MELBOURNE ROYAL SHOW 2026

FUN ANIMAL FACTS

# COWS

1. Cows have super-duper side vision, allowing them to see almost all the way around them without turning their heads.
2. Cows can have best friends and experience emotions like happiness, excitement, nervousness and sadness.
3. Cows have amazing noses and can smell things from up to 10 kilometres away.
4. Every cow has a unique nose print, just like every person has their own fingerprint.
5. Cows are curious explorers and love investigating new things in their environment.
6. Cows have four stomach compartments that help them turn grass and plants into energy.
7. Baby calves are quick learners, often standing and walking within just a few hours of being born.
8. Cows have their own way of talking, using moos, body language and facial expressions to communicate.
9. Some cows are giant-sized, weighing more than 1,000 kilograms.
10. Cows are champion grass munchers, taking tens of thousands of bites of grass every day.

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FUN ANIMAL FACTS

# SHEEP

1. Hampshire Downs are the feature sheep breed of the 2026 Melbourne Royal Sheep Competition, known for their dark faces and legs, bright white wool, and long history in Victoria dating back to the 1860s.
2. Sheep can be their own doctors, sometimes choosing specific plants to help prevent or treat illness.
3. Sheep have impressive memories, recognising up to 50 other sheep faces and remembering them for as long as two years.
4. Sheep experience a range of emotions, including empathy, boredom and even optimism.
5. Sheep make strong friendships and prefer to stay close to their flock mates, often becoming stressed when separated.
6. Sheep can learn their names and respond when called, especially if they spend lots of time around people.
7. Young lambs love to frolic, racing around, bouncing and jumping as they play.
8. Wool sheep need regular haircuts, as they don't naturally shed enough wool on their own.
9. Sheep come in many colours, including white, black, brown, grey and even spotted patterns.
10. Sheep are champion nappers, usually sleeping for around four hours a day in lots of short snoozes.

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FUN ANIMAL FACTS

# DOGS

1. 242 purebred dog breeds are recognised in Australia, with Labradors, Border Collies and Samoyeds among the most popular at the Melbourne Royal Show.
2. Dogs communicate through their tails, ears and facial expressions.
3. Action Dogs are trained athletes that tackle jumps, climbs and obstacle courses.
4. Toy Dogs may be small, but they excel in agility, obedience and tricks.
5. Terriers are known for being brave, energetic and determined.
6. Hounds are famous for their howls, and Greyhounds can exceed 70 km/h.
7. Gundogs are intelligent, friendly dogs often chosen for assistance and therapy work.
8. Working Dogs herd livestock, guard property and help people. Kelpies can run over 50 km a day.
9. Utility Dogs include Boxers, Schnauzers, Akitas and Shiba Inus. The Shiba Inu is Japan's national dog.
10. Non-Sporting Dogs are a diverse group including Poodles, French Bulldogs, Chow Chows and Dalmatians. Chow Chows are famous for their distinctive blue-black tongues.

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FUN ANIMAL FACTS

# HORSES

1. The Garryowen is one of Australia's most prestigious equestrienne competitions and has been a Melbourne Royal Show highlight for more than 80 years.
2. Brumbies are Australia's iconic wild horses, adapted to survive in harsh environments from the Alps to the outback.
3. Horses arrived in Australia with the First Fleet in 1788 and have played an important role ever since.
4. Australian Stock Horses are renowned for cattle work, campdrafting and endurance riding.
5. Horses can sleep both standing up and lying down, helping them stay alert in the wild.
6. Horses have excellent hearing, with ears that rotate independently to detect sounds from different directions.
7. Horses have helped shape Australia's history through farming, transport, exploration and military service.
8. Showjumping horses are remarkable athletes, with some clearing jumps over 1.6 metres high.
9. Heavy Horses are gentle giants, bred to pull heavy loads and among the world's largest horse breeds.
10. Horses recognise people they know and trust, and grooming helps strengthen the bond with their handlers.

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FUN ANIMAL FACTS

# CHICKENS

1. Show chickens need plenty of pampering before competition, including having their feathers cleaned, nails trimmed and combs polished.
2. A chicken's comb and wattles act like a natural cooling system, helping it stay comfortable in warm weather.
3. Chickens are great communicators, using more than 20 different sounds and calls to share information with their flock.
4. Chickens love taking dust baths, which help keep their feathers clean and free from unwanted pests.
5. Hens can lay eggs in a rainbow of colours, including white, brown, blue and green.
6. Chickens are curious explorers and enjoy scratching through the ground looking for seeds, insects and tasty treats.
7. Chickens live by a social ranking known as the pecking order, which helps keep their flock organised.
8. Chickens are surprisingly quick runners, reaching speeds of up to 14 km/h.

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FUN ANIMAL FACTS

# ALPACAS

1. Alpacas come in just two breeds, Huacaya and Suri, with Huacayas known for their fluffy fleece and Suris recognised for their long, silky fibre.
2. Alpacas have a unique smile because they do not have any top front teeth.
3. Alpaca mums have one of the longest pregnancies among farm animals, carrying their babies for around 11.5 months.
4. Australia is home to one of the largest alpaca populations outside of South America.
5. Alpacas can be excellent livestock guardians and are often used to help protect sheep from foxes and other predators.
6. Alpaca fleece is a luxury fibre, used to make soft scarves, jumpers, blankets and other cosy products.
7. Alpacas are gentle on the environment, with soft padded feet that cause very little damage to pastures.
8. Alpacas are tidy grazers, gently nibbling grass rather than pulling it out by the roots.
9. Baby alpacas are called crias and can be standing and walking within hours of being born.
10. Alpacas come in an amazing range of natural colours, including white, black, brown, grey and fawn.