

ONLINE ARTICLE

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Author:	Stephen Stockwell
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The Dareen is docked at Port Hedland's port, loading 6,000 head of cattle bound for the middle east. (Stephen Stockwell)

The first live export boat to leave the Western Australian town of Port Hedland in three years sailed at around 5am on Saturday morning.

Six-thousand head of cattle bound for the Middle East were loaded onto a Livestock Shipping Services (LSS) vessel to make up the first shipment from the Pilbara since October 2009.

Paul Keenan, live export manager for LSS, says despite the difficulty filling this latest order he is keen to return.

"We've had a bit of trouble sourcing the cattle but we had four or five major suppliers to LSS who have supported us, so we're very grateful for those pastoralists helping us out, and we'll be looking at bringing more ships back here in the future."

Jon Jiles, port-side operations manager for the Port Hedland Port Authority, says this vessel is a bit larger than the cattle boats the port became used to.

"Historically we have handled larger ones but certainly in 2009 it was around 1,000 to 2,000 head."

Georgia Williams, manager of the Port Hedland Export Depot, is glad to see boats returning to the Pilbara.

"It's exciting to see that the industry is getting up again, there's some support from the pastoralists and exporters are showing a bit of interest.

"Hopefully we can fit another one or two (boats) in before the end of the season."



Cattle are trucked into Port Hedland's port | Photographer: | Stephen Stockwell



Cattle trucks waiting to be unloaded onto livestock vessel, the Dareen. | Photographer: | Stephen Stockwell



Cattle being loaded on the Dareen while it's docked at Port Hedland | Photographer: | Stephen Stockwell



Cattle in the Port Hedland Export Depot | Photographer: | Stephen Stockwell