The Central Highlands has 61 feedlots and with access to reliable, secure water allocations, there is significant opportunity to develop new feedlot facilities and operations in the region. Intensive beef industries are experiencing growth with current approvals and expansions of more than 52,200 SCU in progress in 2018.

Emerald Saleyards
The contemporary Emerald Saleyards complex is the Central Highlands’ premier livestock selling centre, and holds weekly and special sales serviced by a group of highly competent and experienced livestock and property agents. Over the last five years, an average of around 100,000 head of cattle, worth $100 million have been yarded each year. The welfare facilities located at the Saleyards provide a cost-effective centre for the inspection and treatment of livestock moving across Queensland’s cattle tick biosecurity zones.

Markets, Export Value and Volume
The Central Highlands is serviced by three major export-focused abattoirs, which are located within a 300 kilometre radius of the region on the east coast of Queensland. Markets, Export Value and Volume

- BS Australia
  - Location: Rockhampton
  - Daily Processing Capacity: 696
- Teys Australia
  - Location: Rockhampton
  - Daily Processing Capacity: 1,731
- Teys Australia
  - Location: Bloolola
  - Daily Processing Capacity: 703

In addition to the live cattle selling centre in Emerald, the region is serviced by the Central Queensland Livestock Exchange (CQLEX) located 8km west of Rockhampton. The majority of cattle are transported to these facilities by road, however Aurizon also provides a regular weekly schedule of cattle services via rail which travel from Emerald to Rockhampton and Brisbane abattoirs.

Once beef cattle have been processed, the final product is delivered to domestic customers or to the Port of Brisbane and Townsville for export. $365 million of Central Highlands’ beef is exported to Japan (25 per cent), the United States (24 per cent), South Korea (17 per cent) and China (7 per cent).

Best Practice and Integrity Systems
Livestock producers employ best practice including performance recording and evaluation, Total Genetic Resource Management (TGRM), feed efficiency testing, walk-over weighing technologies and genomics.

**CQ INLAND PORT: transformational infrastructure**
Funding has been secured to build an intermodal freight hub at the greenfield site of Yamala with construction expected to be commence in 2018. The CQ Inland Port will improve supply chain efficiency and service the agricultural catchment, facilitating bulk and containerised aggregation.

The development includes plans for a multi-user rail siding and container storage and handling of 5,000 TEU (twenty-foot equivalent) capacity in its initial stage. It is identified in the Central Highlands Regional Council Planning Scheme (2016) as Special Industry Zone which allows a diverse range of commercial and industrial style businesses to be developed.

Rigorous systems and standards that protect product integrity exist throughout the entire red meat supply chain of Australia. These standards and systems operate under independently audited quality assurance programs and include livestock Production Assurance (LPA), the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) and Meat Standards Australia (MSA) eating quality program.

The grazing industry occupies more of the landscape than any other industry in the Central Highlands with 76 per cent of the region (4,547,600 ha) of grazing native vegetation. This makes it particularly well suited for organic and pasture fed systems.

The Pastured Cattle Assurance System (PCAS) is an assurance program that enables the industry to prove claims relating to grassfed production for the lifetime of the animal. It has been increasingly adapted across the region. Many beef producers undertake the voluntary Grazing Best Management Practice (BMP) program which assists graziers improve the economic and environmental performance of their enterprises.

CHDC in partnership with the Central Highlands Regional Council (CHRRC) delivers the award-winning Central Highlands Accelerate Agribusiness (CHAA) initiative which aims to grow, promote and realise value and opportunity for all businesses producing and processing in the Central Highlands region of Queensland, Australia. Find out more at www.chdc.com.au/agribusiness

The region is a critical and strategic staging point in the northern Australian beef supply chain. Cattle from the northern regions of the Northern Territory and Western Australia are typically either sold to live export or relocated to the more favourable growing conditions of the Central Highlands to be fattened before processing in Queensland.

The Central Highlands is located in the heart of the summer rainfall zones which provides a range of options in terms of herd genetics and feeding regimes.

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In the Centre of Queensland, Australia, lies the Central Highlands, one of the state’s key agricultural producers, generating over $740 million per annum in economic value. Beef production is the largest agricultural activity in the region worth an estimated $540 million, and accounting for 70 per cent of the total agricultural output for the region (ABS 2015-16).

The region boasts 1.37 million head of cattle, or 5.5 per cent of the national herd. This makes it the largest herd size by local Government Area in Australia and only surpassed by the larger areas of Fitzroy, Queensland and the Northern Territory in terms of production.

In 2015-16 the value of production amounted to an estimated $540 million in the Central Highlands. The region consistently contributes between 3 and 4 per cent of the national value of production for the last decade.

The Central Highlands – Cattle – Value Of Production (E) in $000’s.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

Over 600 livestock enterprises operate in the Central Highlands either as stand-alone enterprises or in combination with raingrown and irrigated cropping. Substantial private and publicly listed companies run integrated cattle and beef operations from the region including the Australian Agricultural Company, the North Australian Pastoral Company (NAPCO), Clark & Toal and the Action Livestock Company. These include backgrounding and finishing, supported by feedlotting operations totalling more than 105,000 Standard Cattle Unit (SCU) capacity.

Central Highlands – Cattle – Value Of Production (E) in $000’s.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

**Largest herd size in Australia**

$540M

4.5 MILLION HA

VALUE OF BEEF PRODUCTION

AREA OF GRAZING LAND USE

**CHDC**

Central Highlands Development Corporation

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2015-16 Snapshot

Agribusiness in the Central Highlands

Not only is the Central Highlands agricultural industry productive and diverse, it is growing. From 2011 to 2016, the region has seen a cumulative growth in the average value produced per hectare of 12 per cent, well surpassing the national average of six per cent.

Extensive beef production and broadacre cropping (alred and pulses) are the key drivers of the value in the Central Highlands. The region is also an important cotton producer and boasts a thriving citrus and table grape sector. Niche and emerging crops include macadamias, melons, lychees, figs and potatoes.

A key comparative advantage of the region is its secure, reliable, quality water supply provided by Queensland’s second largest water storage, the Fairbairn Dam; the Nogoa Mackenzie Water Supply Scheme, and the Nogoa, Comet, Mackenzie and Dawson Rivers.

A warmer sub-tropical climate provides the opportunity for broadacre and horticultural crops to be planted in both spring and summer. For horticultural producers the Central Highlands’ climate allows them to supply early season fresh produce to southern domestic markets and counter-seasonal exports to the northern hemisphere.

The region boasts large areas of high quality agricultural soil used for broadacre and irrigated cropping.

This has been recognised by the Queensland Government who have formally identified a third of the region as Strategic Cropping Land (SCL) and Priority Agricultural Areas (PAA).

Processing and handling infrastructure in the region includes cotton gins, grain handling facilities and the modern Emerald livestock saleyards.

A strong professional, technical and sales service industry supports Central Queensland and northern Australian agriculture. Research capability is underpinned by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and CQUniversity Emerald campus.

The region is a strategic hub for Queensland’s freight and logistics. The Central Highlands is serviced by 5-9 direct flights per day between Emerald and Brisbane, and is connected to the east coast by electrified rail. Major road freight routes run through the region, north-south and east-west.

Over two-thirds (68 per cent) of Central Highlands produce is exported, primarily to the USA and Asian FTA markets.

Central Highlands Agricultural Commodities: production value ($ million)

1,183 Agricultural businesses (2016)
38% of all businesses (2016)
1,791 Agricultural jobs (2016)

Young, skilled population
27,999 People
18,496 Labour force (2016)
33 Average age compared to national average of 38
69% Agricultural workforce aged under 55
2nd Agriculture is the second largest employer after mining

53% of families in Central Highlands are ‘Couple Family with Children’, compared to 43% for Qld. Living in Central Highlands is a lifestyle choice.

Unemployment Central Highlands
3.8% Qld 5.6% (Dec-Qtr 2016)

Investment opportunity
59,836 km²
Total area of the Central Highlands
91% Agricultural land use
$1,512/HA 3 year average agricultural land price (2012-2015)

Connected
50+ Brisbane to Emerald direct return passenger flights per week