

NEW ZEALAND'S SECOND LARGEST GOODS EXPORT SECTOR

RED MEAT SECTOR TRADE SUMMARY

The red meat industry is New Zealand's second largest goods exporter, with exports of **\$10.87 billion in 2024/25**, generating **14 percent** of New Zealand's export revenue for the year.

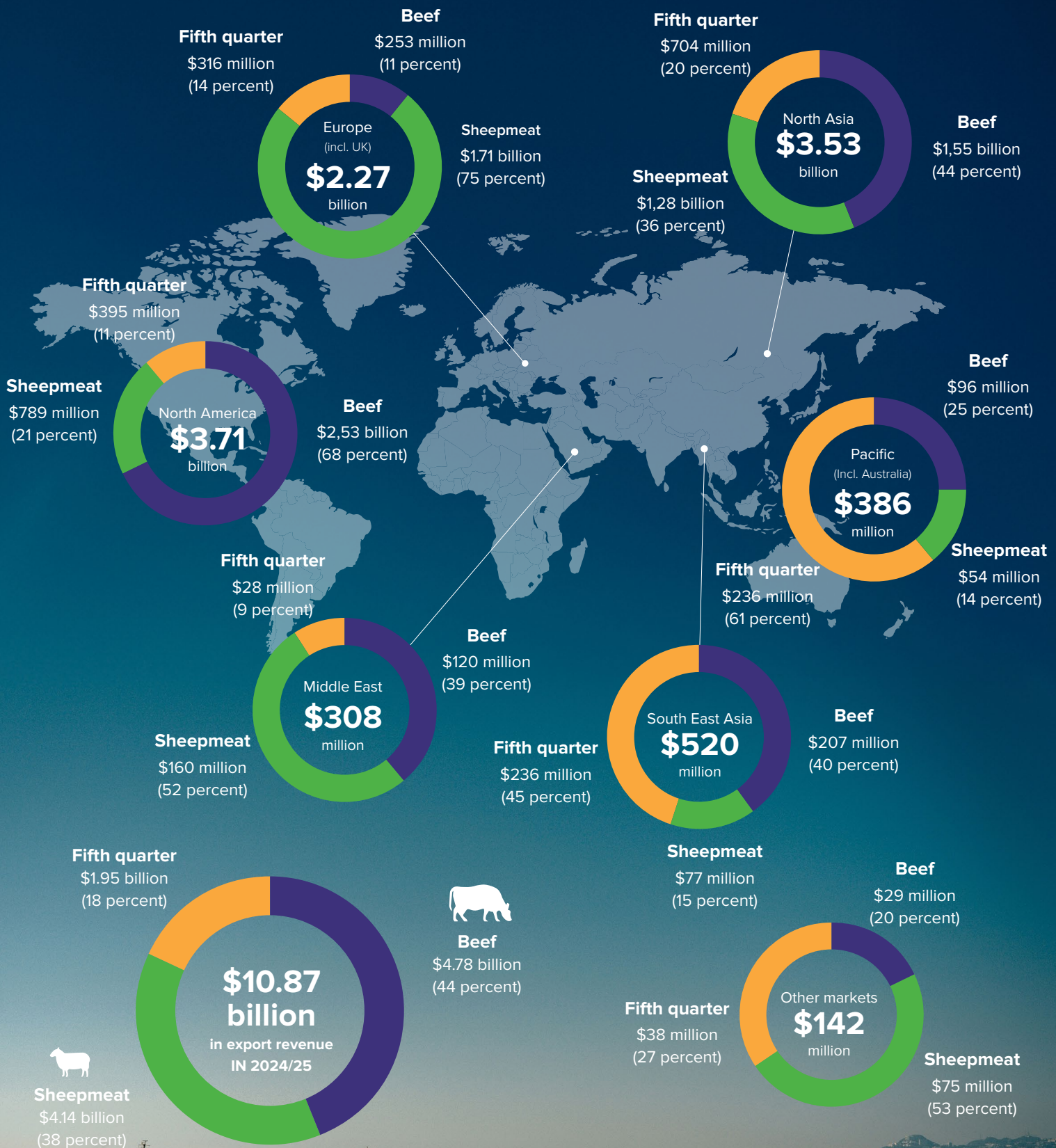
The United States (US) was the meat industry's largest market for the year, with exports worth \$3.15 billion, an increase of 19 percent from the previous year. Conditions remained difficult in the industry's second largest market, China, where exports were down 12 percent to \$2.51 billion, and it was a similar story in other North Asian markets, such as Japan and Taiwan.

The drop in exports to North Asia was offset by good growth in exports to most other major markets. Exports to the European Union (EU) were up 31 percent to \$1.55 billion, and there was further recovery in exports to the United Kingdom (UK) from the low levels of 2023, with exports up 46 percent for the year reaching \$667 million.

The increase in overall export value was driven by strong global prices, as the volume of both beef and sheepmeat exports was down on the previous year. This reflected lower domestic production, particularly in the second quarter of 2025.



Major exporter to 123 markets around the world



The red meat sector is built on trade

The red meat sector is export-focused and driven by global supply and demand, with more than 90 percent of production exported in 2024/25.

The sector exported to 123 markets in 2024/25. The ability to export to so many markets is helped by New Zealand’s network of free trade agreements and preferential quotas negotiated through the WTO.

Approximately 80 percent of the sector’s trade enjoys preferential treatment through an FTA or WTO quota, which provide tariff savings of around \$650 million annually for the sector.



Top 10 overall red meat and co-product markets by value, 12 months ended 30 June 2025

Market	Value (NZ\$m)	Annual change
United States	\$3,148m	19 percent
China	\$2,517m	-12 percent
European Union	\$1,547m	31 percent
United Kingdom	\$667m	46 percent
Canada	\$564m	55 percent
Japan	\$435m	-11 percent
Taiwan	\$274m	-4 percent
Korea	\$229m	8 percent
Australia	\$214m	14 percent
Indonesia	\$149m	-4 percent

Regional exports (NZ\$m) 2024/25

	Beef	Sheep-meat	Fifth quarter	Total
North America	\$2,528m	\$789m	\$395m	\$3,712m
North Asia	\$1,545m	\$1,278m	\$704m	\$3,527m
Europe (including UK)	\$253m	\$1,705m	\$316m	\$2,274m
South East Asia	\$207m	\$77m	\$236m	\$520m
Pacific (Incl Australia)	\$96m	\$54m	\$236m	\$386m
Middle East	\$120m	\$160m	\$28m	\$308m
Other regions	\$29m	\$75m	\$38m	\$142m
Total	\$4,778m	\$4,138m	\$1,953m	\$10,869m



Value-added production and exports

Historically, the red meat exports largely consisted of frozen carcasses to the UK and Europe and frozen boneless beef to North America. However, nearly all meat is now processed into a wide range of cuts before being exported.

High value chilled cuts make up a significant proportion of exports. While chilled meat made up 9 percent of exports by volume in 2024/25, they accounted for 16 percent of exports by value, and were worth just under \$1.5 billion.

In 1989/90

**35 percent of meat exports
were in carcass form**



In 2024/25

**only 4 percent of meat exports
were in carcass form**



Barriers to Trade

Tariffs

Agriculture is often politically sensitive, and international trade in agricultural products tends to be highly protected. Despite the network of FTAs in place, New Zealand exports of red meat incurred tariff costs of approximately **\$150 million** in 2024/25.

More detailed information about the sector's tariff costs is available in the [Barriers to International Trade report](#), which provides a comprehensive overview of tariff costs and non-tariff barriers that impact the industry.

Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs)

As tariffs have dropped, Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs) have become one of the most significant challenges for the red meat sector. NTBs impose significant costs in production and administration, as well as causing delays and commercial uncertainty.

Recent research by Sense Partners estimates that NTBs impose a \$1.5 billion cost on New Zealand meat exporters each year.

