

NHIA Survey Shows Strong Growth in Beef Semen Sales and Beef-on-Dairy Programs

The National Herd Improvement Association of Australia (NHIA) has released 2025 Semen Market Survey data showing beef semen sales surged in 2025, driven by continued growth in beef-on-dairy breeding and stronger investment in genetics across the beef sector.

The survey recorded total import and domestic beef semen sales of 545,533 doses in 2025, up 18.8% on the previous year and the strongest result since NHIA began collecting beef semen data.

NHIA Chair Nick Brasher said the figures reflected the growing role of genetics across both dairy-beef and beef breeding systems.

“The 2025 survey shows beef genetics continuing to gain momentum, both within dairy businesses using beef-on-dairy and across the broader beef industry,” Brasher said.

“It reflects a growing focus on herd performance, efficiency and making each mating decision work harder, whether that is in a commercial beef herd or within a dairy business using beef genetics as part of its breeding program.”

Beef-on-dairy growth continues

A major feature of the 2025 survey was the continued expansion of beef-on-dairy breeding, with combined imported and domestic beef-on-dairy semen sales increasing 27.1% year-on-year from 254,524 doses in 2024 to 323,618 doses in 2025.

Nigel Semmens, Manager of Beef Development and Sales at STgenetics Australia, said the figures underlined the extent to which beef-on-dairy had become embedded within mainstream dairy herd strategy.

“Beef-on-dairy is no longer a niche or opportunistic part of the market,” Semmens said.

“It is now firmly part of the breeding strategy for many dairy producers, particularly as they look to maximise the value of lower-ranking cows while using sexed and conventional dairy semen more selectively across the rest of the herd.”

The growth in beef-on-dairy has also been supported by more strategic use of sexed dairy semen over the top end of the herd, leaving a greater proportion of lower-ranking cows available for beef matings. At the same time, stronger processor and end-market acceptance of dairy-beef cattle, including the emergence of branded processor-backed programs and greater focus on traits such as feed efficiency and carcase performance, is helping underpin confidence in the model.

Brett Sweetnam, Key Account Manager with Inventia Genetic Technologies (IGT), said the continued growth in beef-on-dairy reflected the fact that the system remained profitable for dairy farmers and was now being applied far more deliberately than in the past.

“Beef semen has always been used over dairy cows in Australia, but historically it was often more ad hoc,” Sweetnam said.

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“What we’re seeing now is beef-on-dairy as a much more deliberate part of the breeding strategy, and that’s why the sales continue to increase.”

Imported genetics account for a significant share of growth

The survey also showed imported beef genetics accounted for a significant share of recent growth in beef-on-dairy semen sales.

Imported beef-on-dairy semen sales rose from 162,910 doses in 2024 to 234,954 doses in 2025, while domestic beef-on-dairy semen sales remained relatively stable at 88,664 doses.

Semmens said the result reflected a combination of supply, product development and the increasing availability of beef-on-dairy specific data from international suppliers.

“International genetics companies are bringing beef sire genetics into Australia backed by progeny testing, feed efficiency and carcass data, which gives dairy producers and processors greater confidence in those mating decisions,” Semmens said.

“As processors and end customers place more value on traits such as feed efficiency, sustainability and carcass performance, that depth of data becomes increasingly important in the beef-on-dairy market.”

Semmens also said the Australian beef-on-dairy market remained less developed than more mature overseas markets but was likely to continue expanding as more processor-backed pathways emerge and dairy producers focus on the value of non-replacement calves.

“We’re seeing increasing acceptance of the beef-on-dairy end product in both domestic and export markets, and as more processors come on line with branded beef programs, that will continue to support growth,” he said.

Beef-on-beef demand also rebounds

The 2025 survey also recorded a recovery in beef-on-beef semen sales, which increased from 204,723 doses in 2024 to 221,915 doses in 2025.

Sweetnam said the increase was consistent with a broader lift in confidence and investment in genetic improvement across parts of the beef industry.

“Given the seasonal conditions and the strength of the beef market, it’s not a surprising result,” he said.

“The amount of money being spent on AI and genetic improvement in the beef sector has increased significantly, and these figures reflect at least part of that trend.”

Brasher said the broader beef result reinforced the value producers were placing on genetics as a tool for lifting herd performance and herd value.

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“The results point to a sector that is using genetics more deliberately to lift herd performance, carcase value and whole-farm returns,” he said.

The National Herd Improvement Association of Australia Semen Survey is conducted annually with data drawn from Australia’s leading genetics companies.

NHIA would like to thank the 2025 Semen Market Survey participants who provided the raw data for this report. The participants were:

ABS Australia | Agri-Gene | Alta Genetics | Breeder Genetics | LIC | Genetics Australia Holdings | Semex | ST Genetics | Viking Genetics | World Wide Sires

Date of issue: Tuesday 14th July 2026

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About NHIA: The National Herd Improvement Association of Australia Incorporated (NHIA) is the industry organisation that promotes herd improvement within the Australian dairy industry, providing a range of services to its membership, and through that membership, to benefit Australian dairy farmers. The member base includes organisations involved directly in the provision of herd improvement services, a range of activities that lead to productivity gains to farmers as well as herd industry improvement suppliers.

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