



Fact Sheet

SOME 'MOO'ING FACTS ABOUT COWS

Holy cow! Don't have a cow, man. The cow jumped over the moon. When it comes to cows, a lot of funny things have been said; however, this common creature is quite complex. Found in almost every country, cows produce more than 90 per cent of the world population's dairy needs. So special is this beautiful bovine, that some countries consider the animal sacred. So next time you see a cow in the pasture, remember a few of these 'moo'ing facts.

1. Dairy cattle produce the milk we drink, where as beef cattle provide us with meat.
2. Dairy cattle have a very bony frame, where as beef cattle are fuller and more muscular.
3. Common types of dairy cattle in Canada include: Holstein, Brown Swiss, Jersey, Guernsey, Ayrshire and Milking Shorthorn.
4. Common types of beef cattle in Canada include: Angus, Charolais, Hereford, Highland and Limousin.
5. Until recently, dairy farmers thought cows looked their best in the show ring just after they had given birth. As a result, cows' delivery dates were planned to coincide with The Royal – resulting in numerous Royal births.
6. A cow produces around 200,000 glasses of milk in her lifetime.
7. Today, virtually all dairy cattle in Canada are mated artificially, as it is much easier to deal with a vile of sperm than an actual bull!
8. In Holstein competitions, such as the one at The Royal, cows line up for judging and may look identical, but miniscule variations in their bone structure and fleshing can mean thousands of dollars worth of difference in the value of the winner.
9. In 2009, cattle became the first livestock animal to have its genome mapped after six years of research. The bovine genome has the potential to improve dairy and meat products and enhance food safety as well as help researchers learn more about the human genome and develop new strategies in the battle against disease.
10. An intact (not castrated) adult male is called a bull. A castrated male is called a steer.
11. An adult female who has had a calf is called a cow. A young female before she has had a calf of her own is called a heifer.

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12. The adjective applying to cattle in general is bovine.
13. The “mooing” sound a cow makes is actually called lowing. Other sounds made by cows include calves bawling, and bulls bellowing.
14. Cows do not bite grass; rather they curl their tongue around it.
15. Cows have one stomach with four compartments. With this, they have a digestive system that allows use of otherwise indigestible foods by repeatedly regurgitating and rechewing them as “cud”.
16. Per day, a cow spends six hours eating and eight hours chewing cud.
17. An average cow produces 30 lbs of urine and 65 lbs pounds of feces daily.
18. A cow can climb up the stairs, but cannot climb down. This is because her knees cannot bend properly.
19. In some countries, cows are considered sacred. In fact, in India, old cows are cared for in their own nursing homes.
20. A common misconception is that bulls are enraged by the colour red. This is incorrect as cattle are red-green colour-blind. This myth arose with bull fighting, when the bullfighter would wave a red flag. It is not the colour of the cape that angers the bull, but rather the movement of the fabric that irritates the bull and incites it to charge.

Learn more about cows and other farm animals at The Royal this November!

For more information visit www.royalfair.org – November 6-15, 2009

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