A photograph of three black cattle grazing in a lush green field. The cattle are positioned in the lower half of the frame, with one on the left, one in the center, and one on the right. The background is a rolling green hillside under bright, natural light. The text is overlaid in the center of the image.

FROM WEANER TO YEARLING: THE NORTHERN CATTLE LIFECYCLE

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Northern cattle life cycle



April to November (of the same year)

Cycle begins again

Two to three years following birth, the female heifers retained on the station to become replacements enter the breeding herd and the cycle begins again.



Year round

Joining (conception)

Due to the expansive and vast nature of stations and the land in northern Australia, bulls run with breeding cows year-round, meaning calves can be born at any time of the year.

This is different to southern Australian production systems where bulls will only be joined with females during certain times of the year, typically Autumn and Spring.

Post dry season mustering

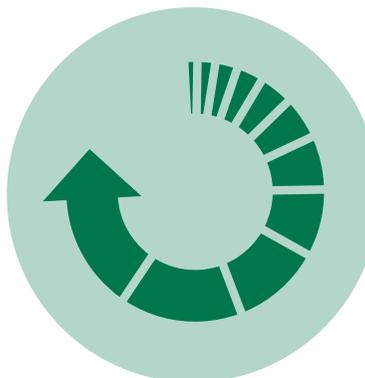
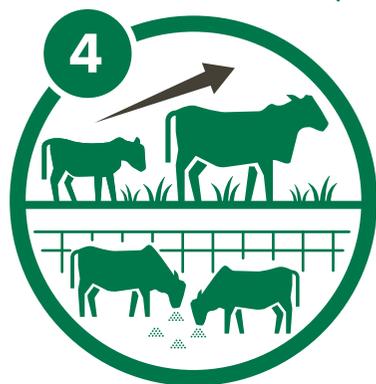
Animal development and turnoff

All steers and heifers, not kept to join the breeding herd as replacements, will transition into yearling cattle as they grow and increase weight.

The end market will determine their turnoff weights. Most yearlings that are destined for the live export market will be grown out on the same property they were born, or on others specifically utilised for growing out young cattle.

Those cattle that are not sold into the live export market will be transported to feedlots or other southern properties to mature.

Turnoff into the live export market occurs year-round, although typically, the higher points of the year are during the dry season when mustering and processing of sale cattle occurs.



Wet season or November to April

(Rainfall period = grass/pasture growth time and autumn)

Calves born and reared

The majority of northern Australia's calves will be born during the 'wet season' which occurs during Australia's summer and between the months of November through to April.

Although, as conception can occur at any stage of the year, calves are born and raised year-round.



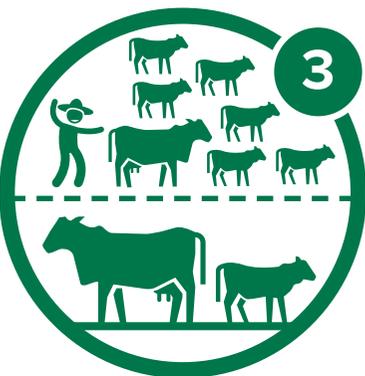
Dry season

April – November (of the same year)

Weaning

The dry season will see stations muster the properties, typically twice each year.

When this is done, calves will be weaned from their mothers, grouped together, and grown out either on the same property or transported to another location to gain and reach saleable weights.



Glossary

Cows: A female which has had one calf or more

Heifer: a young female yet to conceive a calf

Calf/calve: An infant

Weaner: A calf that has been 'weaned' from its mothers dependency

Yearling: A weaner that has now transitioned to an adolescent

Steer: A castrated male

Bull: An entire or non-castrated male

Dry Season: The time period between April – November of the same year in northern Australia where there is no rain

Wet Season: The time period between November and April of the cross over years in Northern Australia where monsoonal rains fall and grass/pasture growth is at its peak