

Pig breeds in Australia

Introduction

There are 8 pure breeds of pig remaining in Australia. Three are common in commercial pork production – Landrace, Large White and Duroc.

The remaining five breeds tend to be used by outdoor producers. Their popularity varies according to their commercial value – Tamworth, Wessex Saddleback, Hampshire, Berkshire and Large Black. Some of these breeds are quite rare.

All the breeds were originally imported into Australia. However for biosecurity reasons there are no imports of live pigs or pig semen permitted into Australia today.

Landrace

This breed was originally developed in Denmark. Landrace pigs were imported into Australia from 1959 until 1973. Most came via New Zealand and Great Britain.

Landrace have white skin, no black hairs and lop ears; popular for commercial pork production.



Figure 1: Landrace gilt.

Large White

This breed was originally developed in England in the late 1700s. It is popular in all major pork producing countries around the world.

Large White pigs have white skin, no black hair and erect ears. They are commonly crossed with the Landrace and this cross is used as the maternal line in commercial herds.



Figure 2: Large White gilt.

Duroc

The Duroc originated in the United States. Duroc lines currently in Australia were imported in 1981 from Canada and New Zealand.

The Duroc are red-brown colour pigs with small lop ears. It is used in cross breeding programs as a terminal sire when crossed with Large White/ Landrace cross sows. The Duroc is not a good maternal sire.



Figure 3: Duroc boar.

Tamworth

This breed would be the least 'improved' of all breeds of British origin within Australia. They are a red breed with erect ears. They are hardy and suited to outdoor production. Tamworth sows make excellent mothers but progeny are slow growing compared to other breeds.

Figure 4: Tamworth sow and piglets.



Wessex Saddleback

This breed was very popular in Australia for many years because of their docile nature, excellent mothering ability and their ability to forage. They are black pigs with a white saddle over the shoulder; and lop ears. Today they are quite rare.

Figure 5: Wessex Saddleback boar.



Hampshire

The Hampshire is an American breed. It has been used as a terminal sire in cross breeding programs overseas and is valued for quality carcass pigs. They are black pigs with white saddle in the shoulder area and erect ears.

Figure 6: Hampshire gilt.



Berkshire

The Berkshire is popular with outdoor producers and could be said to be experiencing resurgence in popularity. They are a black pig with white on the face legs and tail tip. They are docile and hardy animals.

Figure 7: Berkshire gilt soon to farrow.

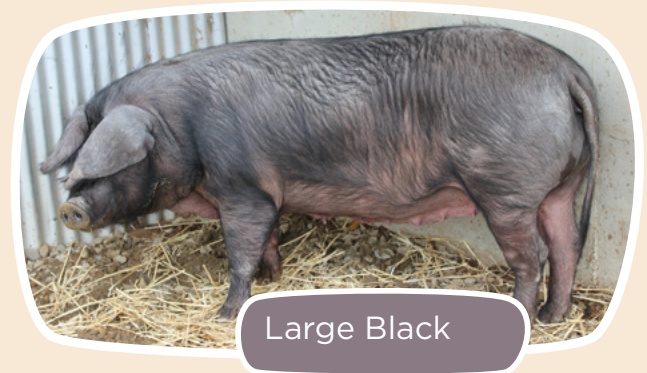


Large Black

This breed also originated in England. They are now quite rare as a pure breed. They are a black pig with lop ears.

Large Black pigs tend to get very fat so are more often crossed with other breeds for pork production.

Figure 8: Large Black gilt.



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