

Cattle and sheep farming fast facts

- Would you believe that there are around 22.3 million head of cattle (not including dairy cows) and 67.5 million head of sheep in Australia? That's about four animals for every person living in Australia.
- Cattle and sheep farmers lead very busy lives. Their jobs include:
 - breeding and raising animals
 - making sure the animals are healthy and content
 - providing pastures and fodder (feed) so the animals eat good quality nutritious food
 - organising and conducting general farm jobs such as maintaining pens and fences, controlling pests and weeds, looking after pastures, checking water supply systems and much more
 - organising the sale and transport of their stock
 - keeping an eye on the economic market and their finances so they can run their farm efficiently and sell their livestock for a good price
 - training and looking after the staff who work on their farm.



Wow, what a complex job!

- Australian livestock farmers don't just produce yummy, nutritious beef, lamb and goatmeats for Australians, a lot of our meat is exported to countries overseas. In July 2017 alone, Australia exported over 93 million kilograms of meat around the world.
- Beef is produced in every state and territory in Australia, but Queensland takes the prize with about 50% of the national herd of cattle located there.
- There are about 50 breeds of cattle in Australia, but did you know that you can't just breed any type of cattle in any area? Some cattle thrive in the warm tropical areas in the north of Australia and others prefer the cooler, more temperate climate in the south.
- Many families with children live on remote cattle and sheep farms in Australia. These farms are often a long way from towns and cities, so the children don't go to school. They use distance education or school of the air. Lessons are sent to children and they communicate with their teachers via the internet or radios. Some children might even have a live-in tutor who becomes part of the family.

- Did you know that cows, sheep and goats are all ruminants? This means they chew cud and have a digestive system that includes four stomachs called the rumen, the reticulum, the omasum and the abomasum.
- Goatmeat is the most widely eaten meat in the world, but we don't yet eat a lot of it in Australia. Amazingly, we are the largest exporter of goatmeat, supplying countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei and the United States.
- It is not just farmers who work in the cattle and sheep industry. There are farmhands, processing plant staff, butchers, truck drivers, accountants, vets, scientists, agronomists, researchers, stock and station agents and more. That's a lot of jobs!
- Red meat contains 13 essential nutrients required for good health and growing bodies, including iron, zinc, protein, omega-3, vitamins B2, B3, B5, B6 and B12, vitamin D, selenium, magnesium and phosphorous. Nutritionists say to include 130 grams of lean red meat 3-4 times a week as part of a balanced, healthy diet.

Livestock laughs

- What kind of cattle giggle?
Laughing stock.
- Why did the cow stop running?
Because she had sore calves.
- What's the easiest way to count a herd of cows?
With a 'cow-culator'.
- What do you get if you cross an angry sheep and a moody cow?
An animal in a baaaaad mood.
- What do you call a sheep that is always quiet?
A shhhheep.
- What do you call a lamb covered in chocolate?
A chocolate baaal!

