposes including international capability building and standard setting.
	Compliance and Enforcement	Delivers regulatory outcomes that protect Australia from risks to our biosecurity and trade systems. Informed by both science and intelligence we set controls and deliver assurance activities to increase compliance with legislation; and respond appropriately and proportionately to any breaches. We work with internal and external stakeholders

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Group	Division	Description of activities
		across the regulatory continuum responding to known and emerging risks to safeguard Australia's agriculture, economy, trade and way of life.
	Biosecurity Operations	Deliver nationally integrated biosecurity and imported food regulatory activities to ensure goods, conveyances and travellers meet Australia's import requirements. Manage operational policy and front-line regulatory control setting to manage biosecurity and imported food risk. Deliver assessment, inspection, post entry quarantine, stakeholder engagement and client contact centre services. Improve the delivery of those regulatory functions.
Strategy, Enterprise, and Engagement Group	Legal	Responsible for the provision of all legal services and advice required by the department to develop its legislation and deliver its functions.
	Digital Services	Deliver high values, sustainable digital services, reduce complexity and provide secure, reusable, innovative digital services, and solutions to meet business and customer needs.
	People, Property and Security	Support our people and leaders across the employment life cycle by enabling the effective management of people-related risk and building future ready leaders, people, and culture.
	Finance and Investment	The Finance and Investment Division manages all financial activities for the department, including budgeting and reporting, policy and governance, cost recovery, spending and receiving money, debt management, grants, procurement and contract management policy advice, treasury and assets, ensuring financial compliance, payroll, credit cards and travel, the division provides financial systems administration and delivers training to uplift financial acumen across the department, and ensures our people receive strategic financial advice through finance business partners. We build value and relationships through trusted engagements and provide considered financial advice for successful management of our resourcing.
	Strategy Performance and Engagement	Responsible for enterprise and budget strategy, communication and media, and governance and corporate support including parliamentary and ministerial services.
	Transformation Taskforce	Deliver the integrated transformation program and its 4 pillars, the Transformation Action Plan, Statement of Strategic Intent, Organisation Design and Culture as a response to the department's capability review findings.
	Central Funds	Accountable for driving capability development across the department, including learning and development, talent management, and leadership growth initiatives.

References

DAFF 2023, [Budget 2023–24, Securing the future of agricultural trade \(PDF 208 KB\)](#), Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Canberra, accessed 22 December 2025.

DAWE 2020, [Budget 2020–21: Busting Congestion for Agricultural Exporters \(PDF 211 KB\)](#), Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, Canberra, accessed 22 December 2025.