



**LIVECORP**

THE AUSTRALIAN LIVESTOCK  
EXPORT CORPORATION



# The LEP RD&E Program

Research projects 2026-27



The Livestock Export Program (LEP) is a collaboration between LiveCorp and Meat & Livestock Australia that invests in research, development and extension (RD&E) activities to enhance the livestock export industry's productivity, sustainability, and competitiveness.

# Overview

Rural research and development corporations LiveCorp and Meat & Livestock Australia are funded by statutory levies on the sale and live export of cattle, sheep and goats. They jointly fund the Livestock Export Program (LEP), which carries out both in-market and research, development and extension (RD&E) activities to improve the productivity, sustainability and competitiveness of their members.

LiveCorp is responsible for the management and administration of the RD&E Program. Around 45% of the annual RD&E budget is allocated to projects directly supporting animal health and welfare, and investment in other areas may also contribute to enhanced animal welfare outcomes. Projects come in many different forms, including literature reviews, experimental design and practical field trials, and the development of systems and software. Resources are developed in multiple languages to support training in overseas facilities that receive imported Australian livestock, including in animal handling and welfare.

Extension materials are aimed at promoting awareness of project outcomes and increasing their adoption throughout the livestock export process. This includes an annual summary of current projects, produced to keep livestock exporters, producers, the wider industry and the community informed of the LEP's work.

Read more about the LEP RD&E Program via the QR code below.



## Current projects

### Understanding community sentiment - Phase 2

The livestock export industry has a complex relationship with the community. A series of community surveys has found strong recognition of the industry's contribution to the Australian economy and to nutrition overseas, along with continued concern over animal welfare. This project is extending the series, based on a scientific methodology and run through an independent third party, with reports published after each survey. The results help to understand the community's views on various facets of the industry and highlight the areas of focus to build trust and acceptance over time.

**ROLL OUT DATE:** ANNUALLY UNTIL 2027

### Interpreting animal welfare - Phase 2

As the livestock export industry continues to expand its collection of animal welfare data, this project builds on Phase 1 to advance the interpretation framework from concept to operational application. Through performance testing, stakeholder feedback, and model refinement, it supports integration with existing industry systems and development of practical guidance to enable consistent data interpretation, benchmarking, decision-making, and continuous improvement of animal welfare outcomes across the supply chain.

**ROLL OUT DATE:** JUNE 2027

### Animal welfare literature review

In response to the ongoing focus on animal welfare by the industry, community, trading partners and government, this project critically evaluates relevant research across the livestock export supply chain. By drawing on peer-reviewed studies, industry reports, and global literature, it identifies key insights, gaps, and opportunities to guide future RD&E investment and inform policy. This helps the industry adopt proven solutions, improve animal welfare outcomes, and demonstrate its commitment to science-based progress.

**ROLL OUT DATE:** FEBRUARY 2027

### Open innovation pipeline

The open innovation pipeline has been developed to allow multiple, small-scale trials which leverage existing technologies from other sectors. This meets the industry's desire for fast, practical solutions to supply chain challenges, with a focus on improving animal welfare and supply chain efficiency. Proof-of-concept trials are being advanced with potential solutions identified by a global innovation scout: an improved drug administration device, a re-designed cattle discharge platform and increased thermal comfort for cattle in market.

**ROLL OUT DATE:** ONGOING



### Extension pipeline

To provide timely, accessible, and targeted knowledge transfer across the livestock export supply chain, the extension pipeline provides a flexible framework for delivering short, focused extension projects. By repurposing and modernising existing RD&E outputs, and tailoring materials to specific stakeholder groups and delivery formats, the pipeline draws on established research, industry knowledge, and stakeholder engagement to accelerate adoption. This approach improves the reach and effectiveness of extension activities, supports capability building, and ensures RD&E outcomes are applied in practice to deliver tangible benefits for industry.

**ROLL OUT DATE:** ONGOING

### Critical control point driven regulatory streamlining for livestock export

In response to the increasing complexity of the livestock export regulatory framework, this project is using risk based principles to identify critical control points and assess the proportionality of existing requirements. The research draws on regulatory analysis and supply chain mapping to support the development of a more efficient, risk aligned, and contemporary model that maintains strong animal welfare outcomes while reducing unnecessary regulatory burden.

**ROLL OUT DATE:** AUGUST 2026

### Document automation and standardisation

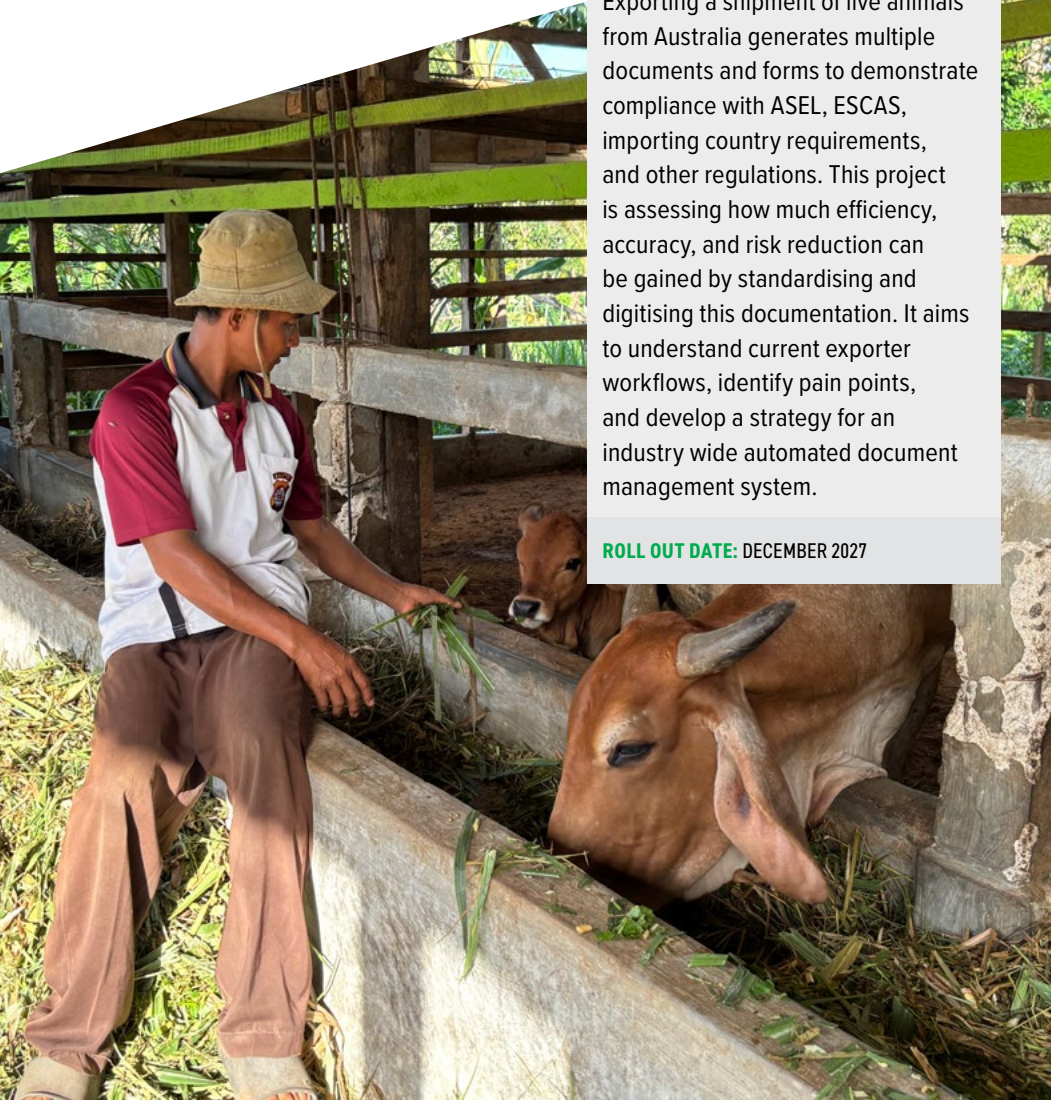
Exporting a shipment of live animals from Australia generates multiple documents and forms to demonstrate compliance with ASEL, ESCAS, importing country requirements, and other regulations. This project is assessing how much efficiency, accuracy, and risk reduction can be gained by standardising and digitising this documentation. It aims to understand current exporter workflows, identify pain points, and develop a strategy for an industry wide automated document management system.

**ROLL OUT DATE:** DECEMBER 2027

### Vessel availability for livestock export growth

Australia's livestock export industry is well positioned for growth, but global competition for suitable vessels is a potential constraint. This project is examining the regulatory, economic, operational and international factors limiting access to livestock vessels, benchmarking incentives offered by competitor countries, and engaging closely with exporters, vessel operators, regulators and industry bodies to validate insights. The outcomes will inform practical, evidence based strategies to attract and retain vessels, strengthen supply chain resilience, support long term industry growth, and guide future policy and investment decisions.

**ROLL OUT DATE:** MARCH 2027



# Current projects *(continued)*

## Benchmarking cost competitiveness of Australia's live cattle export supply chain

Australia is a significant player in the global live cattle export market, but increasing competition makes it essential to continually assess and enhance the profitability and cost competitiveness of the supply chain. This project focuses on benchmarking the Australian industry's business cost structures, logistics efficiency, and cost of regulatory compliance against the supply chains of key international livestock and red meat competitors.

**ROLL OUT DATE:** SEPTEMBER 2026

## Optimising Australia's live cattle export supply chain for global competitiveness

To stay competitive in the global live cattle export market, it is important to enhance the efficiency of Australia's supply chain and boost profitability. This project is analysing feedlot and abattoir operations, exploring full carcase value (including non-meat products), and identifying ways to improve efficiency and profits. It is also investigating importers' preferences to help Australian exporters meet market demands.

**ROLL OUT DATE:** SEPTEMBER 2026

## Sustainable beef industry development in Indonesia

This project is analysing the performance and resilience of the Australia–Indonesia live cattle supply chain, in recognition of its importance to food security, employment, and regional development. By combining literature review, supply chain mapping, stakeholder consultation, and economic modelling, it will identify barriers and opportunities to improve coordination, efficiency, and long term sustainability. The findings will support evidence based decisions on trade and investment, helping to strengthen the Australian industry's contribution to economic, social, and development outcomes in Indonesia.

**ROLL OUT DATE:** NOVEMBER 2026



# LiveCorp strategic priorities

## VISION

An efficient, trusted and resilient livestock export industry that is globally recognised for its animal health and welfare standards and the enduring value it provides to Australia and its trading partners.

## IMPERATIVES

Animal health  
and welfare

Community trust and  
industry sustainability

Supply chain efficiency  
and productivity

Market access  
and trade

## PRIORITIES

1.1 Progress animal  
health and welfare  
measurement and  
reporting

1.2 Support adoption  
of animal health  
and welfare  
practices

1.3 Inform evidence-  
based animal health  
and welfare policy

2.1 Strengthen  
community  
confidence and  
understanding

2.2 Elevate awareness  
of industry value  
and contribution

2.3 Coordinate industry  
communication and  
engagement

3.1 Support efficient  
regulatory  
processes and  
systems

3.2 Enable digitised  
and standardised  
supply chain  
systems

3.3 Lift industry  
productivity and  
reduce emissions

4.1 Expand  
market access  
opportunities

4.2 Strengthen stability  
in key markets

4.3 Deepen in-market  
supply chain  
partnerships



# Completed projects

## Managing effluent produced by livestock export vessels

Research has identified that environmental sustainability and stewardship of the land and sea are among the most important factors for agricultural sectors seeking to build community trust. Washing manure and bedding materials into the sea from livestock export vessels is an important component of effectively managing animal welfare. This project completed an analysis of the international laws and regulations associated with the management of effluent produced during livestock export voyages to address environmental and biosecurity risks.



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## Contribution of livestock exports to international development goals

This project assessed how the livestock export industry supports global development with a focus on four key markets – Indonesia, Vietnam, Kuwait and China. It found the industry supports five of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under the themes of economic development, food security, health and nutrition, waste reduction, and partnerships for growth, as well as contributing to improved animal welfare. It provides a clear framework for communicating the trade's positive impact in partner nations.



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## Understanding community sentiment – 2025 report

The 2025 community sentiment survey was the latest exploration of Australians' views on the livestock export industry. Results showed modest long-term improvements in trust and acceptance since 2019, largely driven by opinions on regulation, animal welfare standards, and industry responsiveness. The findings highlight the importance of transparency and engagement, providing a clear roadmap for maintaining social licence and guiding communication and policy priorities.



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## Life cycle carbon assessment of the livestock export supply chain

This project assessed the livestock export industry's footprint from farm to destination port to provide a robust baseline for benchmarking and guiding the industry's contribution to Australia's net zero ambitions. Findings showed greenhouse gas emissions for exported cattle have decreased by around 30% since 2010, largely due to improved herd performance, while sheep emissions increased by about 10% per head because of reduced shipboard stocking densities to meet welfare standards. The livestock export stage (quarantine yard to destination port) contributes only 4% of total emissions for cattle and 25% for sheep.



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## Rubber matting trials

As part of the open innovation pipeline, this project trialled non-slip rubber mats in livestock handling areas across pre-export facilities, a livestock vessel and in-market facilities. Results showed all mat types completely eliminated falls and reduced slips by up to 99%, with additional benefits including calmer livestock and reduced noise. Its success highlights rubber matting as a practical, effective solution for enhancing welfare outcomes in the livestock export supply chain.



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## Preparations for the ASEL 4.0 review

The regulator is conducting a comprehensive review of the Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (ASEL) and this project equipped industry to engage proactively by analysing industry data, synthesising current research, and consulting widely with exporters and technical experts. It delivered clear, evidence based technical papers and recommendations that identified priority issues, addressed knowledge gaps, and supported the development of practical, welfare focused and scientifically justified updates to ASEL.



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### Enhancing cattle welfare: bedding, lameness, and thermal comfort

Continuous improvement in the welfare of cattle during export is a priority for both industry and the community. This project reviewed existing research and industry data to identify practical opportunities to further enhance cattle welfare, with a focus on bedding management, thermal comfort on board, and the prevention and treatment of lameness. The project delivered evidence based guidance to support improved shipboard management practices and reduce welfare risks, contributing to consistent, high welfare outcomes across voyages.



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### Indonesian dairy supply

Indonesia's dairy sector currently meets a relatively small proportion of domestic milk demand, creating interest in options to support sector growth. This project completed a desktop study to assess opportunities for supplying Australian dairy cattle to Indonesia, with a particular focus on supporting Indonesia's Nutritious Meals Program. It identified, collated, and synthesised relevant information and resources held within Australian institutions to inform future engagement and policy discussions, improving access to existing knowledge for stakeholders involved in dairy development initiatives.



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### Interpreting animal welfare - Phase 1

There has been a significant expansion in the collection of animal-based welfare data along the livestock export supply chain. This project recognised the need for more consistent and meaningful interpretation and developed a scientifically grounded framework and model to integrate multiple indicators into an objective assessment of the welfare state of animals at the group level. Drawing on industry data, scientific evidence, and expert knowledge, it established an approach that supports consistent post-voyage review, benchmarking, and transparent communication of welfare outcomes.



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### ESCAS review and support

As part of a department review of the Exporter Supply Chain Assurance System (ESCAS), this project supported the development of industry's technical contributions to ensure the framework remained effective and efficient. The work also examined potential roles and activities that industry bodies could undertake to support the system and produced technical papers and advice that informed the review and contributed to improvements in ESCAS standards for the benefit of industry.



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