



**Leaving Cert Agricultural  
Science**

**Free Notes**

**Animal Production - Pig**



**Animal Production**  
**Topic: Pig Production:**

**Important terms:**

**Sow:** Mature female pig

**Boar:** mature male pig

**Bonham:** baby pig (piglet)

**Weaner** (Bonham) one month old – no longer suckling its mother

**Fattener/Finisher** – young fattened pig ready for slaughter

**Gilt** – female pig that hasn't had her first litter.

**Farrowing** – term for giving birth

**Dam** – female parent of animal

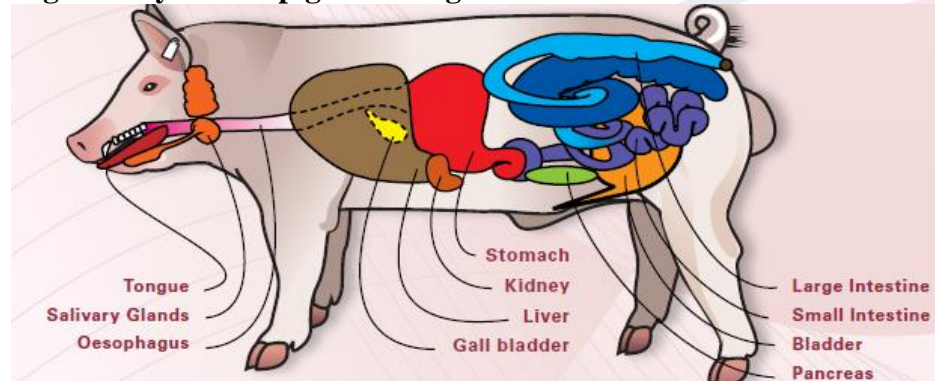
**Sire** – male parent

**Dental Formula:**

**3143**

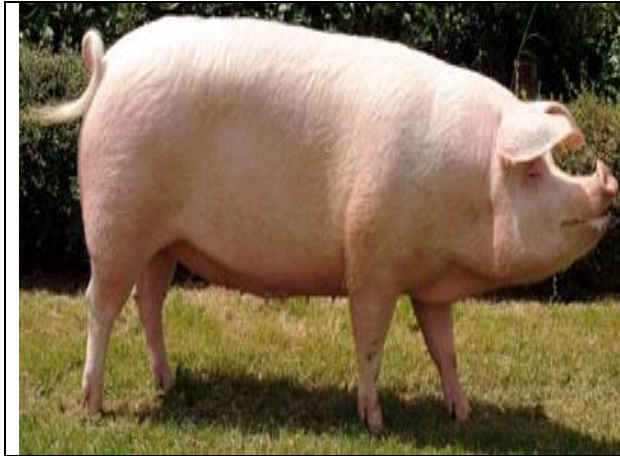
**3143 x 2**

**Digestive system of pigs – Monogastric Animals**

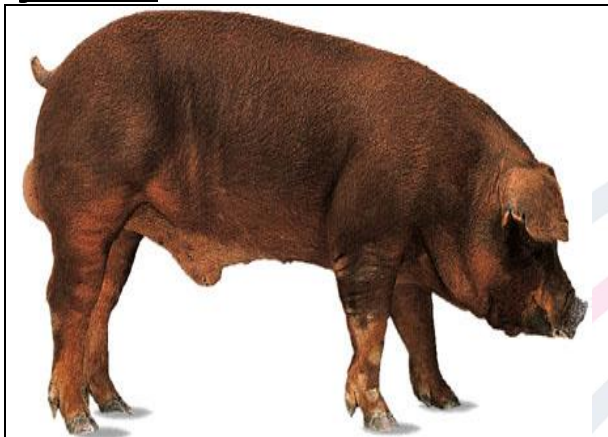


**Q) Name 2 common pig breeds used in Ireland**

<p><b>Landrace</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Danish – Scandinavian breed</li> <li>• Small head, long lean body, small shoulders, lean large ham</li> <li>• Good conformation</li> <li>• Good prolific breed</li> </ul>	<p><b>Large white</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• British breed</li> <li>• Upright ears, large body, large head</li> <li>• Good meat quality</li> <li>• Fast growth rate</li> <li>• White skin</li> <li>• Highly prolific</li> </ul>
---	---



**Note:** other breeds used in Ireland are the **DUROC** and **saddle – back** used in outdoor pig production



**Breeding strategy:**

**(a) Ideal Breeding Strategy**

- Pure bred sow is crossed with a pure bred boar either of Landrace or Large White – Usually the sow and boar are not the same breed.
- Half of the genes from each breed are given to the offspring who will then exhibit hybrid vigour, which is excellent combination of desirable characteristics.
- However this system isn't economically feasible since it is expensive to have both pure bred sows and boars, therefore mostly cross breeding system is used.

**(b) Criss – Cross breeding**

- This greatly reduces the cost of producing quality pigs with characteristics from both breeds while maintaining hybrid vigour.

**Q) Outline the purpose of AI (Artificial Insemination) used in pig production**

- Reduces the number of boars needed on farm
- Gives wider choice of boar genetics

- All AI boars are fully proven and top quality
- More cost effective
- Disease resistance

**Birth, growth rates + puberty:**

Bonham (piglet) weight: 1 – 1.5 kg at birth

Average litter size – 11

Number of sow's litter in lifetime – 7 to 9

Reach bacon slaughter – 82 – 90kg – 6 months

Mature pigs weigh – 140 – 200 kg

Oestrous Cycle – 21 days

Length of heat period – 2 – 3 days

Gestation length – 114 days (3 months, 3 weeks, 3 days)

Lactation period – 28 days

**For more comprehensive Leaving Cert Chemistry Revision  
Notes Click Here.... [Leaving Cert Agricultural Science Notes](#)**