

Victorian Agri-Food Employment in 2021-22

July 2024



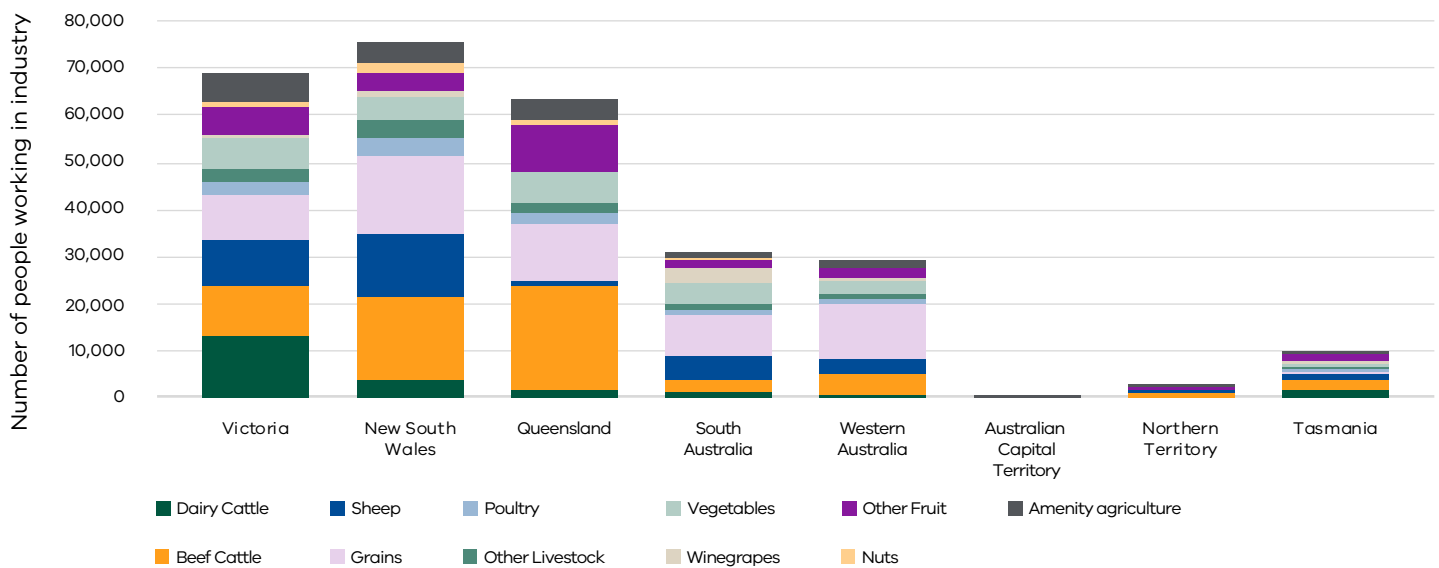
Key highlights

- Victoria's agri-food production and manufacturing industries together employed 153,840 people in 2021-22.
- This includes 68,870 people in Victoria's agriculture production industries, and 84,970 jobs in food and beverage processing in 2021-22. A further 5,260 people were employed in Agriculture Services.
- Victoria is Australia's second largest employer within agriculture (24.5 per cent of the national workforce), and its largest employer within agri-food processing (31.2 per cent).
- Victoria's largest agriculture industry by employment in 2021-22 was Dairy (13,290 people) followed by Beef (10,800) and grains (9,810).
- Production and processing across Victoria's broader Food and Fibre industries collectively employed 189,050 people in 2021-22 (this includes forestry and logging, aquaculture, fishing, trapping and hunting, as well as agriculture and agriculture services).

Victoria is Australia's second largest agriculture employer

- **Australia's second largest agriculture workforce** (24.5 per cent, after NSW on 27.0 per cent of Australian agriculture employment in 2021-22)
- **Australia's largest agri-food processing workforce** (31.2 per cent compared to NSW at 27.7 per cent in 2021-22)
- **#1 Dairy employer** (57.3 per cent of Australian dairy employment in 2021-22)
- **#1 in Amenity Horticulture** (33.8 per cent of Australian horticulture employment in 2021-22)
- **#2 in Poultry** (24.7 per cent of Australian poultry employment in 2021-22)
- **#2 in Vegetables** (25.0 per cent of Australian vegetable employment in 2021-22)
- **#2 in Fruit and Nuts** (20.6 per cent of Australian fruit and nut employment in 2021-22).

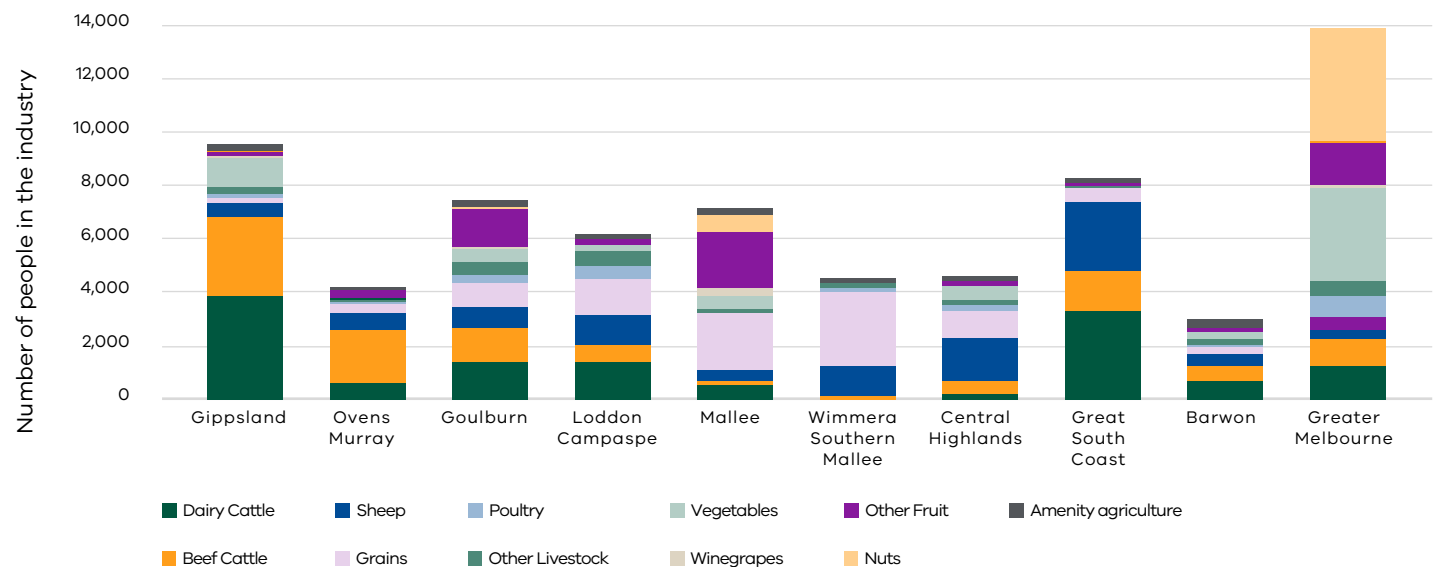
Figure 1: Agriculture employment by state and territory (2021-22)



Victoria's agriculture industries

- **Dairy:** Victoria is Australia's largest dairying state (57.3 per cent of national employment in 2021-22), and dairy has Victoria's largest agricultural workforce with 13,290 people. Dairy employment declined by 3.3 per cent per annum in the five years to 2020-21.
- **Beef:** In 2021-22, 10,800 people worked in Victoria's beef industry. This equates to 15.7 per cent of national beef industry employment, and 15.7 per cent of Victoria's total agriculture employment. Beef makes up Victoria's second largest agricultural workforce. Employment in Victoria's beef industry grew at 1.9 per cent per annum in the five years to 2020-21.
- **Grains:** has Victoria's third largest agricultural workforce at 9,810 employees (14.2 per cent of Victorian agriculture employment). Grains industry employment increased at 2.7 per cent per annum in the five years to 2020-21.
- **Sheep:** Victoria's sheep industry employed 9,500, people in 2021-22, which was 13.8 per cent of Victorian agriculture employment and 27.3 per cent of national sheep employment. The number of people who work in the Victorian sheep industry increased at 1.5 per cent per annum during the five years to 2020-21.
- **Fruit and Nuts:** employed 7,540 people in Victoria in 2021-22. Victoria has Australia's second largest Fruit and Nut workforce (20.1 per cent). Employment increased by 2.1 per cent per annum during the five years to 2020-21.
- **Vegetables:** employed 6,720 people in 2021-22. Vegetable industry employment grew at 3.2 per cent per annum in the five years to 2020-21. This was the second largest increase among Victorian agriculture industries.
- **Amenity Horticulture:** includes nurseries, floriculture and turf-growing. It employed 6,000 people in 2021-22. Employment grew at 3.9 per cent per annum in the five years to 2020-21 (the highest rate of growth in Victorian agriculture production)
- **Poultry:** 2,550 people worked in Victoria's poultry industry in 2021-22. Poultry employment grew 1.2 per cent per annum in the five years to 2020-21.
- **Other Animals:** other animal industries, such as pigs, bees, deer and goats, employed 2,660 people in Victoria in 2021-22. Overall these grew at a rate of 0.1 per cent per annum in the five years to 2020-21. Employment in bee-keeping grew by 8.0 per cent per annum, whereas employment in pig production declined 5.8 per cent (see Table 9).
- **Agriculture Services:** employed 5,260 people in 2021-22. It grew 5.8 per cent per annum during the five years to 2020-21: faster than any Victorian agriculture production industry.

Figure 2: Employment by major industry and Victorian Regional Partnership Region (2021-22)

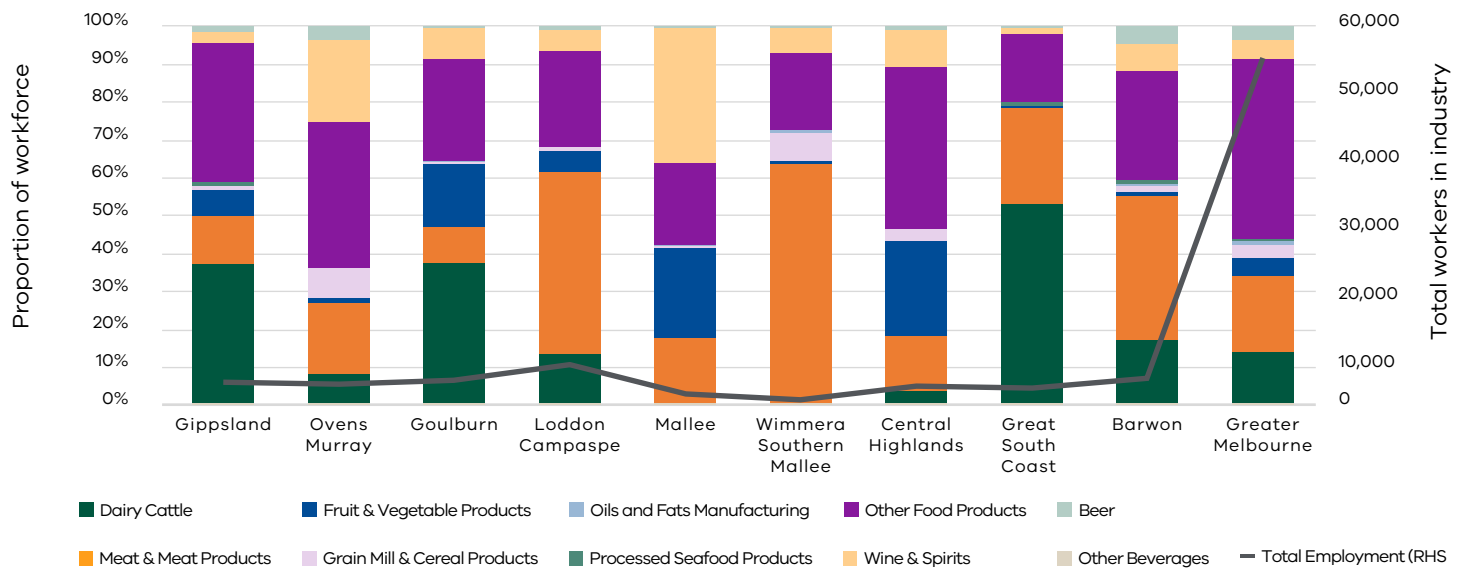


*Source: ABS 2021-22. Produced using data from the Labour Force Survey (2021-22) and Census of Population and Housing (2021). As of July 2024, 2021-22 is the latest year for which a complete set of agriculture data is available.'

Agrifood Manufacturing

- Victoria's food and drink manufacturing industries employed 84,970 people in 2021-22. Employment in Victoria's food and drink manufacturing industries was dominated by the following industries: Other Food Products (40.0 per cent; more than half of which was Bakery Products), Meat and Meat Products (21.8 per cent), Dairy (16.1 per cent) and Beverages (12.4 per cent, especially Wine and Spirits).
- Victoria's food and drink manufacturing industries grew by 2.0 per cent per annum in the five years to 2020-21. This equated to an additional 7,620 jobs. This was driven especially by growth in the processing of meat and meat products, dairy and beverages.
- Non-agricultural food and fibre processing industries contracted by 1.2 per cent per annum during this period.
- The fastest growing food and drink manufacturing industries in the five years to 2020-21 were Seafood (8.4 per cent annual growth), Oil and Fats (6.1 per cent) and Grain and Cereal Products (5.4 per cent). No food or beverage processing industries experienced decline, however Tobacco Product Manufacturing experienced a 56.0 per cent per annum decline.
- Growth in Victoria's food and beverage manufacturing industries was unevenly distributed across Victoria during the five years to 2020-21. Growth was highest in Barwon (increasing 3.9 per cent per annum), Melbourne (2.8 per cent) and Gippsland (1.2 per cent). Food and beverage processing industries experienced employment decline in Goulburn (-1.6 per cent per annum) and Loddon Campaspe (-0.5 per cent).
- While Dairy Manufacturing grew for Victoria overall (by 2.6 per cent annually), it contracted in nearly all areas outside of Melbourne and Geelong. This included Goulburn (-1.5 per cent), Loddon Campaspe (-0.8 per cent), Great South Coast (-0.7 per cent), and Ovens Murray (-0.8 per cent). Growth was concentrated most especially in Melbourne (growing 2.6 per cent per annum; 1,560 jobs over the five years), Barwon (3.5 per cent per annum, or 120 jobs) and Central Highlands (8.7 per cent per annum, or 60 jobs).

Figure 3: Size and composition of agri-food processing employment in Victoria's Regional Partnership regions (2021-22).



Recent changes in employment in Victorian agriculture and food manufacturing

- The most reliable data on recent changes in agriculture employment is from the Census of Population and Housing ('the Census'). Census data indicates that Victoria's agriculture workforce increased by 3,360 people in the five years to 2020-21, which was equal to 1.0 per cent compound annual growth.
- Amenity Horticulture was the strongest area of employment growth in Victorian agriculture between 2015-26 and 2020-21 (e.g. nurseries, which had an annual growth rate of 3.9 per cent), followed by Vegetables (growth rate of 3.2 per cent).
- Victorian Dairy industry employment declined 3.3 per cent per annum on average between 2015-16 and 2020-21.
- Employment growth in Victorian agriculture was concentrated especially in Greater Melbourne, driven by Amenity Horticulture, Vegetables and Fruit and Nuts. The next strongest growth occurred in the Central Highlands and Mallee Regional Partnership regions. Agriculture employment declined in Gippsland.
- Dairy was the only agriculture industry whose employment numbers declined statewide during this period (by 3.3 per cent per annum).

'Source: ABS 2021-22. Produced using data from the Labour Force Survey (2021-22) and Census of Population and Housing (2021). As of July 2024, 2021-22 is the latest year for which a complete set of agriculture data is available.'

Data Tables

Table 1: Employment in Victoria's food and fibre production and manufacturing industries (2021-22)

Industry	Employment in 2021-22	Imputed growth rate FY21 to FY22*	Average CAGR FY16 to FY21*	Share of AFF, 2021-22	Share of Agriculture, 2021-22	Share of AFF Manufacturing, 2021-22
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (AFF)	77,569	3.3	1.3	100.0		
Agriculture	68,871	3.3	1.0	88.0	100.0	
Dairy	13,286	3.3	-3.3		19.3	
Beef	10,799	3.3	1.9		15.7	
Sheep	9,498	3.3	1.5		13.8	
Grains	9,809	3.3	2.7		14.2	
Poultry	2,553	3.3	1.2		3.7	
Other livestock	2,664	3.3	0.1		3.9	
Fruit and Nuts	7,539	3.3	2.1		10.9	
Vegetables	6,723	3.3	3.2		9.8	
Amenity horticulture	6,001	3.3	3.9		8.7	
AFF Support Services	5,920	3.3	5.8	7.6		
Aquaculture	364	3.3	1.2	0.5		
Fishing, Hunting and Trapping	580	3.3	-3.8	0.7		
Forestry and Logging	1,834	3.3	2.0	2.4		
Food and Fibre Manufacturing	111,484	3.3	1.2			100.0
Beverages	10,506	3.3	2.5			9.4
Food Products	74,461	3.3	1.9			66.8
Pulp, Paper and Converted Paper Products	7,323	3.3	-0.3			6.6
Wood Products	9,139	3.3	-1.5			8.2
Textile, Leather, Clothing and Footwears	10,056	3.3	-1.6			9.0
Food and Fibre Production and Manufacturing	189,053	3.3	1.2			

* The most meaningful data on recent trends in the agri-food industry workforce is from the 2016 and 2021 Censuses. Statistically reliable data is not available for annual growth in agricultural employment between 2020-21 and 2021-22, due to the small sample size for Victorian agriculture in the Labour Force Survey (see Technical Notes). For growth between 2020-21 and 2021-22, this fact sheet takes a conservative approach and assumes that employment in Victoria's food and fibre production and processing industries grew at the same rate as the national workforce, as indicated by the LFS.

Table 2: State and territory by agriculture industry (employment, 2021-22)

	Victoria	New South Wales	Queensland	South Australia	Western Australia	Australian Capital Territory	Northern Territory	Tasmania	Total
Dairy Cattle	13,286	3,823	1,667	1,363	1,008	27	8	2,009	23,190
Beef Cattle	10,799	17,827	22,063	2,516	4,212	40	1,592	1,820	60,869
Sheep	9,498	13,454	1,327	5,304	3,539	85	7	1,639	34,853
Grains	9,809	16,365	12,207	8,753	11,442	15	38	363	58,993
Poultry	2,553	3,660	1,961	923	924	105	4	205	10,336
Other Livestock	2,664	4,202	2,165	1,050	1,055	57	45	247	11,486
Vegetables	6,723	4,811	6,906	4,360	2,621	10	244	1,253	26,928
Winegrapes	546	829	2	3,401	803	0	0	431	6,012
Other Fruit	6,129	4,187	9,697	1,646	2,006	27	273	1,474	25,438
Nuts	864	2,224	1,284	563	247	0	0	29	5,210
Amenity horticulture	6,001	4,387	4,071	1,072	1,460	146	140	505	17,780
Total	68,871	75,767	63,350	30,951	29,317	512	2,351	9,976	281,095

Table 3: Regional Partnership region by agriculture industry (employment, 2021-22)

	Gippsland	Ovens Murray	Goulburn Loddon Campaspe	Mallee	Wimmera Southern Mallee	Central Highlands	Great South Coast	Barwon	Greater Melbourne	Total	
Dairy Cattle	3,911	615	1,387	1,438	527	4	180	3,296	678	1,251	13,286
Beef Cattle	2,896	2,014	1,288	627	198	108	514	1,580	536	1,038	10,799
Sheep	615	616	779	1,114	331	1,121	1,550	2,549	478	344	9,498
Grains	118	319	919	1,300	2,151	2,779	1,060	492	235	436	9,809
Poultry	205	33	338	503	62	193	224	36	148	809	2,553
Other Livestock	172	118	480	604	112	114	226	37	216	585	2,664
Vegetables	1,181	79	467	180	474	30	538	68	235	3,470	6,723
Winegrapes	7	39	34	27	320	1	18	4	7	89	546
Other Fruit	165	253	1,428	227	2,106	35	130	31	115	1,639	6,129
Nuts	13	67	75	5	660	0	4	0	0	40	864
Amenity horticulture	259	82	239	187	217	126	175	144	312	4,260	6,001
Total	9,542	4,234	7,435	6,212	7,158	4,513	4,618	8,237	2,961	13,960	68,871

*Source: ABS 2021-22. Produced using data from the Labour Force Survey (2021-22) and Census of Population and Housing (2021). As of July 2024, 2021-22 is the latest year for which a complete set of agriculture data is available.

Table 4: Regional Partnership region by agri-food processing industry (employment, 2021-22)

	Gippsland	Ovens Murray	Goulburn	Loddon Campaspe	Mallee	Wimmera Southern Mallee	Central Highlands	Great South Coast	Barwon	Greater Melbourne	Total
Dairy Products	1,337	290	1,451	869	6	0	116	1,416	734	7,485	13,703
Meat Products	478	632	358	3,076	290	568	424	662	1,640	10,423	18,552
Fruit & Vegetable	237	52	653	357	396	10	756	12	37	2,482	4,992
Cereals Products	38	257	5	74	11	65	97	0	65	1,846	2,458
Oils and Fats	0	0	25	4	8	6	0	0	24	514	581
Seafood	31	0	4	0	0	0	0	31	55	231	353
Other Foods	1,325	1,306	1,034	1,589	359	183	1,285	481	1,242	25,019	33,822
Wine & Spirits	116	733	306	369	595	58	292	39	310	2,680	5,498
Beer	45	118	21	58	5	3	26	9	182	1,836	2,304
Other Beverages	10	22	13	36	15	34	23	4	23	2,524	2,704
Total	3,617	3,410	3,870	6,432	1,685	927	3,019	2,654	4,312	55,040	84,967

Technical Notes

- This fact sheet reports ABS data from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and Census of Population and Housing ('the Census').
- In order to reduce statistical volatility in the LFS data, the LFS has been used to determine the size of Australia's national workforce, while the Census has been used to determine the structure of this workforce (by industry and region).
- This approach has been endorsed by the Agriculture Workforce team of the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES).