**Pot Bellied Pig – Care Sheet**

**Pot Bellied Pigs:** *Sus scrofa domesticus*

Considerably smaller than an American farm pig, pot-bellied pigs can make great pets. Full of personality, these animals can form strong bonds with their owners, and you don’t have to keep a smelly slop pen around for them to roll around in! Adopting a pot-bellied pig is a big responsibility, however, so it is important to know what you are getting into. Unfortunately, many pigs are abandoned by owners who did not know what adopting a pig entailed. Get the right information first!

**Basic Info**

Age: 12-15 years, although many pigs live to as long as 20

Size: 16-26 in. tall, 60-150 lbs.

**Behavior**

Since pigs can grow to become quite large, it can be difficult to force them to do something they do not want to do. On the bright side, pot-bellied pigs take very well to training! This is quite important, since they are curious animals who like to cause mischief. You can train your pig to walk on a leash and be housetrained. We suggest getting them used to a harness and leash early, using plenty of positive reinforcement.

When you are bringing your pig home, it is important to be patient with socializing them. They are likely to be nervous, and most pigs do not like to be picked up. However, if you work with them and provide positive reinforcement, they usually grow to love attention, petting, and belly rubs. Pigs will also likely benefit from coming into a calm house that does not have many other animals around. They can get along with other pets, but often try to start trouble! We can help you understand the best steps to take for keeping your pigs happy and healthy.

**Diet**

Your pot-bellied pig will benefit from a diet that is a combination of a pellet-based food (made for mini pigs, not farm pigs) and plenty of timothy or other grass hay. The pellets will provide them with the vitamins, protein, and other nutrients they need. Consider keeping a grazing area in your yard. We recommend ¼ cup pellets twice daily, and this can be increased as a pig grows. However, even full grown pigs generally do not need more than 1 to 1.5 cups of pellets per day. Mazuri mini pig food is the most commonly available pellet and is an excellent balanced diet.

One of the biggest health problems for pigs is obesity. While it may be tempting to give it lots of treats to keep it happy, it is important to limit its treat intake. When training, consider using fresh fruits and vegetables as rewards.

Provide clean fresh water at all times. Pigs tend to drink a lot of

water, especially while they are eating. It’s very important when a

pig is outside, especially in the warmer weather, to have water available at all times. If they become overheated or dehydrated, then drink excessively, a life-threatening neurologic problem (salt toxicity) can develop.

**Environment & Caging**

Once your pet is socialized, it will enjoy spending time with you, and likely other pigs or friendly pets. If you want your pig to spend a lot of time indoors with you, it is very important to “pig-proof” any areas it will be in. That means protecting it from chewing hazards such as electrical cords and removing breakable objects. Remember, pigs are quite large, and they can accidentally bump into things. For inside, a small mattress or a dog bed can work for a place to lay down.

For outside, it is important to give your pig plenty of room for exercise and grazing. Additionally, provide them with a large dog house that they can rest in and get some much-needed shade (pigs do not have much hair, so they are sensitive to a lot of sunlight). Fill the doghouse with a large amount of straw. Additionally, your pig will root around wherever possible, it is natural behavior. Therefore, consider making a spot in your yard that it’s ok for your pig to dig around in the dirt and explore. You can also make a rooting box indoors using a kiddie pool and hay. Additionally, since pigs generally have poor eyesight and short legs, it may be important to install a ramp into the house if your pig is having trouble navigating steps.

**Veterinary Care & Home Care**

We recommend a physical examination every 6-12 months for your pig. We can determine if your pig is a healthy weight and do a fecal exam and order bloodwork if necessary. We will also look for other potential issues, such as arthritis and make sure it is up to date on vaccinations. We recommend rabies, tetanus, erysipelas, and other combination vaccines for pigs.

We also highly recommend spaying or neutering your pig. Both males and females can develop certain tumors when they are older, and it may be harder to treat. For males, neutering them will also make them easier to train and cut down on odor and other undesirable behaviors.

Pot-belled pigs also have tusks (sharp teeth) that start to develop after about a year. If not controlled, tusks can cause injuries to you and other animals. We can trim your pig’s tusks (recommend one or twice a year for males), a painless procedure, to keep them at a safe length. Hoof trimming is also often needed, 1-3 times a year depending on how much time the pig spends outside.