

Lotfeeding for the Long Haul



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Research Purpose

Australia’s beef industry is shaped by one of the most variable climates in the world, with droughts and climate extremes placing ongoing pressure on production and market stability. This project set out to understand how feedlots contribute to resilience within this system. Specifically by:

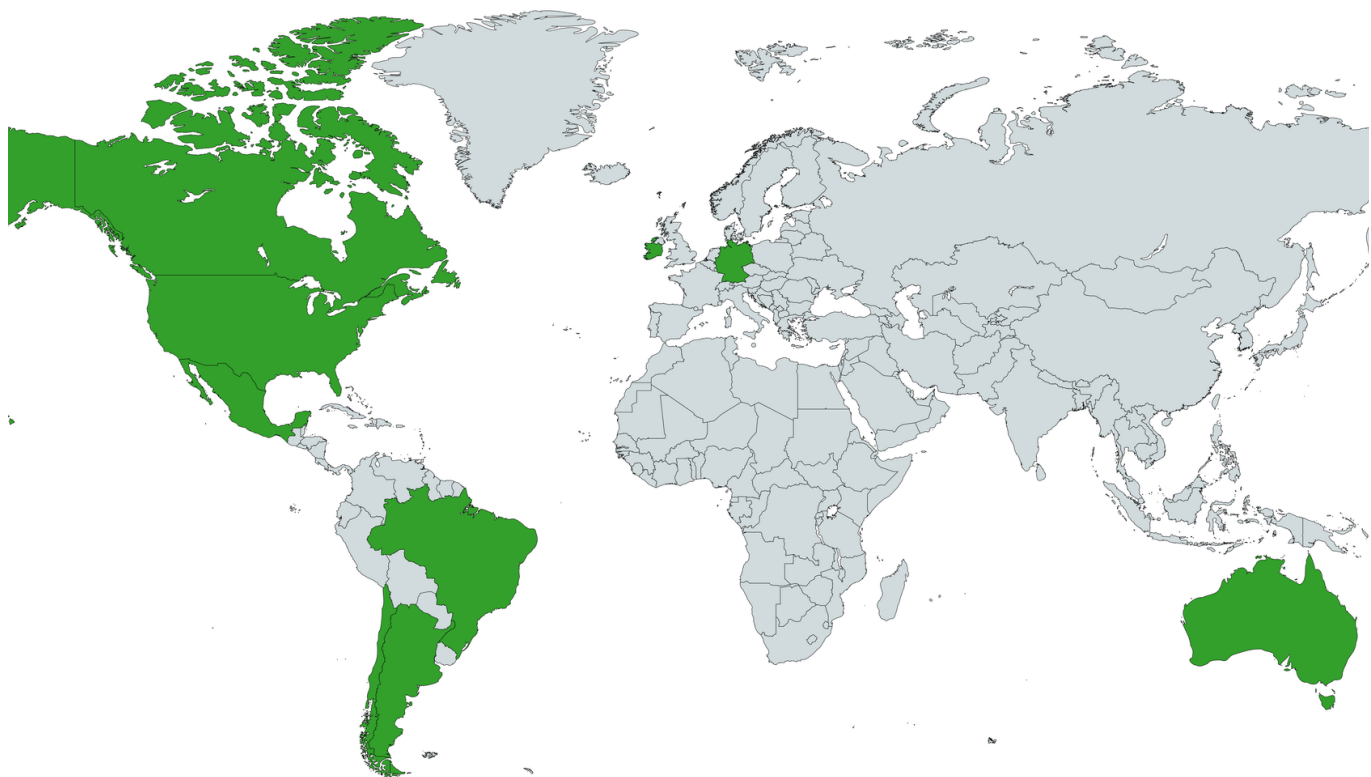
- Buffering supply during droughts and shocks, by absorbing cattle that would otherwise flood the market.
- Supporting price stability and market access, continuing to meet demand even when pastures fail.
- Driving adaptation through certification, infrastructure, and feeding innovation.



Key Learnings

- Feedlots are resilience infrastructure: they stabilise prices and throughput during droughts.
- Capacity has doubled since 2010: reaching 1.58 million head on feed in 2025.
- NFAS provides assurance and mandatory contingency planning (drought, flood, fire).
- Feeding flexibility (co-products, ration reformulation, grain processing) allows continuity under scarcity.
- International comparisons (Brazil, Canada, USA) highlight that integrated, certified systems recover faster.

Travel



Case Studies

- Brazil (Pantanal) – drought resilience through whole-corn rations and packer integration.
- Canada (Alberta) – infrastructure designed for snow, heat, and drought extremes.
- USA (Colorado) – pasture-fed feedlot program linking animal raising claims to niche export access



Recommendations

- Recognise feedlots as critical drought infrastructure.
- Invest in shade, silage storage, covered pens where ROI proven.
- Strengthen producer–feedlot integration for continuity in dry years.
- Align certification (NFAS) with future ESG and sustainability reporting.



Thank you to my sponsor



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