Trajectories of South Africa's Red Meat Industry

Growth requires a de-risked environment

August 2025

BFAP Report Commissioned by Red Meat Industry Services (RMIS)

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Abbreviation	Description
FMD	Foot and Mouth Disease
GPV	Gross Production Value
MLA	Meat and Livestock Australia
NALFASA	National African Livestock Farmer's Association
RMAA	Red Meat Abattoir Association
RMIS	Red Meat Industry Services
RMIT-SA	Red Meat Identification and Traceability – South Africa
RMPC	Red Meat Primary Cluster
RPO	Red Meat Producers' Organisation
SAFA	South African Feedlot Association
WOAH	World Organisation for Animal Health

Disclaimer

1 Background to the Report

The report is written with three primary foci.

1. To provide industry with a brief review of past industry performance whilst contextualising said performance against the backdrop of international and domestic market dynamics and relevant external factors.

2. To provide insight and foresight through different industry outlook scenarios, given the current state of the red meat industry and the FMD disease burden.

3. To provide recommendations on how the industry could 'steer the ship' towards focused actions aimed at re-aligned Strategy 2030 targets and/or call for an adjustment of Strategy 2030 targets given findings from point 2.

The key takeaway from this report is that the red meat industry currently faces two distinct potential futures. One path is marked by ongoing challenges such as recurring disease outbreaks, subdued domestic demand, and limited export access, leaving it vulnerable and unable to achieve meaningful growth. The alternative path is that of a sector embracing strategic investments in animal health and food safety, enabling more stable production and export performance, and fostering more resilient and profitable growth.

The findings and recommendations generated in this report should be critically assessed by industry and collaboratively transformed into actionable tasks (cross-cutting interventions) that address industry needs and Strategy 2030 targets. These interventions (and their action plans) could then inform a follow-up projection on industry performance to update Strategy 2030 and define the ideal trajectory for the sector over the coming years. This will help provide strategic guidance and ensure alignment and strategy adoption throughout the value chain.

Acting alone and without clear direction or clear targets will likely hinder overall industry success.

2 Executive Summary

The red meat industry has been hit hard by global shocks, COVID-19, war, inflation, rising input costs, drought, and disease. Post-COVID demand briefly lifted prices in 2021-22, but gains were wiped out by soaring costs. Herd reductions in the U.S., Australia, and South America are now fuelling a rebuild, with stronger global prices expected in 2025. Still, ongoing instability is shaking market confidence, leaving producers vulnerable and slow to see the upside.

Global meat consumption growth will be driven primarily by rising demand for lower-cost options like poultry and pork, while red meat demand will increase mainly in developing Asian markets (AHDB, 2024). Global beef consumption is projected to grow at 1.2% annually, reaching 83.7 million tons, with Asia accounting for the bulk of the increase, from 29.8 million to 34.8 million tons. Global sheep meat consumption will likely rise from 17.2 million to 19.4 million tons at an average annual rate of 1.3% (OECD-FAO, 2025).

Consumption in South Africa remains constrained by weak consumer spending, which is driving a shift toward cheaper meats. From 2015 to 2024, per capita **sheep meat consumption fell 6.0% annually** to 1.5 kg, while **beef dipped 1.5% annually** to 12.2 kg. Poultry consumption saw declines of 1.0% annually, to 33.9kg per capita, while pork surged, up 3.2% annually, reaching 5.4 kg. By 2030, overall beef consumption is set to rebound modestly at 2.0% per year (between 2025 and 2030), fuelled by population growth. Sheep meat consumption is projected to increase to 102 000 tons by 2030 at an annual growth rate of 0.5%.

Weak domestic demand is driving the need to expand beef and sheep meat exports, yet persistent animal disease outbreaks, particularly Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), and a volatile global trade environment present significant challenges. The report outlines future scenarios for South Africa's red meat industry, shaped by key risks and interventions. **In a status quo scenario, marked by inadequate national animal health systems, recurring FMD outbreaks,** limited export access, rising input costs, and stagnant domestic demand and profitability, **the industry struggles to meet Strategy 2030 targets.** Under these conditions, annual exports are projected to stagnate at approximately 4 000 tons, constraining price and production growth and potentially **resulting in R10.6 billion in lost Gross Production Value (GPV) over the next five years,** excluding enterprise-level losses and FMD control costs.

The alternative presents a scenario involving more proactive and coordinated disease control, diversification of the export product mix towards value-added cuts, and expanded market access, demonstrating the potential for enhanced resilience and profitability. Here, the capacity to maximize carcass value through strategic value addition could counter input cost pressures and tap into growing global demand. Under this scenario, the industry is expected to recover in the next 24 to 36 months, **reaching an annual GPV of R56.8 billion by 2030. Under this more ideal scenario, the GPV is still R14.7 billion lower than the Strategy 2030 target of R71.5 billion, largely due to the production growth lost in the difficult recent livestock farming seasons and the current FMD crises.**

Without strategic alignment and joint action, the red meat sector faces a vulnerable future, and South Africa risks major economic loss. Targeted investment in disease control, traceability, exports, carcass value optimisation, abattoir upgrades, and on-farm productivity gains could drive recovery and position the industry as a globally competitive exporter, fuelling resilient, profitable growth in line with Strategy 2030. **However, re-alignment within industry requires a re-assessment of where the industry is, where it could be, and the updated interventions needed to support industry growth aligned with Strategy 2030 objectives. Achieving a necessary 7% GPV growth rate, more than double the forecast of 3%, requires a recalibrated strategy, with targeted, high-impact, and cross-cutting interventions going beyond business as usual.**

3 Domestic industry outlook

Profitability in the red meat industry has been under pressure for some time, with domestic retail and producer prices increasing more slowly than the cost of inputs. Between **2019 and 2024, for example, electricity costs in South Africa increased at an average annual growth rate of 12.12%, fuel at 11.37%, fertiliser at 13.06%, and yellow maize at 9.66%. During this same period, average retail prices for various cuts increased by 4.57% (beef) and 2.92% (lamb) and producer prices (live weight) increased by 4.53% and 3.4% for cattle and sheep, respectively.**

This section provides some foresight into the expected future domestic demand for red meat, as well as an examination of the profitability of the red meat industry. Sections that follow will illustrate how large international competitors ensure carcass value maximisation and profitability in their own industries.

3.1 The domestic market for beef and sheep meat

The domestic market is characterised by the relatively weak buying power of South African consumers. Figure 1 demonstrates the real changes in disposable income per capita of households in South Africa as well as the rate of change. In **real terms, disposable incomes per capita per household decreased with an annual rate of 0.08% between 2015 and 2024.** This can largely be explained by the relatively high consumer price inflation (CPI) rates of around 5.0% per annum over this period. One unfortunate consequence has been a marked regress of a share of the population from the affluent household category to the middle-income household category - the share of affluent households in 2020 was 25%, declining to 20% by 2024, with middle-income households decreasing from 42% to 38% over the same period (BFAP, 2024). The share of low-income households increased from around 33% in 2020 to 42% in 2024 (BFAP, 2024).

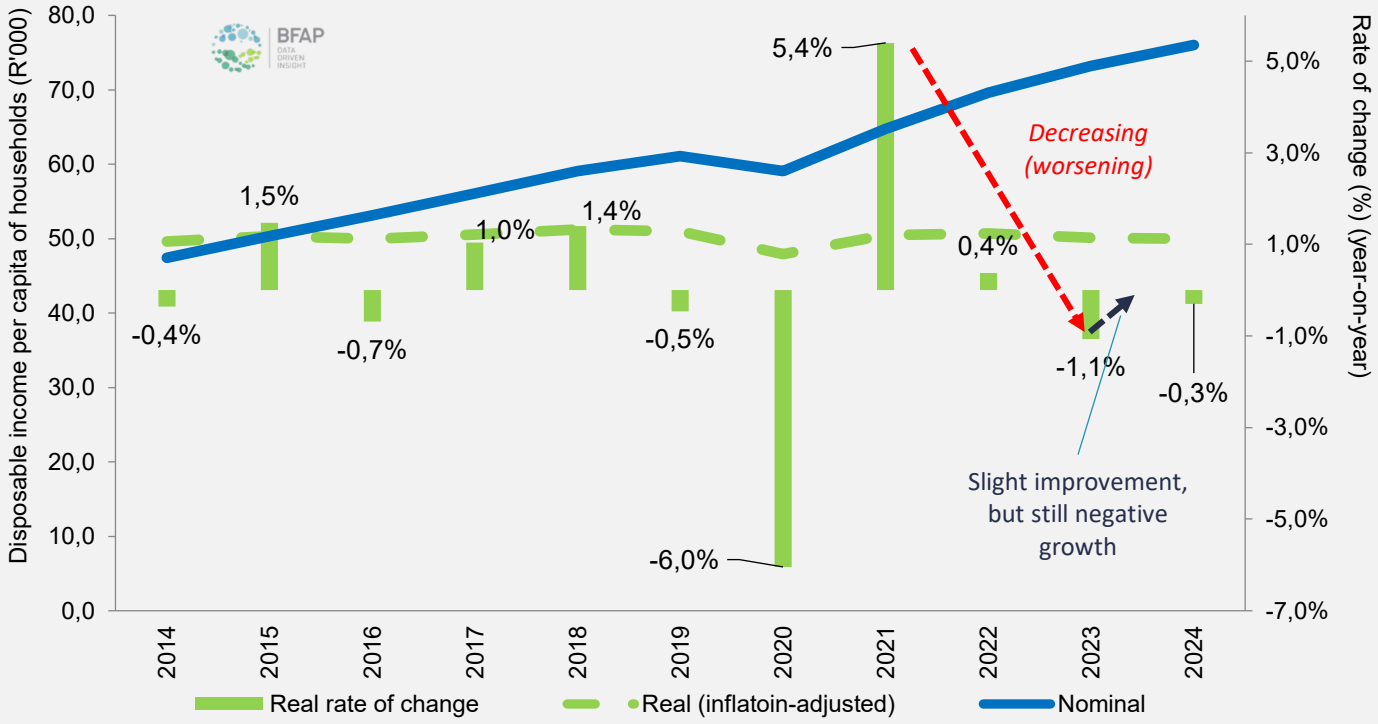

Figure 1: Disposable income trends in South Africa
Source: BFAP (2025)

South African consumers are highly price-sensitive, regularly shifting consumption from more expensive meats like beef and sheep meat to cheaper alternatives such as pork and poultry when prices increase and

disposable incomes come under pressure. Between 2015 and 2024, the average annual rate of per capita consumption of beef and sheep meat decreased by 1.5% and 6.0%, respectively. This equates to reductions of 1.2kg and 0.9kg, reaching 12.2kg and 1.5kg in 2024, respectively. Poultry consumption also declined at a rate of 1.0%, with per capita consumption falling over the same period by 3.1kg to reach 33.9kg in 2024. By contrast, pork consumption increased at a rate of 3.2%, with consumption reaching 5.4 kg per capita.

Looking forward, **overall meat consumption is projected to increase over the long term (2025–2035). Beef consumption is forecast to grow at an average annual rate of 1.1%, increasing by 89 000 tons to reach 798 000 tons** (BFAP, 2025). **Sheep meat consumption, however, is expected to decline from 97 000 to 91 000 tons (Figure 2).** Meanwhile, poultry and pork consumption are projected to increase to 2.4 million tons and 393 000 tons, respectively. This reflects gains of 330 000 and 60 000 tons respectively (BFAP, 2025). While population growth is the main driver of the increase in consumption, beef and sheep meat's consumption growth rates will remain lower than those of pork (1.5%) and poultry (1.5%) due to the latter's relative affordability.

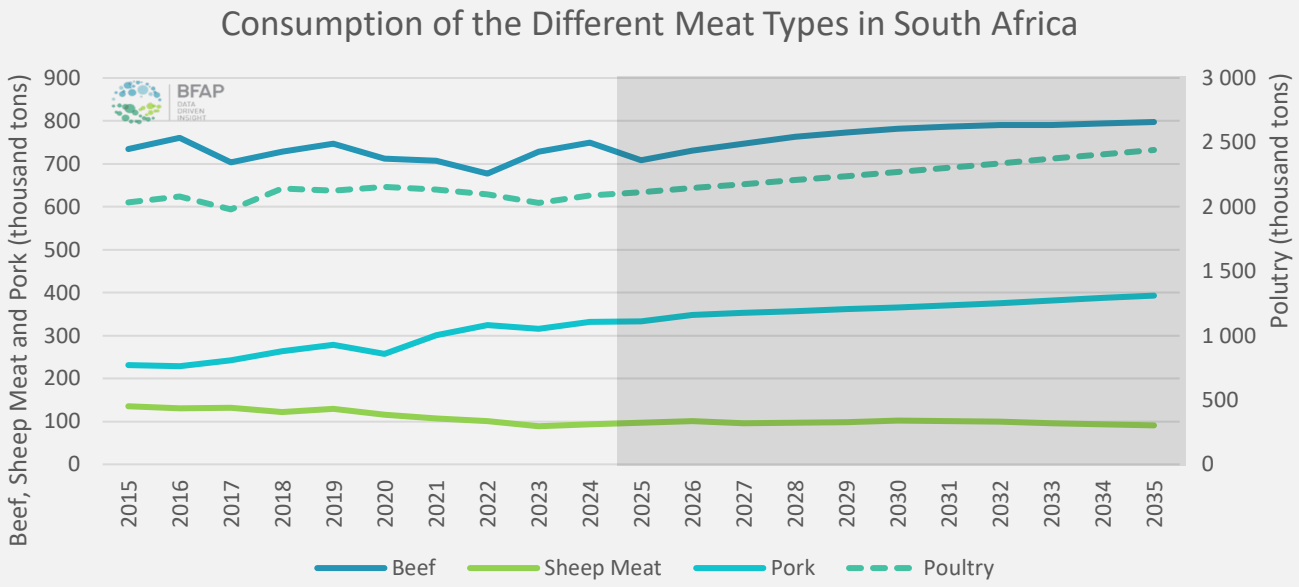

Figure 2: Forecasts on consumption of the different meat types in South Africa
Source: BFAP Baseline (2025)

3.2 The domestic beef and sheep meat industry

Profitability in livestock production along the different nodes of the value chain is influenced by numerous factors. The list includes, the cost of **feed and feed supplements, veterinary services, animal husbandry, labour, fuel, transport, electricity, capital, land, and water**. Given the heterogenous nature of beef and sheep products, which is characterised by the quality and the number of differing cuts that a single carcass can produce, value addition in the beef and sheep value chains is complex. **A single carcass can produce cuts of different qualities that are sold in the domestic, regional, and international markets. This has a sizeable impact on the value realised from a single animal.** Here we asses baseline expectations for input costs going forward and the likely impact on industry profitability, before turning to the general carcass value split and resultant impacts on revenue generation and profitability.

3.2.1 Input costs and prices

The past decade has been characterised by a dynamic and volatile international production and trade environment, ranging from international trade wars, geo-political uncertainty and tensions, animal disease outbreaks, climate shocks, and others. The impact is revealed in considerable price volatility for several critical inputs for the beef and sheep sub-sectors, impacts on the logistical networks, and the final price received for

agricultural goods. Table 1 and Figure 3 present the price evolution of various input costs over the past decade (2015-2024), the Rand to US$ exchange rate, and beef prices received at the producer, retail and export levels.

*Table 1: Indices for export, retail and producer prices and input costs - **Beef***

Indices and Growth Rates - Beef		Average Annual Growth Rate	
		2015-2024	2019-2024
Fresh or chilled boneless cuts (US$/kg)	Export Prices and Exchange Rate	3.8%	2.3%
Frozen boneless cuts (US$/kg)		3.7%	4.4%
Fresh or chilled boneless cuts (R/kg)		7.7%	6.9%
Frozen boneless cuts (R/kg)		7.6%	9.1%
R:US$ Exchange Rate		3.8%	4.7%
Fillet (R/kg)	Domestic Prices	4.5%	7.6%
Rump (R/kg)		5.2%	5.3%
T-Bone (R/kg)		5.1%	4.5%
Cheapest Chuck A-Grade (R/kg)		5.9%	5.1%
A2 Price (R/kg)	Producer Prices - Livestock	5.1%	4.9%
Weaner (R/kg)		6.0%	2.3%
Commercial Bull Auction Price (R/head)		6.6%	8.0%
Commercial Cow Auction Price (R/head)		0.1%	7.9%
Commercial Heifer Auction Price (R/head)		8.3%	3.2%
Producer Price Index - Agricultural Goods	Input Costs	6.5%	7.3%
Consumer Price Index		4.8%	5.1%
Prime Interest Rate (%)		0.2%	5.8%
Baltic Dry Index		13.9%	7.9%
Electricity (c/kWh)		9.6%	12.1%
Yellow Maize (R/ton)		6.5%	9.7%
Import Parity International Maize (R/ton)		10.1%	14.0%
Fuel - Diesel (c/l)		8.9%	11.4%
Urea (R/ton)		9.6%	11.5%
Phosphate (MAP) (R/ton)		8.5%	14.8%
Potassium (Kaliumchloried, GROF) (R/ton)		8.9%	12.8%
Labour - Minimum Wage (R/hr)		8.3%	8.0%

Source: Eskom (2025), ITC (2025), Nedbank (2025), RMAA (2025), SAFEX (2025), SAPPO (2025), Stats SA (2025), and WCDoA (2025) compiled by BFAP (2025)

Domestic urea prices (an important input in grain production and as a feed additive) have increased strongly, with the past decade (2015-2024) seeing an annual average growth rate of 9.6%. **Supply chain constraints, the advent of COVID-19, the commencement of the Russia-Ukraine war, higher fuel and labour costs and several other factors forced urea prices to increase rapidly between 2021 and 2022, before moderating to above pre-Covid levels - the growth rate for the latter half of the past decade equated to an annual average rate of 11.5%.** Fuel prices are also above pre-COVID levels with a growth rate of 8.9% over the past decade. From 2019 to 2024, fertiliser, electricity, fuel, and yellow maize feed prices rose sharply – with average annual growth rates of 13.1%, 12.1%, 11.4%, and 9.7%, respectively. Fortunately, a partial reduction in the cost of inputs over the past two years has brought some relief but prices are still above pre-COVID levels.

When evaluating the true impact of input cost inflation on the value chain it is necessary to assess how output prices have performed over the same period, as well as the exchange rate, especially where exports and imports are concerned. In Rand terms, export prices for fresh/chilled and frozen boneless cuts rose annually by 6.9% and 9.1% respectively (2019–2024), outpacing US$ equivalent growth in prices due to the Rand's average annual depreciation of 4.7%. While export prices for beef cuts were also outpaced by input cost growth, the gap was smaller, suggesting that maintaining or growing exports - if aligned with historical price trends - could help cushion rising production costs. Altogether, the faster increases in input costs suggest continued strain on profitability along the value chain.

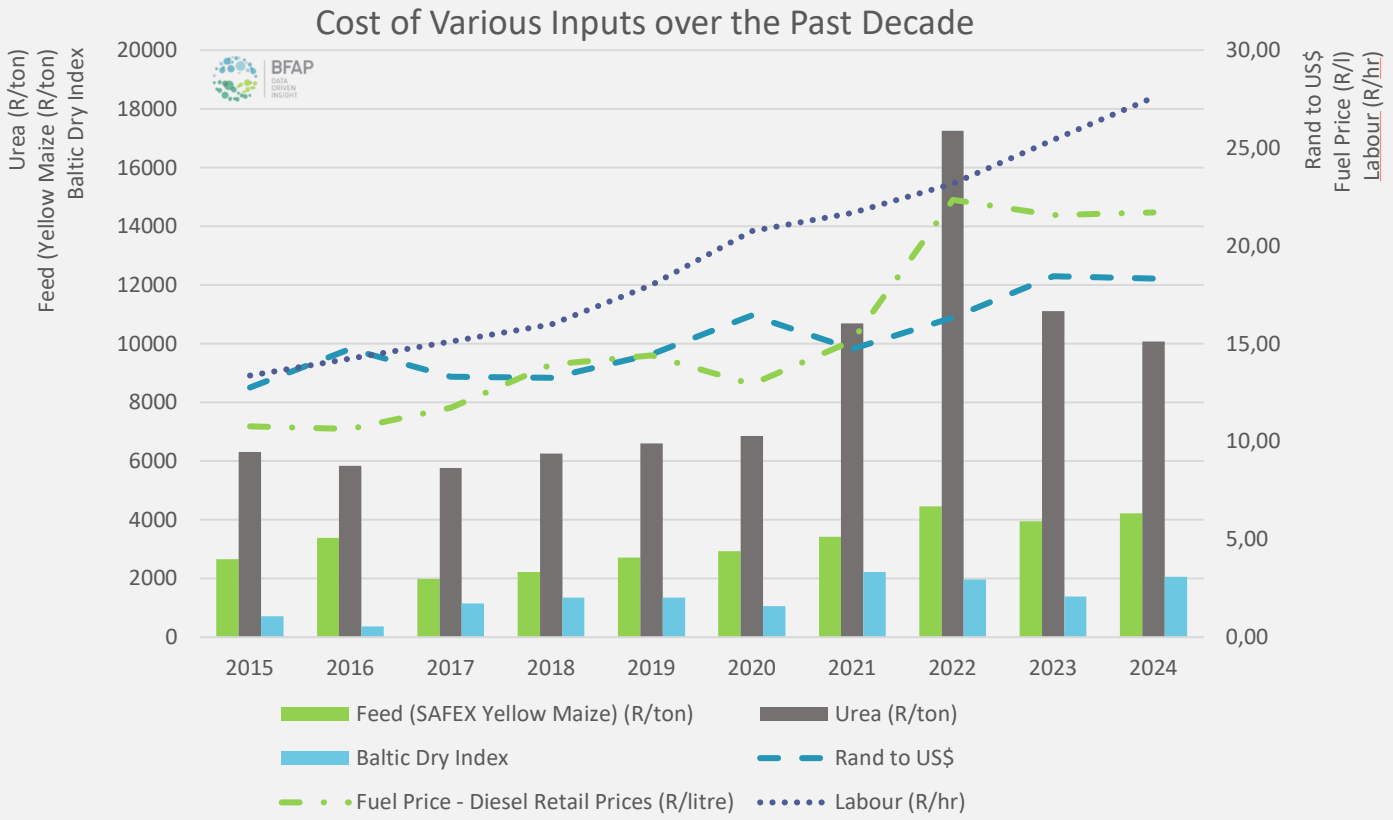

Figure 3: Evolution of various input costs over the past decade
Source: Nedbank (2025), SAGIS (2025), and NDA (2025) compiled by BFAP (2025)

Table 2 shows that while prices for sheep meat, especially exports of fresh or chilled carcasses and half-carcasses, grew relatively strongly over the past decade (9.4% and 9.0% annually), their US$ growth slowed between 2019 and 2024 to 1.9% and -0.5%, respectively. In Rand terms, growth remained firmer at 6.5% and 4.1% between 2019 and 2024. However, domestic retail price increases were more subdued, with lamb halves, shoulder/braai chops, and leg of lamb increasing 2.9%, 2.4%, and 3.5% annually. Producer-level growth was similarly modest, with A Grade and store lamb prices growing at 4.0% and 2.1%, while commercial ram and ewe auction prices fared better (7.8% and 5.3%). Across the board, input cost increases continued to outpace these gains, reinforcing the role of export markets in helping offset rising production costs.

Table 2: Indices for export, retail and producer prices – Sheep Meat

Indices and Growth Rates - Sheep		Average Annual Growth Rate	
		2015-2024	2019-2024
Fresh or chilled lamb carcasses and half-carcasses (US$/kg)	Export Prices and Exchange	9.4%	1.9%
Fresh or chilled sheep carcasses and half-carcasses (excl. lambs) (US$/kg)		9.0%	-0.5%
Fresh or chilled lamb carcasses and half-carcasses (R/kg)		13.2%	6.5%
Fresh or chilled sheep carcasses and half-carcasses (excl. lambs) (R/kg)		12.8%	4.1%
R:US$ Exchange Rate		3.8%	4.7%
Lamb Half (R/kg)	Domestic Prices	5.5%	2.9%
Lamb Shoulder/Braai Chops (R/kg)		5.0%	2.4%
Leg of Lamb (R/kg)		5.3%	3.5%
A-Grade Price (R/kg)	Producer Prices -	3.9%	4.0%
Store Lamb (R/kg)		4.5%	2.2%
Commercial Ram Auction Price (R/head)		2.2%	7.8%
Commercial Ewe Auction Price (R/head)		5.7%	5.3%

Source: ITC (2025), RMAA (2025), SAPPO (2025) and WCDoA (2025) compiled by BFAP (2025)

Prolonged periods of subdued local demand and focused exports, coupled with declining herd numbers across both formal and informal sectors, have accelerated a drive toward feedlot-abattoir efficiency, most notably reflected in rising average carcass weights, as shown in Figure 4. Beef production has increased by over 33 000 tons over the past decade, with carcass weights increasing at an annual average rate of 1.01% over the same period, which is equivalent to a 20kg per head increase, from 258.3kg to 278.3 kg) (RMAA, 2025). Over the same period, slaughter volumes remained mostly flat with an average of about 2.7 million head slaughtered annually, whilst herd numbers declined by 1.57 million head (DALRRD, 2025). Heavier carcass weights have supported the improvement of overall profitability by spreading fixed costs such as labour, transport, and processing over a greater product volume; this is particularly important as the export market currently drives demand growth, and with the contraction of the cattle herd due to drought, disease, and other factors, increased carcass weights help maintain total beef supply and processing plant throughput with fewer animals, making feedlot-abattoir integrated businesses more viable. On another note, the reduction in herd numbers whilst slaughter volumes remained relatively constant points to a thinning of the herd through increased slaughters of cows but also points to strong imports of live animals, mostly from Namibia and Botswana - over the past decade South Africa has imported a total of more than 2.4 million head of cattle, largely weaners and slaughter-ready animals) and potential increased domestic productivity through higher calving and weaning rates and heavier carcasses.

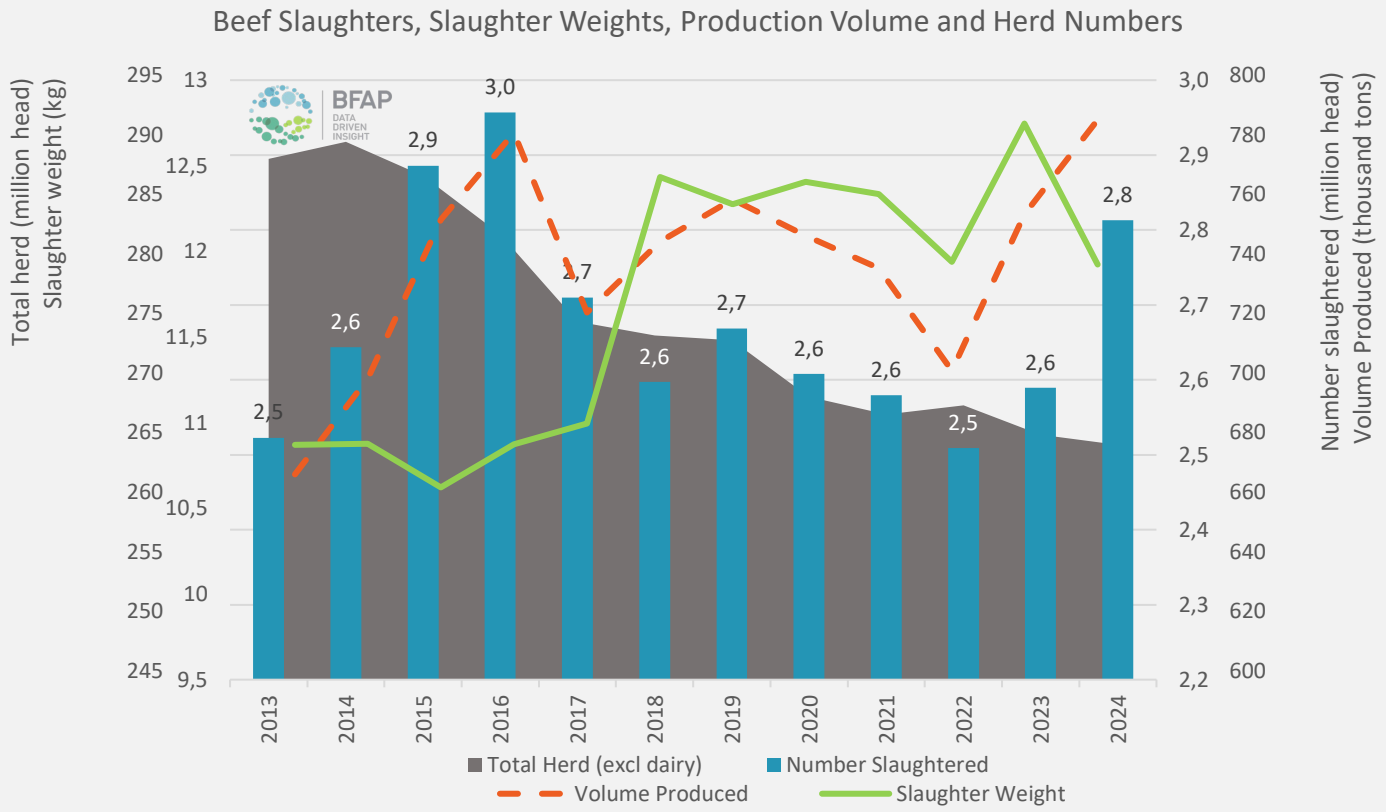

Figure 4: Beef production vs stock numbers, carcass weights and slaughter volumes
Source: BFAP Baselined (2025), DALRRD (2025) and RMAA (2025) compiled by BFAP (2025)

3.2.2 Production efficiency / profitability

Producer profitability in the beef sector has fluctuated significantly over the past decade, with the beef: maize price ratio **peaking at 23 in 2017**, a year marked by record maize production, strong rainfall, and heightened domestic and export demand for beef. That year also saw a 38% rise in weaner prices in the first four months (ABSA, 2017), driven by improved grazing (following the 2015/16 drought) and increased feedlot demand. Profitability has since declined, with the ratio falling to 13.2 in 2022 amid rising grain prices, elevated input costs (fertiliser, fuel, electricity), loadshedding, a weakening Rand, and broader supply chain disruptions.

More recently, poor grain harvests domestically and globally due to El Nino weather cycles have increased the cost of feed and worsened grazing conditions in the region. During 2024 this forced many producers to thin their herds, sending larger numbers of cows for slaughter. The high feed prices also impacted feedlot profitability whilst a generally weak consumer environment dis-incentivised the demand for beef and subsequently weaners.

In early 2025, global beef producer and consumer prices rose amid recovering global demand and higher international prices. Domestically, improved grain output for the 2024/25 season helped lower feed costs and lifted weaner demand. A2 prices in Q1 2025 averaged R50.13/kg, up 2.9% from Q1 2024. Looking ahead to 2030–2035, profitability is expected to strengthen, with the beef: maize price ratio projected to average out at 18.1 in 2025.The reduction in maize prices reflects the normalisation in global price levels and improved weather conditions domestically. In recent years, global supply has responded to the high price cycle that was underpinned by disruptions such as the war in Ukraine and challenging weather in key producing regions. In South Africa, prices have not come down to the same extent yet due to the drought in 2024, which limited domestic supply, as well as the depreciation in the exchange rate. With the new summer crop in 2025 estimated to exceed 15 million tonnes, domestic grain prices have started to decline and, under baseline conditions, which reflect normal weather over the outlook, these prices remain fairly stable in the short term, further aided by the projected strengthening in the Rand exchange rate in 2026.

At the same time, beef prices have also increased sharply due to constrained supply from reduced imports and the effects of FMD outbreaks and related control measures (i.e., movement restrictions). The higher prices have supported slaughter volumes despite constrained supply; however, production volume growth is limited due to slaughter weights falling sharply in 2025. The lower carcass weights (weighted average carcass weights are 11.6kg lower y-o-y in 2025 at 267.5kg compared to 279.1kg in 2024) can be explained by the industry capitalising on the high prices and slaughtering animals at lower weights rather than feeding them for longer periods.

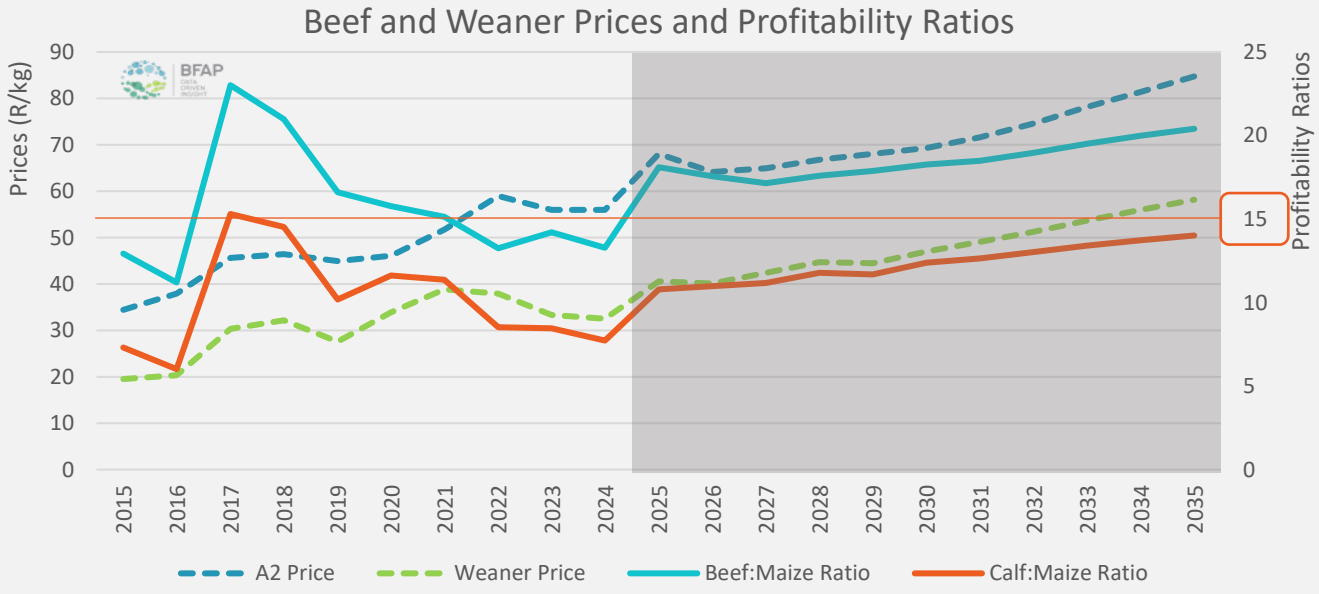

Figure 5: Beef and weaner prices and profitability ratios – South African
Source: BFAP Baseline (2025)

4Participating in international beef and sheep markets

4.1 Expected demand growth

With South Africa's constrained consumer environment expected to persist, exports are set to become increasingly important for growth in the beef and sheep sectors. Global demand for red meat, especially in the developing regions of Africa and Asia, is projected to rise due to population and economic growth (AHDB, 2025). Developed economies are expected to see flat demand as consumers prioritise sustainability, health, and animal welfare (AHDB, 2025). Between 2025 and 2034, beef consumption is forecast to grow at an average of 1.2% annually to reach 83.7 million tons, with Asia accounting for much of this increase (from 29.8 to 34.8 million tons; Figure 6). Growth will be strongest in Africa (2.4%) and Asia (1.7%), while beef consumption is expected to decline in Europe (-0.3%).

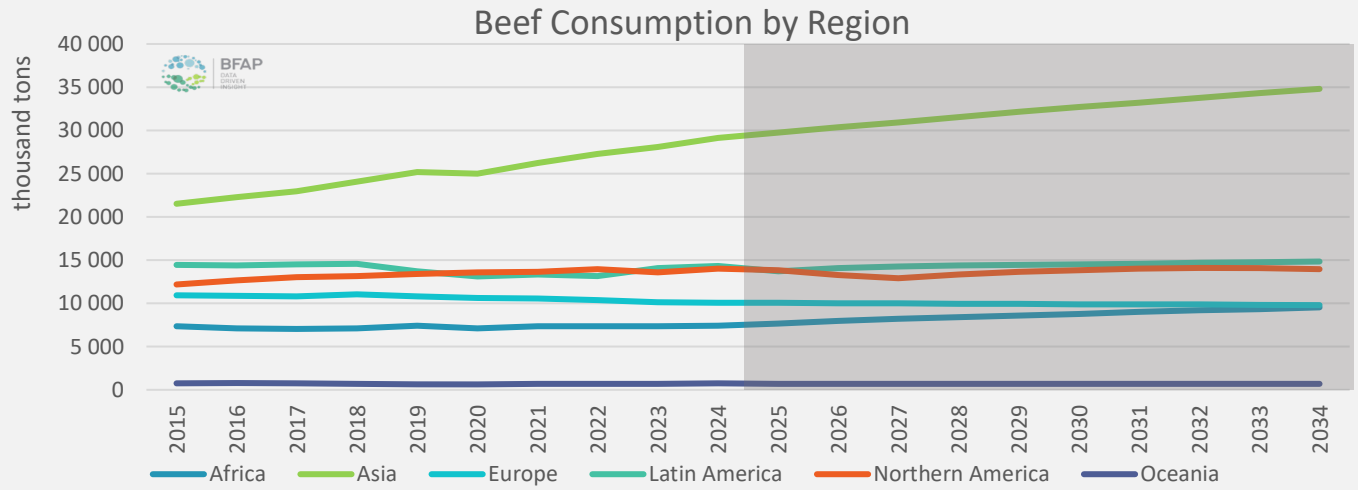

Figure 6: Beef consumption by region
Source: OECD-FAO (2025) compiled by BFAP (2025)

Overall global sheep consumption is expected to increase to 19.4 million tons in 2034 from the current 2024 base level of 16.8 million tons (a 1.3% annual average growth rate between 2025 and 2034) (Table 3) (OECD-FAO, 2025). The strongest contributors to this growth are Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Oceania who are expected to increase their consumption of beef by 800 000 tons, 1.3 million tons, 30 000 million tons, and 20 000 tons respectively over the same period. Europe is expected to see reductions of roughly 20 000 tons over the same period and Northern America a minor gain of 2 000 tons.

Table 33: Average annual growth rates in the consumption of sheep meat for different regions

Average Annual Growth Rates (%)	5-Year Intervals		10-Year Intervals	
	2015-19	2019-24	2015-24	2025-34
Africa	1,5%	0,4%	1,3%	2,4%
Asia	2,0%	2,4%	2,3%	1,2%
Europe	-1,1%	-1,2%	-1,3%	-0,2%
Latin America	1,6%	1,2%	1,3%	0,8%
Northern America	3,1%	0,8%	2,4%	-0,1%
Oceania	-10,7%	5,4%	-0,9%	0,8%
Total	**1,5%**	**1,7%**	**1,7%**	**1,3%**

Source: OECD-FAO (2025)

Over the next decade, domestic beef consumption in South Africa is expected to grow only modestly, while sheep meat consumption is projected to decline, constrained by limited local spending power and driven mainly by population growth. **To expand beyond organic growth**, the industry will need to focus on export markets, particularly fast-growing African and Asian regions, with Asia expected to add 5.1 million tons of beef and 1.3 million tons of sheep meat between 2025 and 2034. While other global markets may see weaker or negative growth, opportunities remain for South African exporters who can align with developed market demands by emphasizing meat quality, safety, environmental sustainability, and animal welfare. Future success will depend on the industry's ability to meet these standards while navigating risks such as disease outbreaks, exchange rate volatility, rising input costs, and geopolitical uncertainty.

4.2Competing with international leaders

Almost all of the top beef producers globally have increased exports as a share of total domestic production (Figure 7). **Exports constituted 64.8% (Paraguay), 58.0% (Uruguay), 55.3% (Australia), 34.6% (Spain), 20.4% (Argentina), 18.7% (Brazil), and 8.0% (United States) of total domestic beef production in 2023.** South Africa lags other exporting nations in this regard with around 5% of domestic production exported. Understanding how other countries improved their export performance and how this influenced their domestic industries will be important to give direction to South Africa's beef sector. **South Africa only became a net exporter of beef in 2014 when domestic production reached 694 000 tons - surpassing domestic consumption by 4 000 tons (BFAP, 2024). Since 2014, South Africa's beef exports have increased to 39700 tons.** The growth in exports as a share of total domestic production is commendable; however, if South Africa's beef sector is to realise the true benefits of exports, this growth will need to be accelerated.

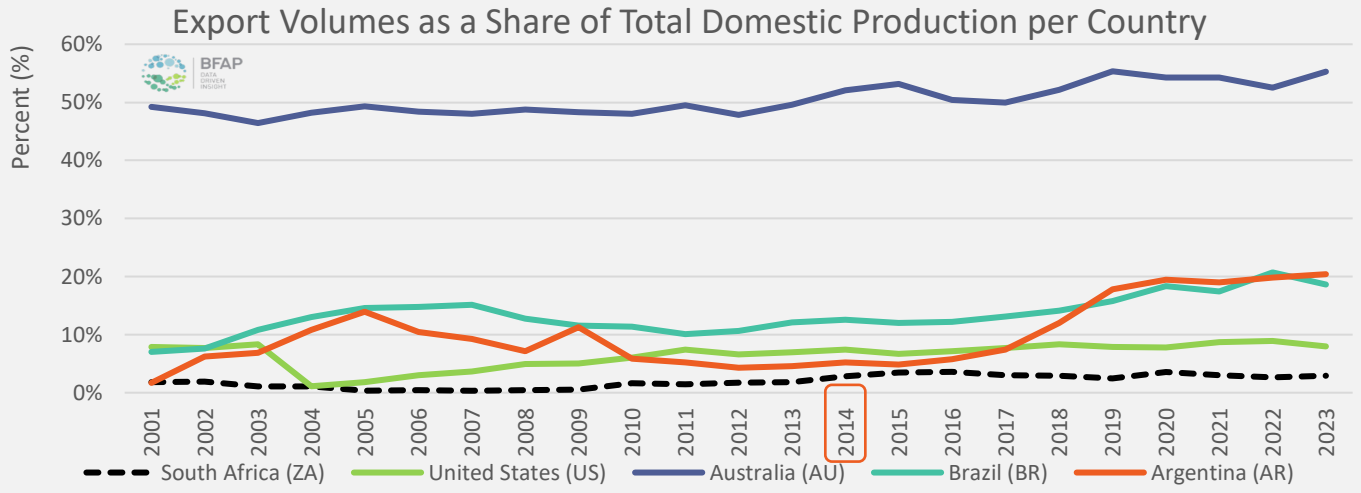

Figure 7: Export volumes as a share of domestic production in top beef exporting and producing nations
Source: Agri Benchmark (2024) and ITC (2025) compiled by BFAP (2025)

Being a net exporter of beef reflects well on South Africa's ability to compete internationally with products that meet quality and safety standards. However, shifting global consumption trends toward premium beef offer a largely untapped opportunity. In 2024, South Africa lagged in value capture - earning US$6.68/kg for fresh or chilled boneless cuts exported to the UAE, for example, compared to US$14.18/kg for Australia and US$15.93/kg for the US (ITC, 2025). While product type and quality differences contribute to this disparity, the lack of detailed export cut data from all countries limits clearer comparisons. Unlocking full export potential will require South Africa to better align with premium market expectations and transmit value back to producers.

4.2.1 Linking exports to value chain profitability

4.2.1.1 Drivers of Competitiveness

Higher beef prices (and lower feed costs), incentivise feedlots to keep cattle on feed for longer periods of time, allowing the cattle to put on additional weight and improve profitability. Without sufficient increases in the value of the carcass (through carcass value optimisation) this would otherwise not be possible, unless feed costs dramatically dropped.

Average carcass weights in the US over the past 60 years have been increasing with an average annual rate of 4 lbs. (1.81kg) (Drovers, 2024). For the past few years, average carcass weights reached 900 lbs. (409.09 kg) with cattle being placed in feedlots for up to 190 days. These high carcass weights have been supported by some of the highest carcass prices in the world and relatively low grain prices, stimulating a drive to build heavier carcasses and boost profits through increased productivity and high-value exports to high-value markets enhancing profitability by spreading fixed costs over a larger carcass. Herd reductions are also a significant driver for heavier carcasses as production has struggled to keep pace with demand, stimulating producers to increased yields (carcass weights) for every head of animal. In Australia, average carcass weights have also been trending upwards, increasing from 207kg in 1970, to 307kg in 2024. The past 10 years saw average carcass weights increasing by 30kg (MLA, 2024). According to MLA (2024), '*Improvements to production practices, operational decisions, export and domestic retail demands, investments in genetics, and growth in feedlots have all contributed to the growing change in carcases*.' Argentinian carcass weights are around 234 kg (USDA, 2022). And those in Brazil some 249kg in 2016, expected to reach 278kg by 2027 (MLA, 2018). In South Africa, average carcass weights are around 280kg implying that there is still room for growth when compared to the US and Australia.

Figure 8 highlights that in 2024, South Africa received the lowest price for finished cattle among major beef-exporting nations at US$2.96/kg whilst the US led with prices at US$5.68/kg (Agri Benchmark, 2024). Back in 2010, South Africa's beef prices were relatively strong - above those of the US, Australia, and Argentina, with only Brazil earning a slight premium of US$0.05/kg. At the time, the effects of the global financial crisis were still being felt by global consumers, which stifled the demand for beef, placing pressure on prices (BFAP, 2010). In South Africa, beef (and other meat) prices were less affected by global meat price trends, whilst increased consumption, a reliance on imports, and post-drought herd-rebuilding supported higher prices (BFAP, 2010). While global prices declined from 2010 to 2014 due to rising output in Australia and Brazil, South Africa's own beef production expanded by 2.47% annually, though it remained a net importer. **From 2014 to 2023, prices recovered for all major exporters except South Africa, whose finished cattle prices fell at an average annual rate of 3.7%**, in contrast to growth in the US (1.5%), Australia (1.7%), Brazil (0.38%), and Argentina (1.0%) (Agri Benchmark, 2024).

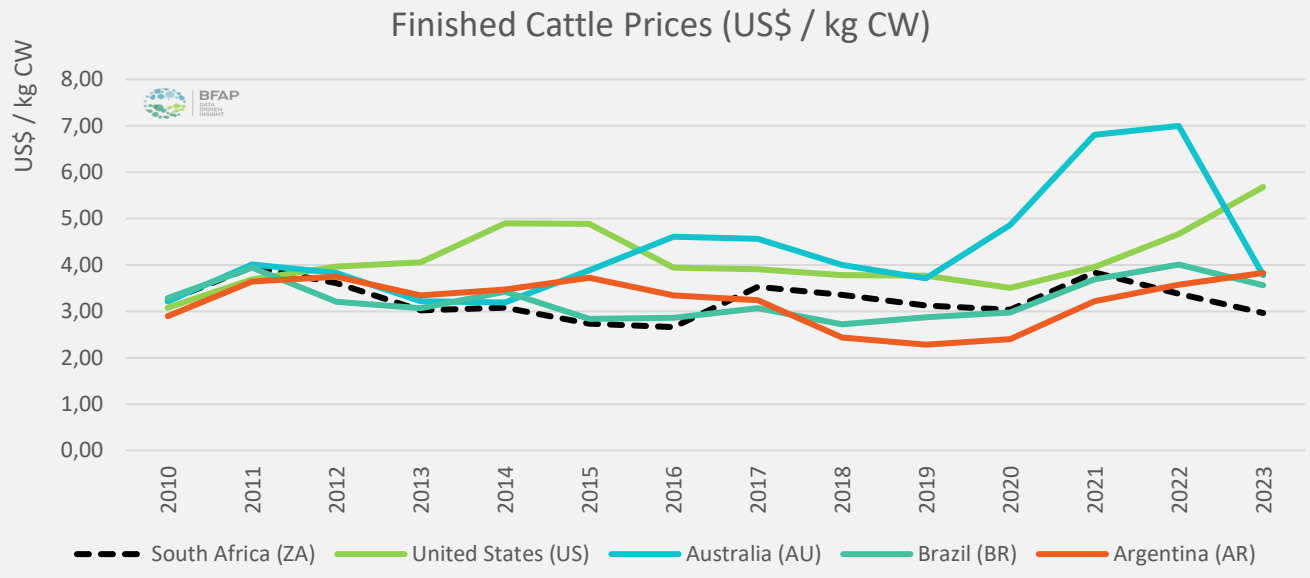

Figure 8: Finished cattle prices (US$/kg) for South Africa and major beef exporters
Source: Agri Benchmark (2024) compiled by BFAP (2025)

When compared to major global producers and exporters of beef, in US$ terms, South Africa's weaner prices are the lowest, with the US and Australia generally achieving highest prices (Figure 9). Between 2019 and 2023 weaner prices have been volatile, but in general were higher towards the end of the five-year period – the only exception being South Africa. South Africa's weaner prices fell with an annual average rate of 5.6% between 2019 and 2023, whereas weaner prices increased in the US, Australia, Brazil, and Argentina, with annual average growth rates of 11.6%, 7.9%, 8.3%, and 7.6%, respectively. The reductions in weaner prices domestically (in US$ terms) were likely due to poor domestic currency performance making South African weaners cheaper in US$ terms compared to competing nations.

In earlier years (2016 to 2019), the average annual growth rate for South African weaner prices was 11.1%, whereas for other countries the growth rates over the same period were negative: US (-0.5%), Australia (-13.9%), Brazil (-4.7%), and Argentina (-17.4%). In South Africa, this reflects growth in the sector which at the time was likely supported by low feed prices and increased demand for weaners by the feedlot sector.

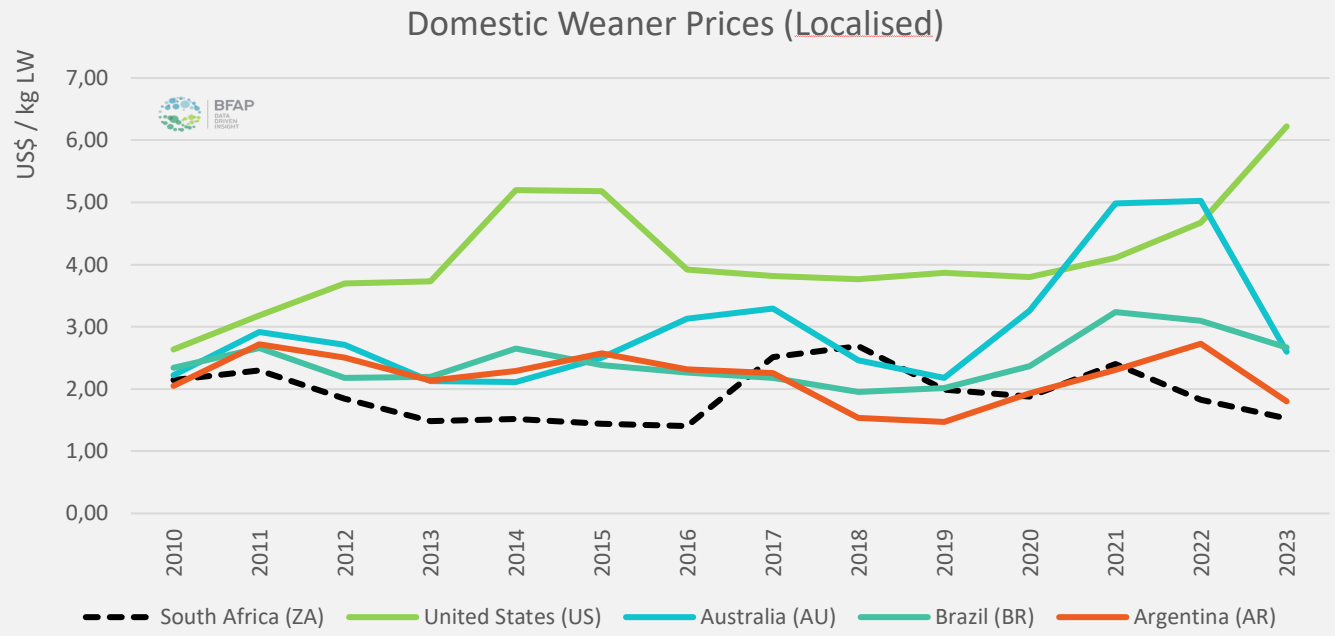

Figure 9: Weaner prices (US$/kg) for South Africa and major beef exporters
Source: Agri Benchmark (2024) compiled by BFAP (2025)

4.2.1.2 Exports as a share of production

A common theme among the largest global exporters of beef has been a high and often growing export share of domestic production, for example Brazil, where domestic production more than doubled (5.2 to 10.7 million tons) between 2001 and 2023, whilst at the same time the export share increased from 7% to 18.7% (Agri Benchmark, 2024) (Figure 10). As domestic consumption over this same period remained relatively flat at between 6.1 and 6.5 million tons, the industry had to look to export markets for growth (OECD-FAO, 2025). This strategy supported Brazilian beef and weaner price increases: despite excess domestic production and insufficient domestic demand, beef prices increased by US$2.28 per kg (5.4% per annum) whilst weaner prices increased by US$1.83 per kg (6.3% per annum) between 2001 and 2023 (Agri Benchmark, 2024). Without the export markets, prices would likely have dropped to levels that could not sustain industry growth.

A similar story is shared by Argentina, despite the country having a more turbulent build-up due to policy shifts during 2009 and 2016. Between 2001 and 2023, Argentina's exports as a share of domestic production increased from 1.69% to 20.4% whist production increased over the same period by 414 000 tons to 3.1 million tons (0.4% annually) and consumption decreased by 40 000 tons (OECD-FAO, 2025). At the same time beef and weaner prices increased by US$2.33 per kg (5.4% annually) and US$0.82 per kg (5.7% annually), respectively (Agri Benchmark, 2024).

Australia has been focussing on beef exports for a longer period, with exports as a share of production already at around 50% in 2001, with not much growth in the share of exports through to 2023. Despite this, Australia has still managed to increase beef and weaner prices received by US$2.27 per kg (5.1% annually) and US$1.51 per kg (5.0% annually) respectively (Agri Benchmark, 2025). This can be explained by the emphasis placed on meat safety and quality by the Australian beef industry, facilitated by world class traceability and identification systems and strong national animal health status, which allows high value cut exports to high value markets.

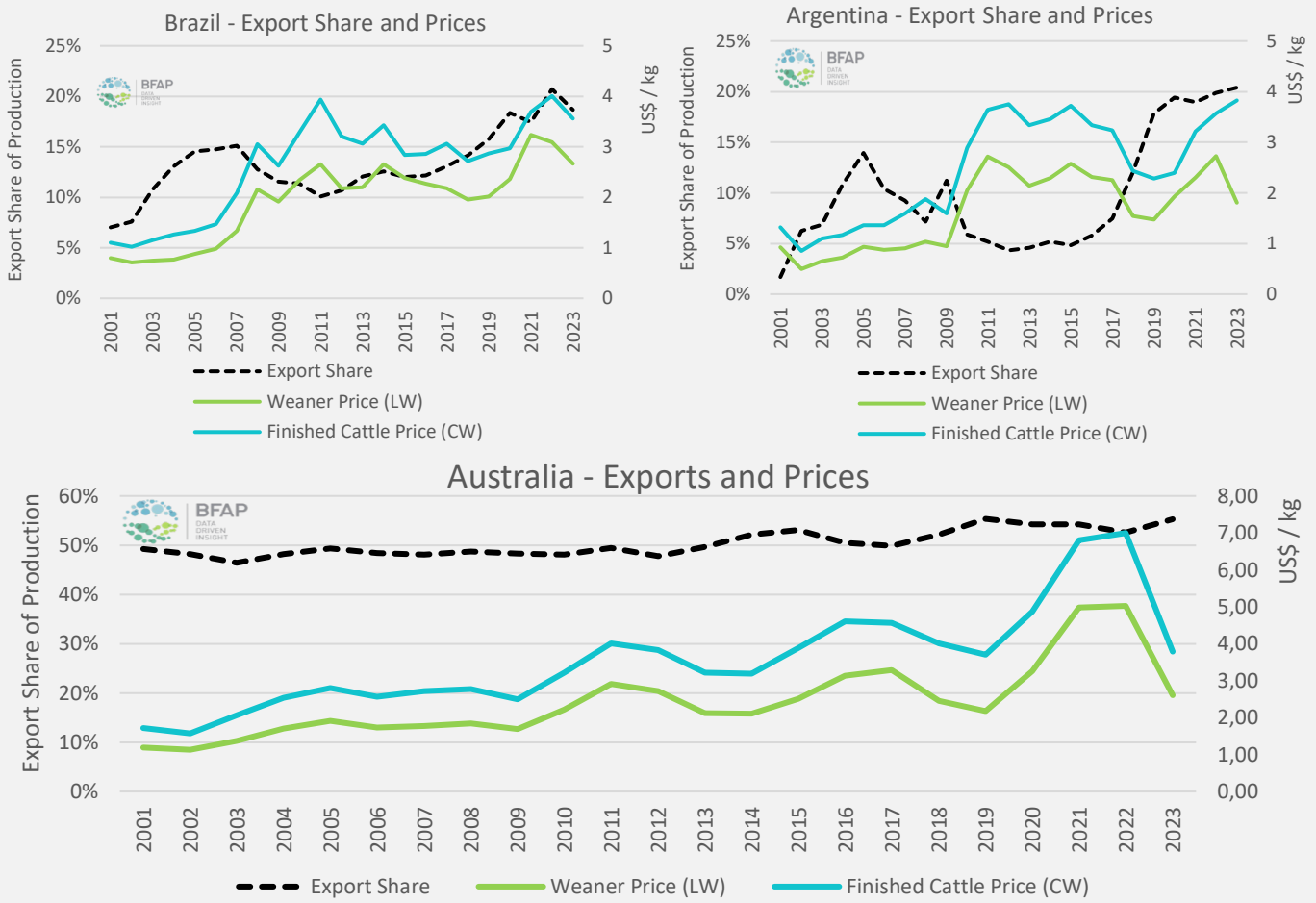

Figure 10: Exports as a share of production and domestic prices received by major beef exporters
Source: Agri Benchmark (2024) compiled by BFAP (2025)

4.2.1.3 Animal health

The animal health status of a country impacts productivity, market access, and price levels, and is therefore of utmost importance where a country is aiming to enhance value chain resilience and access to premium prices in high-value export markets. Recently, Brazil declared FMD freedom without vaccination, a testament to enhanced biosecurity measures and a well-functioning veterinary service able to combat outbreaks of contagious diseases effectively (Salvarani *et al.*, 2025).

Argentina on the other hand has zonal freedom. The southern parts of the country are recognised as being free from FMD without vaccination, whilst the northern parts are recognised as being FMD free with vaccination. Animals and animal products originating from the south therefore face few restrictions when entering export markets, while exporters from the north generally face challenges.

Australia has a favourable animal health status and has not had an FMD outbreak in over 100 years, with the last reported outbreak in 1872. The fact that Australia is basically an island has enabled the country to enjoy mostly uninterrupted access to export markets globally, including high-value markets that are willing and able to pay a price premium for safe and high-quality products.

4.2.1.4 Meat safety and quality – Carcass value optimisation through traceability

Value chain traceability is critical for domestic and export sales of beef and sheep meat, enabling market access and compliance with international standards that require verified production practices (Schroeder et al., 2021; FAO, 2023). It supports credence attributes such as designations of origin, organic, natural, and animal welfare, allowing producers to access niche markets and command price premiums (Schroeder et al., 2021). Traceability also enhances product differentiation, ensures consistent quality, and strengthens food safety response through rapid recalls, fostering consumer trust (Schroeder et al., 2021; FAO, 2023). Additionally, accurate traceability data underpins effective market reporting and policy development, helping stakeholders respond to shifting demand (Schroeder et al., 2021).

There is also a growing preference for food-service items, convenience, and higher-quality products, driven by societal awareness influenced by media coverage on health, environment, and animal welfare issues. These trends are prompting industry changes towards more transparent supply chains, branding, and certification to meet consumer expectations domestically and internationally (Schroeder *et al.*, 2021; FAO, 2023).

Australia's strong global reputation for producing clean, safe, and natural red meat plays a key role in the country's export success (MLA, 2025). To uphold this standard and safeguard the integrity of beef, sheep meat, and goatmeat, MLA and its subsidiary, Integrity Systems Company (ISC), collaborate with the broader red meat industry to implement comprehensive traceability and quality assurance programs throughout the value chain (Table 4) (MLA, 2025).

Table 4: Australian red meat traceability and quality assurance programs/accreditation schemes

	Safety Program / Initiative
On Farm	Livestock Production Assurance European Union Cattle Accreditation Scheme
Feedlots	National Feedlot Accreditation Scheme
Transporters	TruckSafe Animal Welfare
Saleyards	National Saleyard Quality Assurance Program
Processors	Australian Government Legislation and Standards AQIS Health Certificate Australian Government Halal Slaughter Program Micro-organism Monitoring MLA Food Safety Program National Residue Survey
Exporters	Department of Agriculture Biosecurity
Overall Supply Chain	National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) AUS-MEAT

Source: Adapted from MLA (2025)

One example for further carcass optimisation is in the fifth quarter, as most of the offal is sold domestically at generally lower prices than beef cuts. In 2024, South Africa exported 8700 tons of offal with an average unit value of US$3.50 per kg, with Lesotho, Botswana and Namibia the main destinations (ITC, 2025). By contrast, Australia exported 220 000 tons at an average unit value of US$5.05 per kg, with Indonesia, Japan, Korea, the US, and Vietnam the main destinations (ITC, 2025). Due to the perceived high meat safety and quality standards, Australia can export various cuts of offal at premium prices. As a further example, Australia received AUS$13.22 per kg FOB for tail, AUS$12.67 per kg FOB for tongue (Swiss cut), AUS$13.68 per kg FOB for halal tongue (Swiss cut), and AUS$8.13 per kg FOB for cheek meat in November 2024 (MLA, 2024). Given that the fifth quarter can comprise around 45% of the live weight of an animal, an opportunity lies in maximising the value received for the fifth quarter.

5Trajectories faced by the red meat industry – a beef focus

South Africa's red meat industry is aligning with key policy frameworks to drive growth, sustainability, and inclusion. The National Development Plan (2012) set long-term goals for economic expansion through enhanced agricultural growth with equity (National Planning Commission, 2012), while the Agriculture and Agro-Processing Master Plan (2022) aims to improve productivity, market access, and value chain efficiency via collaboration across stakeholders. Initiatives such as the National Red Meat Development Programme target communal farmer participation and better livestock quality. The Red Meat Industry Strategy 2030 ('Strategy 2030') builds on these by outlining a roadmap for innovation, resilience, and competitiveness—fostering a strong, inclusive, and export-ready sector.

Strategy 2030 is focused on creating a unified, competitive, and sustainable red meat industry that responds effectively to market demands and environmental challenges. The strategy aims for an industry that is well-coordinated, with improved collaboration among stakeholders, ensuring food safety, quality, and traceability. It also emphasizes sustainable use of natural resources and resilience to climate change impacts, ensuring long-term viability and growth of the industry. The mission of Strategy 2030 centres on fostering industry transformation through coordinated governance structures, improved research and development, capacity building, and effective communication across the value chain. It seeks to establish robust support services, enhance market access (both domestic and export), and enable participation of all producer types including smallholders. Key components of the mission include the implementation of comprehensive animal identification and traceability systems, addressing infrastructural gaps, ensuring food safety and quality, and promoting sustainable natural resource utilization.

To achieve this, Strategy 2030 set out short-, medium- and long-term interventions each centred on four main pillars (Market Access, Competitiveness, Animal and Public Health, and Inclusive Growth). The four pillars and their main mission are summarised as follows:

1. Market Access: Expand and facilitate access for all producers, especially smallholders, to formal local and international red meat markets.
2. Competitiveness and Sustainability: Enhance industry competitiveness through innovation, product differentiation, and sustainable management of natural resources.
3. Animal and Public Health: Ensure food safety and animal health to protect consumers and maintain access to high-value markets.
4. Inclusive Growth: Increase participation and capacity of marginalized producers to promote equitable growth within the red meat value chain.

Additionally, Strategy 2030 identified key cross-cutting interventions that need to be prioritised to facilitate industry growth and to align the industry with Strategy 2030 targets. These cross-cutting interventions are important and require immediate implementation. They include:

1. Restructuring of industry coordination and direction towards a unified Strategy 2030 vision;
2. Growing a unified voice within the industry, to government and to the larger agricultural sector;
3. Red meat industry value chain systems and data integration;
4. Public-Private Partnership Implementation Model(s) for the Livestock Value Chain Interventions;
5. Implementation of an industry-championed identification and traceability system;
6. FMD high-risk area prioritisation (protection, surveillance and mitigation in affected areas);
7. Compartmentalisation to support robust export performance and resilience;
8. Animal handling facility (including dipping tanks) prioritisation and coordination in communal and commonage areas;

9. South African co-operative/agri-business integration and focus on livestock strategy; and
10. Veterinary services: industry implementation and government oversight towards animal health, meat safety and One-Health (partnerships and industry led).

The red meat industry has been actively engaging with the short-term interventions and the various cross-cutting interventions of the strategy. The alignment of these initiatives remains central to fostering a more coordinated approach to growth. However, various external influences (see sub-sections 3.2.1, 3.2.2 and Figure 11) have put a damper on progress towards the industry achieving Strategy 2030 targets. Economic, environmental, and geo-political challenges have hindered market development and policy implementation (Figure 11).

To achieve sectoral growth, re-aligning industry priorities is essential. While existing targets may be ambitious, adapting plans and continuing to drive progress remain critical. The restructuring and alignment efforts from recent years position the industry well to leverage this new framework and pursue growth beyond 2030. Key GPV growth priorities include: i) animal disease status, ii) meat safety, iii) traceability, iv) market selection, v) export of high-value cuts (carcass value optimisation), vi) meat quality, and vii) value chain sustainability. Without progress in these areas, the industry is unlikely to reach its full potential.

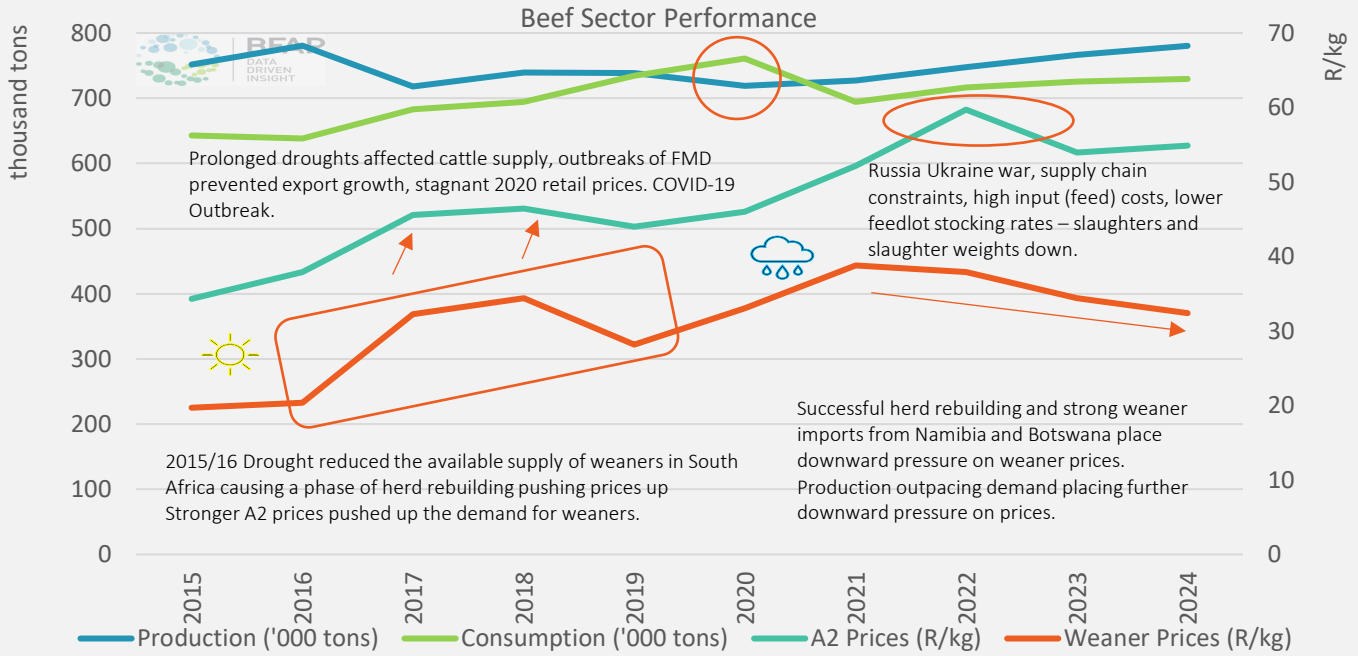

Figure 11: Headwinds that influenced the performance /of South Africa's beef sector (2015-2024)
Source: BFAP (2025)

5.1 Market development unlocks growth

Domestic beef production and consumption volumes mostly declined between 2015 and 2022, and increased thereafter (Figure 11). The decline was from a production level of 751 000 in 2015 to 701 000 tons in 2022, while consumption declined from 734 000 tons in 2015 to 677 000 tons in 2022. Since 2022, production and consumption volumes have been increasing and had been expected to continue along this trend into the long term (Figure 12). However, the recent outbreak of FMD in major beef producing enterprises in Gauteng and the North-West provinces has significantly impacted expected performance, with **production volumes expected to drop to 741 000 tons in 2025** (a 44 000 ton y-o-y reduction). If the FMD situation can be contained in a timely and effective manner, production volumes are expected to recover to 782 000 tons by 2027.

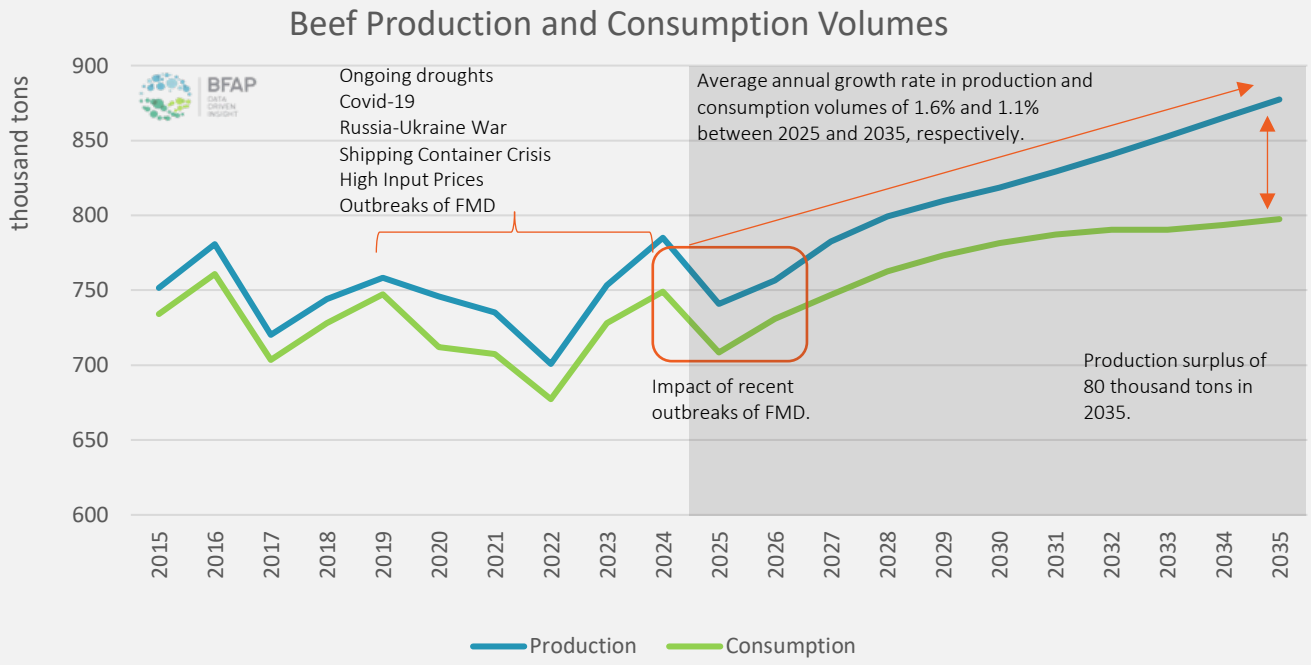

Figure 12: Forecasted domestic beef production and consumption volumes at current baseline levels
Source: BFAP (2025)

Despite the recent outbreak of FMD, production is expected to still exceed consumption volumes. The excess production will need to be exported if it is not to depress domestic prices. However, the closure of the Chinese export market and the potential closure of existing markets in the Middle East and other regions threatens export performance. Considering the recent outbreaks of FMD, BFAP undertook to model different scenarios of outbreak control. Three scenarios were run:

- **BFAP Baseline** – An updated baseline scenario that has considered the ongoing outbreaks of FMD in Mpumalanga, KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng. This scenario factors in that export volumes to date (July 2025) were around 20% higher than in the same period in 2024.
- **Medium Disease Burden (FMD)** – The scenario assumes that the outbreak of FMD is not contained, and that it spreads to other areas within the provinces mentioned. This situation was forecast to improve gradually until a full recovery in export volumes is reached in 2028.
- **High Disease Burden (FMD)** - Assumes that FMD control nationally is lost, and that the only exports that remain are lower-valued exports, in smaller volumes. It is assumed that if this scenario occurred, the recovery in export volumes to high value markets would be much slower, if any recovery took place at all.

Figure 13 illustrates the impact on export volumes of the three scenarios. Under **baseline assumptions, export volumes are expected to reduce from 39 700 tons in 2024 to 35 700 thousand tons in 2025 and 27 600 tons in 2026.** A recovery in export performance is expected to result in an average annual growth rate in export volumes between 2025 and 2030 of 5.1%, to reach 40 800 tons. Abattoirs will come under price pressure due to their reliance on the domestic market and this will be felt through the value chain in the form of lower A2 prices. A2 prices are expected to increase, but by a mere 0.9% p.a. between 2025 and 2030. This represents a R1.29 per kg increase over the five-year period.

In the **medium disease burden scenario,** export volumes are expected to fall more dramatically in 2026, reaching a trough of 20 300 tons. A quick recovery through to 2028 is simulated, with exports recovering to baseline levels of around 40 800 tons by 2030. **A significant impact on A2 prices is expected, with average annual A2 prices falling by R4.59 per kg between 2025 and 2026, to a value of R63.46 per kg.** As with the export recovery, the A2 prices are expected to recover by 2030 to an average annual value of R69.34 per kg.

In the **high disease burden scenario, exports are forecast to fall by 99.6%** (35 600 tons) in 2026 (y-o-y) to a volume of 100 tons. Exports are **expected to remain at low levels through to 2030, where the volume will reach 4 300 tons.** The result on A2 prices will be significant. A2 prices in 2026 were forecast to fall to R61.89 per kg from an annual average of R68.05 per kg the year prior (2025). **A2 prices would be unlikely to see any significant growth between 2025 and 2030, only increasing with an annual average growth rate of 0.3% to reach a value of R66.70 per kg by 2030.**

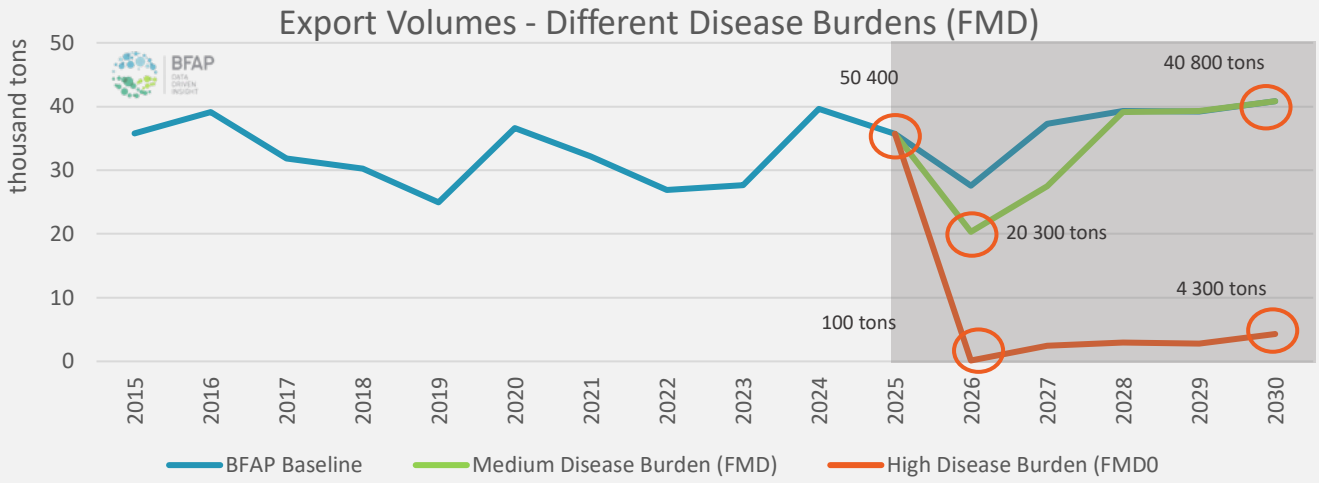

Figure 13: Export Volumes – Different disease burdens (FMD)
Source: BFAP Baseline (2025)

Under **baseline assumptions, the GPV is expected to continue an upward trend through to 2030 with an average annual growth rate of 2.9% between 2025 and 2030, reaching R56.8 billion** (Figure 14). In the **medium disease burden scenario,** the GPV shortfall when compared to the baseline scenarios will sum to R1.0 billion. A recovery to baseline levels will only be achieved by 2028 when the GPV in the industry reaches R53.4 billion. However, in the **high disease burden scenario** the complete loss of control over FMD nationally, and the closure of premium export markets between 2025 and 2030 was forecast to have an accumulated reduction of R10.6 billion in GPV.

If FMD can be contained (under a medium disease burden), the GPV is expected to fall from a value of R50.4 billion in 2025, to a value of R48.1 billion in 2026. The GPV is expected to make a 'full' recovery by 2030 and is expected to reach R56.8 billion by 2030. This represents an average annual growth rate of 3.0% between 2025 and 2030 (from R50.4 billion in 2025 to R56.8 billion by 2030). To reach a GPV of R71.5 billion by 2030, as envisioned by AAMP & Strategy 2030, the GPV would need to increase at an average annual rate of 7.0% between 2025 and 2030. Between 2019 and 2024, the average annual growth rate in GPV was 5.6%.

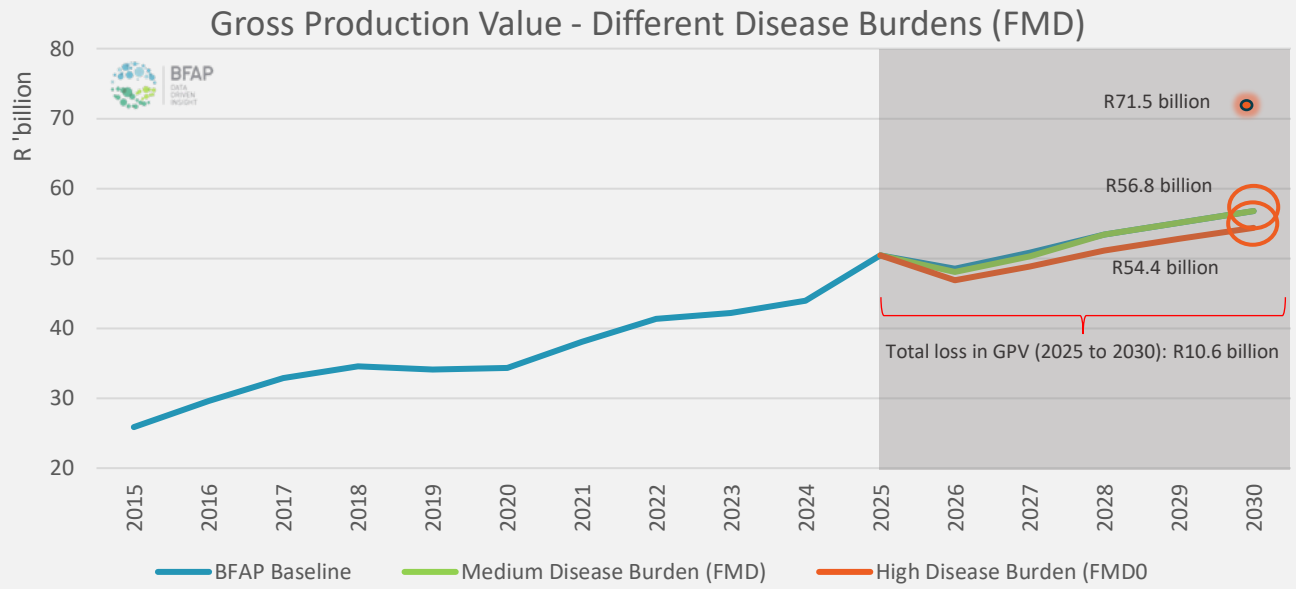

Figure 14: Gross production values – Different disease burdens (FMD)
Source: BFAP (2025)

Exports were identified in Strategy 2030 as a key driver of growth in the industry. Figure 15 shows the export share of production for beef between 2013 and 2024, and the forecasts under baseline and high disease burden scenarios to 2030. If South Africa were unable to manage the FMD outbreak and exports as a share of production were to remain at levels lower than 1%, as is expected under the loss of premium exports scenario, growth in domestic prices and production volumes would be limited, negatively impacting GPV, as demonstrated in Figure 14. Compared to Australia, Brazil and Argentina, South Africa's export share would be far lower, likely increasing the gap in overall industry performance relative to major competitors.

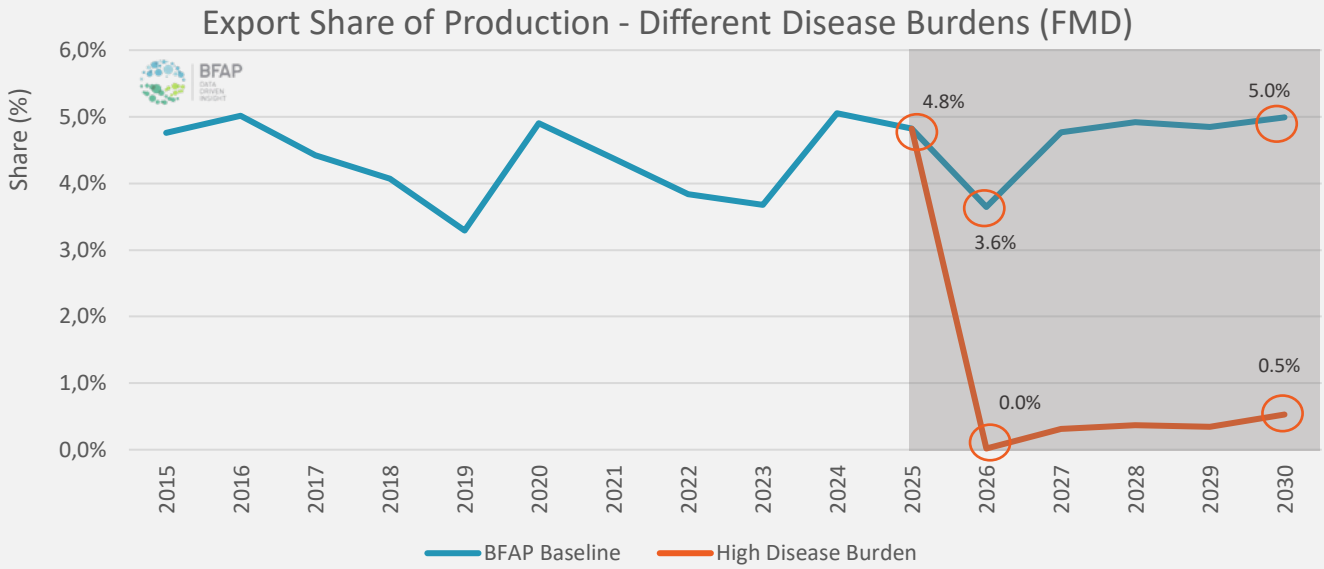

Figure 15: Exports as a share of production – Different disease burdens (FMD)
Source: BFAP (2025)

Table 5 presents the forecasted growth rates for domestic production and consumption, input costs, and prices in the red meat sector. Beef production is expected to continue to grow in the medium term (2025-2030) with an annual average growth rate of 2.1%, whilst domestic consumption is expected to lag this growth with 1.9%. Sheep meat production on the other hand is expected to decrease with a rate of -0.9% and consumption is expected to increase with a rate of 0.5%, still at a production surplus. Input costs are expected to also see continued, albeit relatively slower, growth in the medium term; fuel prices are expected to increase at an annual rate of 2.3%, Urea 1.1%, tractors, 0.7% and 0.5% feed (yellow maize).

Unfortunately for beef producers, price growth in the medium term is expected to still be outperformed by growth in the cost of inputs. A2 beef prices are expected to increase with an average annual rate of 0.9% (from already elevated levels in 2025 where prices are equal to an average annual price of around R70 per kg). The price impact of the high disease burden scenario results in a growth rate of 0.26% between 2025 and 2030, with prices not recovering to baseline levels in the medium- to long-term. Weaner prices on the other hand are expected to grow at a much quicker 3.2% per annum under Baseline assumptions, and 2.96% under a high disease burden scenario between 2025 and 2030. A-grade sheep meat and store lamb prices are expected to grow quicker than input costs with a rate of 3.0% and 3.4%, respectively. However, it is important to understand that with this growth in prices, it is assumed that exports will still form an important part of the red meat industry's performance. Without exports and sufficient demand/carcass value optimisation, it is unlikely that this price growth will be realised.

Table 55: Growth rates on costs and prices for the red meat industry

Growth Rates (%)	Hindsight		Foresight
	2015-2024	2019-2024	2025-2030
Beef Production (thousand tons)	-0,03%	0,4%	2,1%
Beef Consumption (thousand tons)	-0,3%	0,1%	2.0%
Beef A2 Prices (R/kg)	5,3%	5,2%	0,9%
Weaner Prices (R/kg)	6,0%	2,8%	3,2%
Sheep Meat Production (thousand tons)	-3,2%	-4,8%	-0,9%
Sheep Meat Consumption (thousand tons)	-4,8%	-7,1%	0,5%
Sheep A Grade Prices (R/kg)	5,4%	3,5%	3,0%
Store Lamb Prices (R/kg)	5,0%	3,1%	3,4%
SAFEX Yellow Maize Prices (R/ton)	6,5%	9,7%	0,5%
Fuel (Index)	10,4%	15,7%	2,3%
Urea (R/ton)	9,6%	11,5%	1,1%
Tractor Price (Index)	4,8%	5,4%	0,7%
Prime Rate (%) - Average	0,2%	5,8%	-0,03%
Real GDP Per Capita (%)	-0,8%	0,1%	0,8%

Source: BFAP Baseline (2025)

6Conclusions and recommendations

The red meat industry faces a pivotal moment, with its future hinging on how it addresses persistent animal health and biosecurity challenges. Recurring animal disease outbreaks continue to erode productivity, consumer trust, and access to international markets. At the same time, domestic growth is limited by weak consumer spending and stagnant demand. Export potential remains largely untapped due to barriers in accessing high-value markets and concerns over intermittent market access. Without continuous strategic intervention, the industry risks stagnation, reduced competitiveness in premium segments, and ongoing vulnerability to both external shocks and internal health crises. Boosting animal health, elevating product differentiation, and sharpening market focus are the game-changers needed to drive bold growth and resilience.

Strategy 2030's vision for South Africa's red meat industry envisions a resilient, competitive sector with strong growth potential. By prioritizing meat quality and safety, as well as production sustainability, the country could become a leading exporter of high-value meats at globally competitive prices. Enhanced strategic investments in biosecurity, animal health, and production practices would sustainably unlock continued access to premium international markets with rising demand. This path offers stable, long-term growth, growing market access, and a stronger economic contribution.

The current pace of industry growth (represented by GPV) puts it four years behind achieving the GPV target of R71.5 billion (for the beef sub-sector) set in the 2030 Red Meat Industry Strategy. It is projected that the industry will need to grow at an annual rate of 7.0% over the next five years to reach the target. Over the past five years, the growth rate has been closer to 5.6%.

'Steering the ship' in the right direction to achieve Strategy 2030 targets in a timely fashion requires significant action at all levels of the red meat value chain and from Government. Beyond market access and disease control, meeting and growing beyond global standards for quality and safety is essential to maximize export returns. Enhancing herd productivity through carcass value optimisation, genetic improvements, better veld management, and effective use of vaccines and dips, will be key to increasing the sector's gross production value. Success will require coordinated, cross-cutting interventions that align with a unified vision: a competitive, sustainable industry capable of adapting to market demands and environmental pressures.

Achieving a 7% GPV growth rate, more than double the current forecast of 3%, will require a recalibrated strategy, with targeted, high-impact, and cross-cutting interventions that go beyond business as usual. Achieving the necessary growth rate requires expansion in value (price) and volume of production (more and heavier carcasses), underpinned by animal health services that are robust and dependable. There is a call for a more systematically integrated, cross-cutting approach, to induce coordinated growth in the industry.

To this end, the following **revised interventions are recommended** as "**key cross-cutting interventions**" that, when implemented, can move the red meat industry trajectory to a 7% GPV growth. They must be both rigorously implemented and closely measured for effectiveness. They are summarised[1] as follows:

1. Implement Industry Disease Control Plan

Building resilience & a de-risked sector through co-ordinated veterinary systems

- PPPs to expand veterinary capacity – E.g. WOAH Progressive Pathway.
- Rapid response teams, faster diagnostics, and wider vaccine access.
- Develop 'FMD-Free with Vaccination' Compartments/Zones

2. National Livestock Identification & Traceability

Securing markets through transparency & industry creditability

- National rollout of a tech-driven, mandatory system to:
  - Contain outbreaks fast.
  - Guarantee origin and movement transparency (Compartmentalisation Protocol)
  - Build trust with consumers and global partners (facilitate creation of trade protocols).

3. Export Market Strategy & Implementation

Unlocking new opportunities and diversification

- Develop a unified export strategy for industry-wide alignment and growth in the slaughter volume
- Diversify markets with product diversification, while deepening existing ones.
- Establish trade protocols with the *eventual* target being **FMD-free without vaccination** status.
- Promote compartmentalisation and trade protocols until environment can be sufficiently de-risked

4. On-Farm Productivity & Efficiency Gains

Breeding, herd health, and performance as the foundation of profitability

- Invest in genetics and fertility for higher efficiency and carcass quality.
- Focus on preventive herd health & biosecurity. E.g. Brucellosis "Progressive Pathway"
- Improve herd metrics: calving, feed conversion, weaning, and mortality.
- Strengthen extension services to spread modern practices.
- Empower emerging farmers to scale productivity and meet export needs.

5. Carcass Value Optimisation

Maximising returns from every animal

- Premium cuts for high-value markets; bulk supply for value segments.
- Differentiate through advanced processing and by-products.
- Introduce carcass block tests (quantity) and advanced grading (quality) for competitiveness.

6. Abattoir Processes & Investments

Upgrading capacity for quality and competitiveness

- Protocols for modernised abattoir infrastructure & export marker readiness.
- Strengthen oversight via **RMAA** and **SAMIC** to ensure Standardised Quality - SA Beef Export Product.
- De-risked investment in export abattoir expansion is underpinned by pro-active animal health services.

Note: The likely impact of the proposed interventions on industry GPV can be modelled. This can further enable industry to realign and reprioritise industry initiatives and budget priorities over the next five years.

[1] More information per intervention would need to be co-developed to form a prioritisation timeline.

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