



Meat export cost recovery arrangement: financial performance 2023–24

October 2024



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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Australia and their continuing connection to land and sea, waters, environment and community. We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the lands we live and work on, their culture, and their Elders past and present.

Contents

Introduction	1
Summary of financial position	2
Securing the future of agricultural trade	2
CRIS cost modelling	3
Volume and revenue	4
Expenses	8
Non-financial performance	10
Objective 1 Industry growth	10
Appendix A: Divisional functions	12

Tables

Table 1 Summary of the financial position of the meat export arrangement for 2023–24	2
Table 2 Volume by charge point, meat export arrangement for 2023–24	4
Table 3 Revenue by charge point, meat export arrangement for 2023–24	6
Table 4 Meat export arrangement cost base by expense type, 2023–24	8
Table 5 Financial performance for meat exports cost recovery arrangement, 2020–21 to 2023–24	9
Table 8 Measure IG-07	11
Table A1 Additional information on divisional functions	12

Introduction

The department 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, with exports contributing around \$1.6 billion every week (total \$82 billion in 2023–24) ([ABARES September 2023 \(PDF 3.1MB\)](#)).

Cost recovery plays a key role in the way the Australian Government charges non-government sectors for some or all the efficient costs 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.

Cost recovery can influence the demand for government activity and raise awareness of how much government activities cost. It improves the efficiency, productivity and responsiveness of government activities and accountability for those activities.

Since 2019, the Australian Government has been supporting industry through the [Busting Congestion for Agricultural Exporters \(PDF 211KB\)](#) and [Securing the future of Agriculture trade \(PDF 208KB\)](#) measures. This demonstrates the continued investment in regulatory export trade and commitment to meeting the needs of exporters and the expectations of our trading partners.

The *meat export cost recovery arrangement: financial performance 2023–24* report describes the meat export arrangement's financial performance against the department's budget and [Cost Recovery Implementation Statement \(CRIS\)](#).

Summary of financial position

The meat exports arrangement forecast a surplus of \$0.3 million for the 2023–24 financial year. The department's actual spend was \$97.0 million with revenue from participants \$79.0 million resulting in a deficit of \$18.2 million (Table 1). This was supplemented with \$18.2 million in appropriation as part of the [Securing the future of agricultural trade budget measure \(PDF 307KB\)](#).

Table 1 Summary of the financial position of the meat export arrangement for 2023—24

Category	Actual (\$)	Budget (\$)	Variance (\$)	CRIS (\$)	Variance (\$)
Revenue	79,040,670	83,868,016	(4,827,346)	78,129,877	910,793
Expenses	97,290,574	96,832,974	457,600	77,816,547	19,474,027
Net surplus/(deficit)	(18,249,904)	(12,964,958)	(5,284,946)	313,330	(18,563,234)
Appropriation	18,249,904	12,964,958	5,284,946	n/a	n/a
Accumulated result	(6,402,731)	(6,402,731)	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 \(PDF 211KB\)](#) package 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 differs from reality.

In the Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook 2023–24, the Australian Government committed \$91.8 million over 2 years through the [Securing the future of agricultural trade \(PDF 307KB\)](#) measure 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 departments export regulatory and trade activities.

Sustainable funding will provide the availability of a consistent, sufficient funding source that appropriately underpins the delivery of trade and export services and associated enabling activities. This includes strategic prioritisation, and importantly the execution of regulatory export functions and the associated supporting international market access and advocacy activities.

CRIS cost modelling

Key objectives for the departments 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 key objectives and undertake the corresponding business processes (regulatory activities), which enable the us to provide outputs that meet the department’s policy objectives.

The greater part 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](#) (Charging Framework) allows government agencies to plan, implement and review their charging activities. Our charging is spilt 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 the activity its costs can be attributed to a group of individuals or organisations as a whole.

The cost base is modelled to reflect the full costs to deliver regulatory services to support the meat industry. The departments [CRIS](#) describes this in further detail.

To provide understanding of what costs are involved in providing our services, Table 4 provides costs across divisional functions. Descriptions for the services provided by these divisions is outlined at [Appendix A](#).

Volume and revenue

Revenue for the meat exports arrangement was \$79.0 million in 2023–24, which is \$4.8 million lower than budget and \$4.8 million above CRIS projections.

This increase in revenue was largely driven by export processing volumes, driven by both domestic and international factors. Domestically, significant numbers of Australian producers reached peak herd and flock recovery after the recent drought and sought to turn off excess or aging stock to match seasonal carrying conditions. Internationally, strong export commodity prices for meat and meat products coupled with market gains, including the recent [Australia-UK Free Trade Agreement](#), helped drive an increase in export volumes.

This has resulted in an increase in animals available for processing, increasing volumes above CRIS estimates, with a flow on effect to more establishment openings and demand for on-plant services.

Further, this has meant volumes of electronic certificates, document -certificates and document -replacement are higher than projected in the CRIS. Manual documents ended the year with a 43% decrease compared to projected CRIS volumes, this was expected due to the transition to electronic certification.

Standard audits exceed CRIS projections by 47%. This increase is due in part to the increase in staffing compared to previous years, along with increased prioritisation of food export audit completion.

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

Table 2 Volume by charge point, meat export arrangement for 2023–24

Type of charge	Cost recovery charges	Actual (Units)	CRIS (Units)	Variance (Units)	Variance (%)	Budget (Units)
Charges	Document – certificates	302,032	244,256	57,776	24	245,662
	Meat export licence	328	307	21	7	324
	Registration application	30	37	(7)	(19)	38
	Establishment – poultry	378	362	16	4	371
	Establishment – further processing	926	876	50	6	944
	Establishment – independent boning room	168	194	(26)	(13)	167
	Establishment – casings	84	96	(12)	(13)	96
	Establishment – storage and transport	1,846	1,641	205	12	1,772
	Establishment – abattoir	1,136	880	256	29	1,107
	Throughput – full unit (cattle/buffalo/camel)	7,381,435	6,393,188	988,247	15	6,160,450
	Throughput – pig	5,108,195	3,788,152	1,320,043	35	4,703,883

Meat export cost recovery arrangement: financial performance 2023–24

Type of charge	Cost recovery charges	Actual (Units)	CRIS (Units)	Variance (Units)	Variance (%)	Budget (Units)
	Throughput – goat, lamb, sheep	37,461,308	25,109,356	12,351,952	49	28,186,218
	Throughput – deer, game deer	9,405	2,925	6,480	>100	7,055
	Throughput – emu, ostrich	0	1,523	(1,523)	(100)	31
	Throughput – calf	335,659	282,376	53,283	19	271,739
	Throughput – kangaroo, wild boar	529,935	771,268	(241,333)	(31)	593,036
	Throughput – rabbit/possum/hare	1,833	0	1,833	–	0
	Establishment – tier 1	0	200	(200)	(100)	200
	T1 – Throughput – full unit (cattle/buffalo/camel) a	70,328	146,528	(76,200)	(52)	139,396
	T1 – Through put – Pig	781	0	781	–	64
	T1 – Throughput – goat, lamb, sheep	282,854	3,278,076	(2,995,222)	(91)	2,280,643
	T1 – Throughput – deer, game deer	2,050	77	1,973	>100	1,544
	T1 – Throughput – emu, ostrich	0	0	–	–	0
	T1 – Throughput – calf	224	6,721	(6,497)	(97)	0
	T1 – Throughput – kangaroo, wild boar	34,461	107,483	(73,022)	(68)	0
	T1 – Throughput – rabbit/possum/hare	0	0	–	–	0
Fees – audit and inspection	Standard audit	14,152	9,620	4,532	47	11,441
	Specialist audit (ATM)	19,303	24,991	(5,688)	(23)	18,353
	FSMA – monthly	1,094	1,105	(11)	(1)	1,125
	FSMA – qtr. hr planned	57,529	98,600	(41,071)	(42)	115,180
	FSMA – qtr. hr unplanned	6,148	36,040	(29,892)	(83)	45,601
	OPV – monthly	1,133	1,027	106	10	1,124
	OPV – qtr. hr planned	19,583	105,951	(86,368)	(82)	124,570
	OPV – qtr. hr unplanned	114	23,993	(23,879)	(100)	29,822
Fees – documentation	Electronic certificates	302,046	244,256	57,790	24	245,662
	Manual documents	653	1,135	(482)	(42)	773
	Document – replacement	2,750	469	2,281	>100	2,285
Organics ^a	Organic certifying organisation	1	1	–	–	1

a Organic certifiers support a small number of exporters in each export arrangement (excluding Live Animal Exports) with revenue and expense reflected in each arrangement.

Table 3 Revenue by charge point, meat export arrangement for 2023–24

Type of charge	Cost recovery charges	Actual (\$)	CRIS (\$)	Variance (\$)	Variance (%)	Budget (\$)
Charges	Document – certificates	9,351,479	7,571,936	1,779,543	24	7,615,515
	Meat export license	110,763	104,073	6,690	6	109,667
	Registration application	25,140	31,006	(5,866)	(19)	32,020
	Establishment – poultry	486,486	465,894	20,592	4	476,846
	Establishment – further processing	1,191,762	1,127,412	64,350	6	1,214,426
	Establishment – independent boning room	216,216	249,678	(33,462)	(13)	214,298
	Establishment – casing	72,660	83,040	(10,380)	(13)	82,815
	Establishment – storage and transport	1,596,790	1,419,465	177,325	12	1,533,031
	Establishment – abattoir	982,640	761,200	221,440	29	957,815
	Through Put – full unit (cattle/buffalo/camel)	3,309,511	2,876,935	432,576	15	2,772,202
	Throughput – pig	766,229	568,223	198,006	35	705,582
	Throughput – goat, lamb, sheep	4,466,138	3,013,123	1,453,015	48	3,382,346
	Throughput – deer, game deer	846	263	583	>100	635
	Throughput – emu, ostrich	0	91	(91)	(100)	2
	Throughput – calf	16,550	14,119	2,431	17	13,587
	Throughput – kangaroo, wild boar	15,898	23,138	(7,240)	(31)	17,791
	Throughput – rabbit/possum/hare	18	0	18	—	0
	Establishment – tier 1	0	173,000	(173,000)	(100)	200
	T1 – Throughput – full unit (cattle/buffalo/camel) a	28,917	60,076	(31,159)	(52)	57,152
	T1 – Throughput – pig	109	0	109	—	9
	T1 – Throughput – goat, lamb, sheep	15,182	360,588	(345,406)	(96)	250,871
	T1 – Throughput – deer, game deer	164	6	158	>100	124
	T1 – Throughput – emu, ostrich	0	0	—	—	0
	T1 – Throughput – calf	9	269	(260)	(97)	0
	T1 – Throughput – kangaroo, wild boar	1,034	3,224	(2,190)	(68)	0
	T1 – Throughput – rabbit/possum/hare	0	0	—	—	0
Total charges	—	22,654,542	18,906,759	3,747,783	20	19,436,934

Meat export cost recovery arrangement: financial performance 2023–24

Type of charge	Cost recovery charges	Actual (\$)	CRIS (\$)	Variance (\$)	Variance (%)	Budget (\$)
Fees – audit and inspection	Standard audit	876,484	596,440	280,044	47	838,925
	Specialist audit (ATM)	2,037,568	2,649,046	(611,478)	(23)	2,074,426
	FSMA – monthly	20,104,639	20,304,375	(199,736)	(1)	20,664,525
	FSMA –qtr. hr planned	1,552,754	2,662,200	(1,109,446)	(42)	3,109,860
	FSMA – qtr. hr unplanned	227,794	1,369,520	(1,141,726)	(83)	1,732,843
	OPV – monthly	27,779,477	25,178,959	2,600,518	10	27,557,108
	OPV – qtr. hr planned	685,404	3,708,285	(3,022,881)	(82)	4,359,937
	OPV – qtr. hr unplanned	5,607	1,223,643	(1,218,036)	(100)	1,520,908
Fees – documentation	Electronic certificates	1,510,405	1,221,280	289,125	24	1,228,309
	Manual documents	27,380	47,670	(20,290)	(43)	32,460
	Document – replacement	1,482,745	253,260	1,229,485	>100	1,234,057
Organics ^a	Organic certifying organisation	8,439	8,439	—	—	0
Total fees	—	56,298,696	59,223,117	(2,924,421)	(5)	64,353,358
Total charges and fees	—	78,953,238	78,129,876	823,362	1	83,790,292

^a Organic certifiers support a small number of exporters in each export arrangement (excluding Live Animal Exports) with revenue and expense reflected in each arrangement.

Expenses

Expenditure in 2023–24 was \$97.3 million, \$0.5 million higher than budget (Table 4). Variances in expenses compared to budget include:

- challenges to increase the number of staff from recruitment activities
- an overspend relating to higher audit volumes – this is also evident through an increase in audit revenue
- depreciation expenses are higher than budgeted due to the writing off of a portion of the department's Canberra office. This is offset with indirect expenses being 8% lower than budget across the board.

Table 4 Meat export arrangement cost base by expense type, 2023–24

Expenses	Division	Actual (\$)	Budget (\$)	Variance (\$)	Variance (%)
Direct	Export & Veterinary Services	71,649,208	71,335,922	313,285	0
	Plant & LAE Animal Welfare & Regulation	1,783,196	1,919,324	(136,129)	(7)
	Digital Business	3,327,981	3,202,984	124,997	4
	Compliance & Enforcement	1,579,709	1,431,619	148,090	10
	Trade and International	565,373	549,831	15,542	3
	Biosecurity Operations	21,968	26,875	(4,907)	(18)
Total direct expenses	—	78,927,434	78,466,555	460,879	1
Indirect	Finance and Investment	3,067,403	3,500,072	(432,670)	(12)
	Enterprise Strategy and Governance	564,502	700,420	(135,917)	(19)
	Digital Services	5,588,285	5,600,305	(12,021)	(0)
	Legal	1,124,070	1,222,054	(97,985)	(8)
	Transformation Taskforce	86,297	102,404	(16,107)	(16)
	People, Property & Security	4,400,876	4,909,484	(508,608)	(10)
Total indirect expenses	—	14,831,432	16,034,739	(1,203,307)	(8)
Depreciation and amortisation	—	3,531,707	2,331,679	1,200,028	51
Total expenses	—	97,290,574	96,832,974	457,600	0

Note: Totals are rounded.

Table 5 Financial performance for meat exports cost recovery arrangement, 2020–21 to 2023–24

Finance element	2020–21 (\$)	2021–22 (\$)	2022–23 (\$)	2023–24 (\$)
Revenue = X	70,167,633	71,000,823	77,860,338	79,040,670
Expenses = Y	78,803,645	71,789,805	86,951,487	97,290,574
Balance = X – Y	(8,636,012)	(788,982)	(9,091,150)	(18,249,904)
Remissions, rebates and adjustments = Z	8,636,012	788,982	5,048,039	18,249,904
Net balance = balance + Z	0	0	(4,043,111)	0
Accumulated result	(2,359,620)	(2,359,620)	(6,402,731)	(6,402,731)

Non-financial performance

The [Annual report 2023–24](#) 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 Industry growth

Support industry to grow towards a \$100 billion agriculture, fisheries and forestry industry by 2030.

Key activity 1.1

Support industry productivity and growth through science, policy and partnerships.

Measure IG-01

Measure IG-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	Effectiveness.
Target	Greater than 0% difference over past 10 years.
Sources	<i>Corporate Plan 2023–24.</i> <i>Portfolio Budget Statements 2023–24.</i> Programs: 1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9, 1.10, 1.11, 1.12.
Result	Achieved – agricultural productivity growth was 0.11 percentage points higher than the market sector growth rate.
Tolerances	Achieved: Average annual growth in the agricultural productivity (climate-adjusted) series exceeds average annual market sector productivity growth over the same period. Partially achieved: Not applicable. Not achieved: Average annual growth in the agricultural productivity (climate-adjusted) series is lower than average annual market sector productivity growth over the same period.

Measure IG-02

Measure IG-02	Equal or reduced cost of levies administration compared with levies disbursed.
Measure type	Effectiveness and regulatory.
Target	Cost is less than or equal to 1.2% of levies disbursed.
Sources	<i>Corporate Plan 2023–24.</i> <i>Portfolio Budget Statements 2023–24.</i> Programs: 1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9, 1.10, 1.11, 1.12.
Results	Achieved – cost was \$4.65 million or 0.77% of levies disbursed.
Tolerances	Achieved: Levies administration cost is less than 1.2% of levies disbursed. Partially achieved: Not applicable. Not achieved: Levies administration cost is more than 1.2% of levies disbursed.

Key activity 1.3 Streamline export regulations and compliance arrangements

Table 6 Measure IG-07

Measure IG-07	Increase in the number of electronic certificates for export issued (moving to paperless trade).
Measure type	Effectiveness and regulatory.
Target	Plus 2.5% of the final 2022–23 eCert number (61,237).
Sources	<i>Corporate Plan 2023–24.</i> <i>Portfolio Budget Statements 2023–24.</i> Programs: 1.13
Result	Achieved – 21.9% increase in the number of electronic certificates issued for export (74,661 in 2023–24 compared with 61,237 in 2022–23).
Tolerances	Achieved: 100%. Partially achieved: 50% to 99%. Not achieved: 0% to 49%.

For a complete picture of our performance, see page 14 of the [Annual report 2023–24](#).

Appendix A: Divisional functions

Table A1 Additional information on divisional functions

Group	Division	Description of activities
Agricultural Trade Group	Trade and International Division	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 and 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; management of the government priority to phase out live sheep exports; and fostering regulatory stewardship across the export related functions.
Biosecurity, Operations and Compliance Group	Biosecurity Plant and Science Services	Safeguarding Australia's plant health stats 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.

Meat export cost recovery arrangement: financial performance 2023–24

Group	Division	Description of activities
	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 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.
	Enterprise Strategy and Governance	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.