

A high-angle photograph of a large group of brown cattle in a pen. The cattle are packed together, and many have white identification numbers on their backs. In the foreground, one cow is lying down behind a metal railing. The ground is dirt and the scene is brightly lit.

# BRING THE CYCLE TO LIFE

UNDERSTANDING SOUTH  
AUSTRALIA'S CATTLE LIFECYCLE

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# Southern Australia cattle life cycle



## September to November (Australian spring)

### Cycle begins again

Two years following birth, those female heifers retained on farm to become a part of the breeding herd are now joined with bulls and the cycle begins again.



## September to November (Australian spring)

### Joining (conception)

In the months of spring, both heifers and cows are joined with non-castrated males and become pregnant. The gestation length for cattle is nine months. Calves conceived during these months will be born between June – August the following year.

## January onwards (Australian summer)

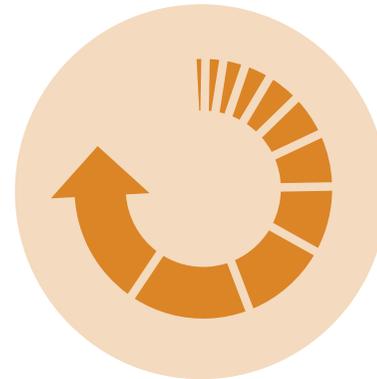
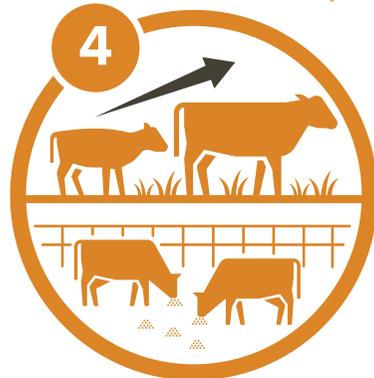
### Animal development and turnoff

Weaners transition into becoming yearlings as they grow and increase in weight. The end market determines their turnoff weight. Most yearlings through winter will graze on forage crops and planted pastures.

In 2021, nearly Three million cattle entered Australian feedlots, with an average weight of 400 kilograms per head.

This information indicates once these yearling cattle reach 400 kilograms, some will be sold to feedlots and spend the remainder of their lives consuming solely grain rations.

Those that are not sold to the feedlots will spend the remainder of their lives grazing on grass until they are ready to be processed.



## July to September (Australian winter and spring)

### Calves born and reared

Calves conceived the previous spring will be born, growing and developing by their mother's side suckling milk.

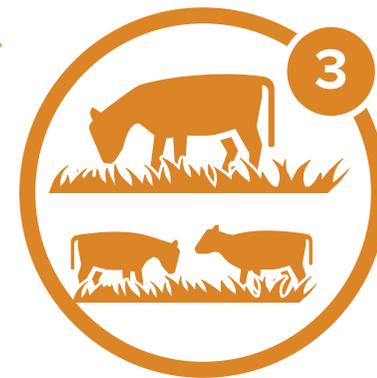
In line with this period, an increase in supply of matured stock hits the market after grazing on pastures and forage crops during the winter months.



## October to December (Australian spring/summer)

### Grass growth and Weaning

Calves born during the late Winter and early spring will be weaned from their mothers – they will now graze solely on grass and continue to grow and develop without their mothers and become known as weaners.



### 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 mother
- Yearling:** A weaner that is now seen as an adolescent.
- Bulls:** An entire or non-castrated male