

# ***Fact Sheet:- Pigs***

## **TERMS:**

***boar*** (male, any age), ( long front tooth on each side called a *Tusk*)  
***barren*** (a male whose reproductive organs have been removed),  
***sow*** (adult female pig ),  
***gilt*** (less than 1 year old)  
***piglet*** (baby pig)  
***farrow of piglets*** (farrowing means when the sow is giving birth)  
***litter*** (a group of piglets from one sow)  
***herd of pigs, team or a drift***, (a group of pigs)  
***drove of pigs*** ( when a group of pigs are being moved)

## **Features**

### **INTERESTING FACTS:-**

- ♣ In Australia, pig production is worth over \$690 million annually at the farm gate.
- ♣ *Pigs show dominance by barking or swiping their heads and charging. They have three layers of skin on their shoulders.*
- ♣ Pigs cannot sweat, can burn easily and suffer heat stroke. To cool their body temperature, they wallow or roll in mud, this also protects them from insects
- ♣ *Pigs have been placed fourth on the intelligence list behind humans, primates, dolphins/whales.*
- ♣ Pigs enjoy rooting with their snouts and by doing this they obtain, food, vitamins and minerals from the soil
- ♣ *Do pigs have hair? Yes, and it is very bristly*
- ♣ *Pigs are born with a curly tail which is trimmed to prevent other piglets chewing the tail!*
- ♣ *Life span is between 10-15 years*
- ♣ Gestation time is about 4 months
- ♣ *A sow will have 2 litters a year and can have 8-12 piglets (sometimes more!)*
- ♣ A new born piglet body weight is made up of 75 % water.
- ♣ *Feeding accounts for 70 per cent of the cost of pig meat production.*
- ♣ It takes 5.5kg feed to produce 1kg of meat.

### **BREEDS:-**

- ♣ There are 73 different breeds of pig ([www.ansi.okstate.edu/breeds/swine/](http://www.ansi.okstate.edu/breeds/swine/))
- ♣ In Australia the main breeds are Large White, Landrace, Duroc and Hampshire
- ♣ Other breeds are Tamworth, Wessex Sandleback, Berkshire

## **HISTORY:-**

The first pigs arrived in Australia with the settlers in 1788. The Ancient Egyptians used pigs to seed their corn - their hoofs made an imprint in the ground of just the right depth at which wheat should be sown. They have also been used for rounding up cattle, retrieving game, and digging for truffles (a fungus delicacy which grows 30-60cm below ground.).

## **PIG BY PRODUCTS:-**

- \* *Intestines* used for sausage skins,
- \* *blood* used for fertilizer,
- \* *fat* made into lard, soap, candles, explosives and lubricative oils,
- \* *bones* are ground into glue, fertilizer, animal foods and bone oil.
- \* *heart* valves used in human heart operations to replace damaged valves in humans
- \* *gall* is used in production of cosmetics.

## **EVERY PART OF THE PIG IS UTILIZED!**

## **OTHER BY- PRODUCTS INCLUDE:-**

Heart valves, Plasmin, Estrogens, Chalk, Porcelain Enamel, Artist Brushes, Fibre Softeners, Plywood Adhesive, Glass, Water-Proofing Agents, Insulin, Porcine Burne Dressing, Prypsin, Gelatin, Fabric Printing and Dyeing, Water Filters, Plastics, Floor Waxes, Buttons, Upholstery, Cement.

## **PIG MEATS INCLUDE:-**

Pork, Ham, Spareribs, Roasts, Bacon, Sausages

## **POTBELLIED or MINIATURE PIGS:-**

In America since the 90s, miniature or pot-bellied pigs have become the latest throw-away pet and pig havens have been set up to care for dumped animals. The reason so many are being dumped is because they become aggressive. Research by PIGS, a Sanctuary, has found that they become aggressive because the pet pig has not been socialized with other pigs and in some cases even allowed outside.

Pigs are a herd animal and have a pecking order. If they are raised unnaturally, these instincts are played out on the family dog and members of the household.

There are no true miniature or pot-bellied pigs in Australia, although some breeders have produced smaller pigs which they call Miniature. A pot-bellied pig weighs 90-100kg and has a lifespan of 15 years..