

Fact Sheet - Cows

TERMS

Bull, Steer (male)

Cow, Heifer (female)

Calf (calf)

HISTORY

2 bulls and 7 cows arrived in Australia in 1788 with Captain Phillip after almost 12 months at sea

In 1987 there were 1,697,000 Dairy cows in Australia producing 6,176 million litres of milk

- * WA produces 4% of Australia's milk
- * A cow produces 5 times more milk than a calf needs
- * Cows can drink 100L of water a day
- * Cows have large ears which turn in almost any direction so they can sense danger

PRODUCING MILK

- * It takes 60 hours to turn grass into milk
- * Cows are ruminants, which means they have 4 stomachs. Each one contributes to the digestive process
 1. **Rumen:** grass is swallowed, half chewed into the Rumen, which is the largest stomach (it can hold 100L). Softened by fluids the moves into the 2nd stomach
 2. **Reticulum:** grass forms into a ball called a cud. This is moved back to the cows mouth where it is rechewed, swallowed again and goes back to the Rumen. When it is well chewed it goes to the third stomach
 3. **Omasum:** food is pressed and broken up and moves into the 4th stomach
 4. **Abomasum:** grass is digested then passes through the intestines where the cow takes out what she needs to stay healthy .. the rest goes to the udder the cows milk factory.
- * Cows produce between 20 – 70 litres of milk per day. To make 1L a cow eats 5 kg of hay and drinks 2L of water

Dairy Breeds, (in Australia):-

Hostein- Fresian, Illawarra, Jersey, Guernsy, Dairy Shorthorn Ayrshire and Fresian, Limousin

Beef Breeds, (in Australia):-

Aberdeen Angus, Brahman, Charolais, Shorthorn and Simmental, Murray Grey

- * grass eaters with 4 stomachs
- * First cream separator used in 1881, refrigeration invented in the 1880's and pasteurization was first used in New South Wales in 1889
- * 400,000 cattle hides produced annually in Western Australia
- * Exports from WA are exceed \$60 million. WA produce 1.8 million beef cattle which is exported to US, Canada, Japan, Malaysia, Taiwan, and Indonesia
- * WA is the largest exporter of live animals in the world. More than 270,000 cattle valued at \$143 million were exported live in 1999 – 2000. Egypt was the dominant export market taking 40%.

BY PRODUCTS:-

- * Cattle hides are used to produce clothing, upholstery, shoes and a number of leather goods. 400,000 are produced in WA annually and most are exported.
- * Fats for industrial oils, glycerin, animal feed, human food products
- * Bones for animal feed, crockery, fertilizer, steel hardener
- * Offal for pharmaceuticals, animal feed, human food products
- * Intestines for smallgoods
- * Meat meal for pet food, aquaculture feed, poultry feed, fertilizers
- * Blood for animal feed, human products
- * Milk also has by products including plastic, glue, fertilizers, medicines, bath salts and skin creams

FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE:-

- * highly contagious viral disease of cloven-hoofed animals such as cattle, sheep, goats and pigs. It does not have a high mortality rate in infected animals but is feared for the severe losses in productivity and loss of export markets.
- * widespread in South-East Asia, South America, Africa, Middle East, Asia and most recently in Europe. It has not occurred for more than 120 years in Australia.

