



















Farm Pigs

Did you know?

-  That pigs do not sweat and need to roll in mud to keep cool.
-  That pigs squeal so loudly they can hurt your ears! They can reach 115 decibels.
-  That pigs cannot lift their heads to look up at the sky, instead, they must turn their heads on one side so that the eye points upwards.
-  Pigs have a curly tail but when they are unhappy or not well, it goes straight.
-  Sows, or mother pigs, build huge nests to have their piglets in.
-  It is said that pigs are as intelligent as a three year old child.
-  Pigs can grow to a very large size, around 300 kilos.
-  Pigs can swim.
-  Young pigs love to run and play and chase each other around the paddock.
-  A sow is pregnant for 3 months, 3 weeks & 3 days.

Terms used to describe pigs and pig farming

-  Sow – a mother pig
-  Boar – a mature male pig kept for breeding
-  Gilt – a young female pig that has not had piglets yet
-  Barrow – a castrated male pig
-  Weaner – piglets that have just been weaned and separated from their mother
-  Grower – pigs being grown for pork that weigh between 30 and 60 kilos
-  Farrowing – when the sow gives birth to piglets
-  Herd – a group of pigs

Production Systems



Most pigs in Australia are produced indoors. This method is called **intensive farming**. Under this system, large numbers of pigs are kept in sheds in pens with floors that are a combination of cement and slats. Farrowing crates and sow stalls are used by intensive pig producers.

A small percentage of pig farmers are growing pigs outdoors in a more natural environment. **Bred free range** describes sows that live outside, their piglets however, grow up inside sheds and do not get to go outside.

On a **free range farm**, the pigs are free to roam in paddocks just like other farm animals do.

Australia produces approximately 5 million pigs for market each year.



Natural Behaviour of Pigs

Pigs are actually very clean animals. They do cover themselves in mud to keep cool and to keep off biting insects so they look dirty some times. They do not eat muck and mess in their food unless they are forced to because of the way the farmer keeps them.



When sows are allowed to roam freely, they will build large nests to give birth in. Depending on what materials are available to them in the paddock, they will carry straw, long grass and sticks to their chosen site, much like a bird does! They dig out a shallow hole and fill it with straw or grass and then build up the sides with grass and sticks to help keep their newborns from straying. Usually the sow will give birth well away from the rest of the herd but will bring her young to join them when they are around a week or two old.



Pigs don't just oink! They bark, grunt, trumpet, grumble and hum. They are capable of many vocalizations and when you spend a lot of time around them, you actually learn to understand what a few mean. Pigs are very good at communicating with each other.



Pigs are omnivores which means, that just like humans, they eat meat and vegetables. In the wild, pigs will eat grass and plants, farmers crops, dead animals and they will also catch and eat small animals like rats, lizards and birds. Farmed pigs are fed a diet of mostly grains, (wheat, barley, sorghum and corn) as well as meat and fish meal. Pig nutrition is very complex and although people sometimes think a pig will just eat anything, their diet has to be carefully managed so that they grow into marketable pigs.



Pig Breeds



Pigs come in many colours, some with prick ears, and some with very large floppy ears. The main breeds used in commercial farming are the Large White, Landrace and Duroc.

Other common breeds include the Hampshire, Berkshire and Tamworth.

Some pigs are now classed as rare and those that live in Australia include the English Large Black (or Cornish Black) and the Wessex Saddleback.



What Do Pigs Provide Us With?

Pork, ham, bacon, sausage and smallgoods like salami. Nearly every part of the pig is used to produce food or used to make cosmetics, glue or medicines.



Ham comes from the hind legs or the shoulders (picnic ham)

Bacon comes from the middle of the pig or the loin. Bacon is cured and smoked to give it that special flavor.



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