

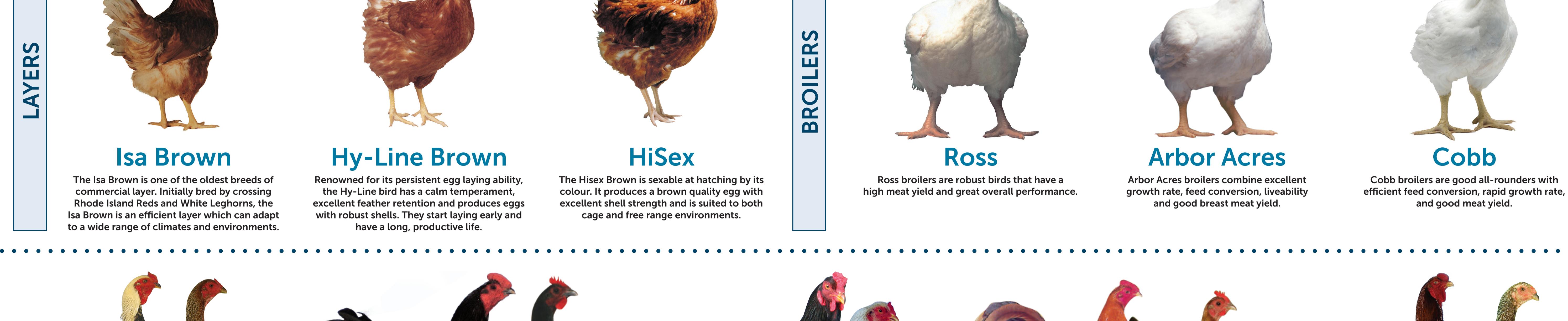
Chicken Breeds in Australia

Poultry breeds are generally classified into one of two major categories, being **HARDFEATHER** and **SOFTFEATHER**.

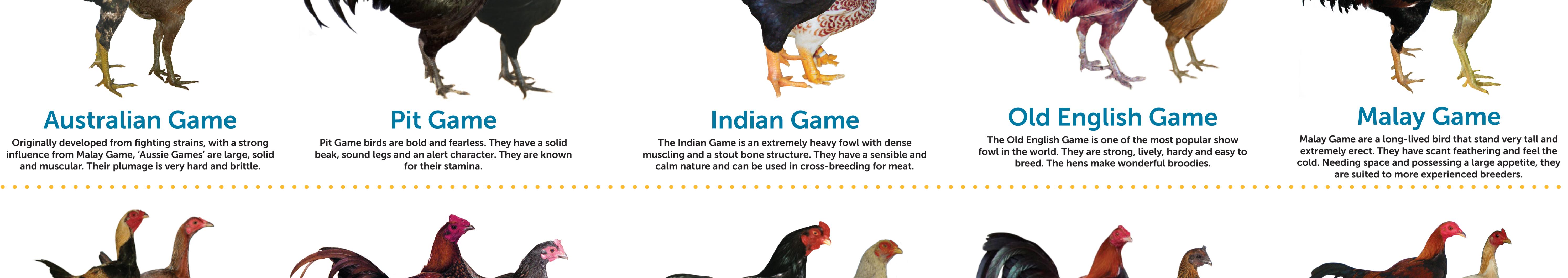
Hardfeather varieties generally have tighter, closer fitting plumage which sits smoothly along the contours of the body. These birds tend to come from oriental and game bloodlines, exhibiting more athletic bodies with prominent muscling. Individual feathers on these birds are generally more rigid than those of softfeather breeds and tend to break more easily.

Softfeather birds have a layer of soft fluff between the body and the outer feathering. Feathers sit at an angle away from the body and are generally looser than in hardfeather breeds. Traditionally, softfeather breeds were developed for either meat or egg production, whereas the hardfeather or "game" varieties were bred for fighting.

Commercial Breeds



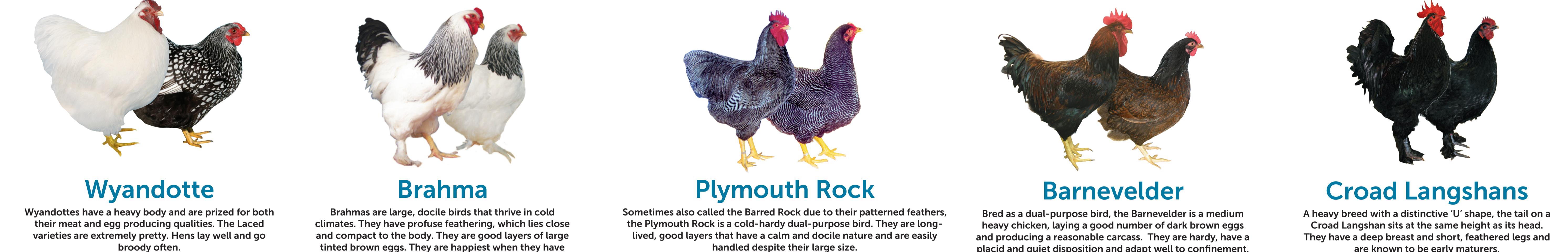
Hardfeather Large



Hardfeather Bantam



Heavy Softfeather Large



Orpington
Originally bred in England, Orpingtons are very large birds, with deep, broad bodies. They are beautiful in appearance and temperament, are good broodies and thriving in cold climates. They are gentle and tame, yet show great courage. Feathering is exceptionally hard and close fitting.

Australian Langshan
Langshans are tall, attractive birds with feathered legs. A dual-purpose bird, they produce over 200 eggs per year and are also a good eating bird. They are popular and highly successful on the show bench.

Australorp
Australorps are an Australian breed, derived from the Orpington. The last three letters of the name 'Australorp' acknowledges the Orpington's role in the development of this breed. They have outstanding egg laying performance, glossy feathers, are good sitters and mothers and are a backyard favourite with Australian families due to their versatility.

Rhode Island
Rhode Islands are excellent layers of large brown eggs and are also a good eating bird. They are hardy, coping with both hot and cold weather, mature early and display a calm nature.

Sussex
Being good foragers, the Sussex does well in both free-range and confined environments. They produce a good number of eggs each year as well as having a solid body suitable for meat production. They are curious and friendly, not prone to flying and easily handled.

Light Softfeather Large



Ancona
Originally bred in Italy, the Ancona is known for its excellent flying ability. Hardy foragers and thriving in free-range conditions, they can be flighty without frequent handling so are suited to more experienced breeders.

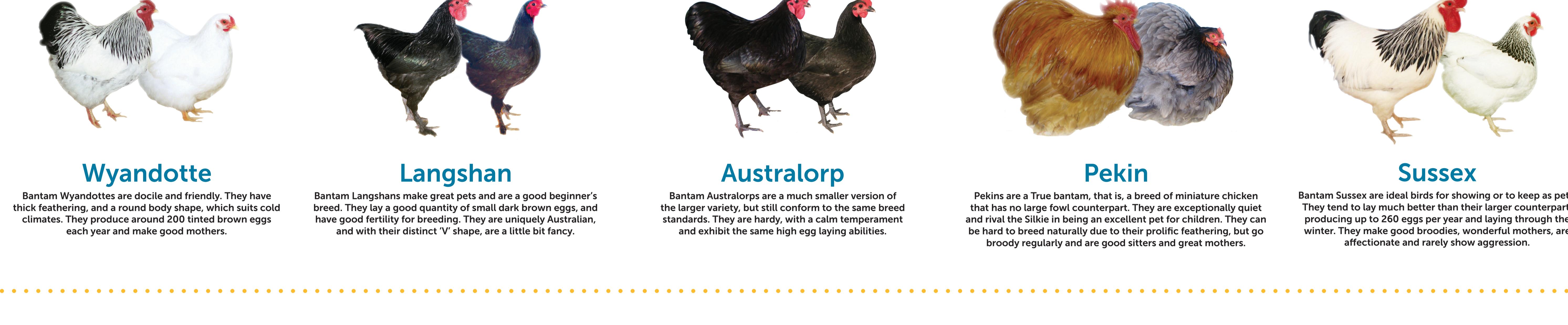
Leghorn
Laying up to 300 large, white eggs per year, the Leghorn is one of the world's most popular breeds. They adapt easily to both confinement and free-range conditions. They can be noisy.

Silkie
The Silkie is one of the most popular choices of breed for children. They are extremely docile and make excellent pets with a friendly temperament. They often go broody and make excellent mothers, so are frequently used to hatch eggs of other breeds. They cannot fly and do not need much room; so make great pets. They have black skin and 5 toes on each foot.

Polish
The Polish chicken is renowned for the unusual large crest of feathers on top. Originally bred as a show bird, they have great temperament and a friendly disposition. They can experience vision problems if their crest grows large enough to cover their eyes.

Minorca
Sometimes called the "red faced black chicken", Minorcas are an ornamental breed. They have dark feathers with red wattle and comb and large white earlobes. They thrive in hot weather but struggle in the cold. Despite being excellent layers, they seldom go broody. They are active and prefer open outdoor areas.

Heavy Softfeather Bantam



Wyandotte
Bantam Wyandottes are docile and friendly. They have thick feathering, and a round body shape, which suits cold climates. They produce around 200 tinted brown eggs each year and make good mothers.

Langshan
Bantam Langshans make great pets and are a good beginner's breed. They lay a good quantity of small dark brown eggs, and have good fertility for breeding. They are uniquely Australian, and with their distinct 'V' shape, are a little bit fancy.

Australorp
Bantam Australorps are a much smaller version of the larger variety, but still conform to the same breed standards. They are hardy, with a calm temperament and exhibit the same high egg laying abilities.

Pekin
Pekins are a True bantam, that is, a breed of miniature chicken that has no large fowl counterpart. They are exceptionally quiet and make the Silkie the best pet for children. They can be hard to breed naturally due to their prolific feathering, but go broody regularly and are good sitters and great mothers.

Sussex
Bantam Susse are ideal birds for showing or to keep as pets. They tend to lay better than their larger counterpart, producing up to 250 eggs per year and through the winter. They make good broodies, wonderful mothers, are affectionate and rarely show aggression.

Light Softfeather Bantam



Ancona
Bantam Anconas make good free range birds as they are very alert and active. They don't like to be penned up in small spaces and can be flighty without handling. They lay well (around 150 eggs per year), but tend to not go broody. They are hardy and good foragers.

Leghorn
At times nervous, bantam Leghorns are vigorous and hardy layers of white eggs. Chicks are easy to rear, feathering up and growing quickly. However, their noisiness and flightiness can make them a challenge to keep. Best suited to experienced breeders.

Belgian d'Uccle
These fowl have full boards and muffs and feathered feet. Despite their feathering, they are not particularly cold hardy. They handle confinement well, have an excellent calm disposition and are extremely tame. Although going broody often, they cannot cover more than a few eggs at a time, due to their small size.

Sebright
With lacing on all their feathers, Sebrights are an eye-catching bird. They are an ornamental breed, originally bred for exhibition purposes. Despite their beautiful looks, Sebrights are difficult to raise due to a lack of vigour in the chicks and are best suited to experienced breeders only.

Rosecomb
Rosecombs are a popular breed, bred mainly for exhibition purposes by experienced breeders. They come in a variety of colours, but all colours have large, white earlobes. They can suffer from poor fertility, low hatchability and are slow to mature.

Rare



Houdan
Of French origin, the Houdan is an unusual bird, with 5 toes, a V-shaped comb with two parts like the wings of a butterfly, and a large crest and muff. They are calm, placid chickens and good layers of large eggs. They have a 7-8 year lifespan so make good pets for somebody looking for something out of the ordinary.

Araucana
Bred as exhibition birds, the Araucana are an unusual looking fowl that lays distinctive blue-shelled eggs. Some strains are rumpless and missing a tailbone, but varieties in Australia commonly come with tails. They are difficult to breed, with a high rate of mortality in the chicks, but once started, are hardy, fast growers who mature quickly.

Frizzle
An attractive and unusual looking bird, Frizzles have feathers that curl backward. Although bred for exhibition purposes, they also make great pets due to their kind and gentle nature. They come in a variety of colours, but all colours have red eyes.

Cochinchina
The Cochinchina originated in China. It is a large, slow maturing bird with an enormous amount of soft, broad feathers. They have no sharp angles and are round and lazy. Profuse feathering on the legs can cause problems unless they are kept on short grass. They have a calm, maternal nature and make good pets, living for between 8 to 10 years.

Hamburg
Sometimes called the "Everlayer", the Hamburg is a prolific layer of small white eggs. They are good flyers so can be hard to keep confined, and need a large amount of room, so are best suited to a free-range environment. They are active, hardy birds who can be flighty around people.