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Potbellied Pig Information

Facts about Potbellied Pigs:

- Potbellied pigs are a smaller member of the pig family, however they can range in size from an adult weight of 80 pounds up to 180 pounds, and stand 16 to 20 inches at the shoulder. Recently we have even been seeing some very small "TeaCup" Potbellied Pigs, which are only about 20 pounds as adults. By comparison, the domestic pig at maturity can weigh over 800 pounds and be over 36 inches at the shoulder.
- The adult size of your PotBellied pig is best predicted by the size of his/her parents. Also, what they will look like (body type) is also determined by this as we also see a variety of different "styles" of Potbellies.
- Pigs are a smart, clean, and social animal. They will however, quickly take charge of a household if some rules are not set down. They need guidance and training just as a puppy does. And yes, they can and will bite and push you around to get their way. Best that they learn who is the boss when they are small.
- Potbellied pigs can live to be 10-15 years on average if well taken care of.
- In the Midwest, keeping them indoors is best as they are not well adapted to very cold temperatures. If you do keep them outdoors, they must have a draft free, warm area in the winter and a shady cool area in the summer.
- Pigs cannot sweat, so always have plenty of fresh water available for them. A kids swimming pool is always fun for them. They also like to roll in the mud if available.
- Potbellied pigs are very trainable and are highly food motivated.
- They can be litter box trained or trained to go outside to eliminate.
- They have a need to play and root. Giving them time outside in a secure area or making a "rooting box" filled with large rocks or medium hard rubber balls that they can push around (even bowling balls) give them something to do. Some people will sprinkle some treats (pieces of carrot, cheerios) into a large pile of blankets or into the rooting box to get them going.
- If kept indoors, make sure you "pig-proof" your house, just like you would baby-proof it. They will learn where their food comes from and will try to open anything and everything!

Recommended Health Care for Potbellied Pigs:

FOOD:

Pigs are omnivores and NOT herbivores as some may believe. A good quality pelleted pig chow contains proper balanced nutrients and cat/dog foods should NOT be fed for this reason. Brands such as: Heartland, Peak Performance, Mazuri by Purina, Nutrina and Manna Pro are a few popular and good quality types. Pigs cannot make their own protein and therefore having them on a good quality food will help them live longer healthy lives. It is best to feed twice a day vs feeding once a day to allow for proper absorption of nutrients. The feeding quantities can vary depending on the age, weight and brand fed. Because pigs are omnivores it is best to feed a variety of fruits and vegetables as snacks, making sure to limit the following: certain fruits like oranges and apples (high in sugar), potatoes (high in calories), tomatoes that are acidic (can lead to stomach issues in high quantities), and spinach (high in sodium). Avoid people junk foods as this just adds calories and weight and absolutely NO chocolate as this can be toxic. Try to find snacks that are low in sugars and fats and use in moderation is the key. Good treats (in moderation) are cheerios, shredded wheat, and plain popcorn. Always make sure there is access to water.

HOUSING:

Their "home" needs to be a sanctuary or a space they can call their own. Bedding should be comfortable to avoid any pressure sores from hard surfaces. Use caution or avoid the use of cedar shaving or sleeping bags as they will shred them to make them their own. Pigs WILL get into EVERYTHING! It is very important to piggy proof (just like child proofing) your home. Make sure any low cabinets do not contain chemicals or harmful substances.

If you have an outdoor area for your pig then make sure there is a weather proof area or enclosure they can be in with straw for insulation and is out of the wind and elements. Heat lamps are not recommended because it is very easy to start a fire or overheat the pig. Blankets tend to get wet and hold moisture (which can cause skin sores) when outside so they are best left for inside piggies. Make sure their outdoor enclosure has a strong fence with sturdy panels to keep them in and other creatures out. If you are using a chain link fence make sure to sink the panels at least 6 inches deep as pigs like to root around and dig along posts/fence panels. Make sure that the fencing is not something they can get their tusks stuck in.

TOYS OR RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES:

Pigs are very smart creatures. Some believe them to be as smart as a 4 year old child. For this reason it is best to continually challenge their minds with various activities and stimulation.

- It is recommended to create what is called a "rooting box" to stimulate their mind, sense of touch and smell, and also their natural rooting abilities. This "box" is usually a 2 foot by 2 foot wide and 4 inch deep box filled with large round rocks (larger than one's fist) or children's building blocks (larger toddler ones), sprinkles of a food such as a cereal, and crumbled up newspaper or magazines. It is important to make sure the wood is smooth to avoid splinters in their nose/mouth. It works well to mix up the items from time to time to give them new experiences along the way too.
- Busy balls are round balls that contain holes here and there and allow for treats to fall out when turned in the correct direction thus rewarding the pig each time they play with them. This can be a great reward and they often look forward to playing with them.
- Human exercise balls work well to promote exercise as they push them around the home or yard also.
- Stuffed toys can be fun for them but use caution and watch your piggy with them as some pigs (just like dogs) tend to rip them apart and if the stuffing is ingested it could cause some serious health issues.
- Pigs can be trained (just like dogs) to do various tricks for treat rewards. There are several websites available for pig training. Just make sure that if you are using treats for training that you adjust their daily food intake to accommodate the higher calories and thus help your piggy from becoming too heavy.

Resources for general information:

www.minipiginfo.com

www.pigs4ever.com

www.nwpetpigs.org