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Australia's grains and lentils trade flourished in the Q1 2023

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The Australian Bureau of Statistics reports that Australia exported 53,448 tonnes of chickpeas and 168,650 tonnes of lentils in March. The Australian export of lentils is at a record pace, with 733,879t exported in the six months to 31 March 2023 compared to 402,607t in the same period in 2022-23.

Similarly, according to the latest Australian Bureau of Statistics data, Australia exported 3,785,436 tonnes of wheat and durum in March, up 25 percent from 3,038,804 tonnes shipped in February. It is believed that the figure sets a monthly record for wheat exports from Australia.

Viterra chief operations officer James Murray said " the huge shipping month surpassed the previous record set in May 2011 by more than 20,000t. After a record breaking harvest, weâ??re extremely pleased to be utilising our efficient and effective network to send our grower customersâ?? grain around the world on behalf of 19 exporters and helping maximise value with strong early season shipmentsâ?•.

According to trade sources, two mobile shiploaders used primarily by JK International in Semaphore and Cargill across the river at Port Adelaide, as well as Riordan Grain Services' units operating in Portland and Geelong in Victoria, have allowed shipping capacity to increase.

With almost 1 million tonnes loaded on to vessels across Viterra's six South Australian port terminals, March was Viterra's largest ever month of shipping. Additionally, Viterra's Outer Harbor terminal loaded more panamaxes of wheat and barley in March than any other month in its history.

A monthly record was broken for Outer Harbor by loading over 290,000t in March. Chickpea shipments were down 32 percent from 78,213t in February, while lentil shipments were down 14 percent from 196,224t. On chickpeas, the United States on 15,787t appears as the surprise major market, followed by Bangladesh on 11,752t and the United Arab Emirates on 10,435t.

Among containerised exports, China and Vietnam accounted for 96,070t and 80,458t, respectively, with Thailand taking third place with 34,495t. A total of 314,857 tonnes of wheat were containerised in March, an increase of 40 percent from February, with the China figure accounting for 39,334 tonnes. Containerised shipments to The Philippines, Taiwan and Thailand also jumped by more than 50pc.

Prior to the UK-Australia Free Trade Agreement taking effect, containerised wheat exports almost tripled in March to 3957t, up from 1370t in February. With 1,038,798t shipped in February, bulk Australian wheat exports to China were up 59 percent over February's 651,788t.

The second-biggest market for bulk Australian wheat exported in March was Indonesia on 317,148t, followed by Vietnam on 306,172t. Thailand on 291,947t, The Philippines on 290,126t and South Korea on 280,092t were also major volume buyers. Bulk export figures include the two biggest durum cargoes for the current marketing year, with 21,838t heading to Italy and 31,500t bound for Spain.