



# CATSKILL

## ANIMAL SANCTUARY

### Potbellied Pig Fact Sheet

We are committed to finding safe, loving homes for our rescued animals and want to make sure that you are making an informed decision when choosing to adopt. Please read this Fact Sheet carefully before filling out the application, as well as do your own research.

#### Characteristics

- Pigs make wonderful pets. They are smart, clean, full of personality, and inexpensive to feed. They can be trained to use a litter box and to walk on a leash. They love to be scratched and massaged, and enjoy tummy rubs. They are not overly-affectionate, but do enjoy human company. Pigs do not enjoy being picked up.
- Because they are smart, they get bored easily and can become destructive. They are good problem solvers and can figure out how to open doors and cabinets. Thus, it is important to “pig-proof” your home. Pigs also tend to be stubborn and to be naturally suspicious of new situations.
- Pigs need a lot of attention from caregivers or can become grumpy, aggressive, or depressed.
- Pigs respond well to rewards and positive reinforcement. They have excellent memories and can learn commands and tricks. Negative physical reinforcements will not work in disciplining your pig. Firm, gentle discipline is best.
- **Pigs are not recommended for small children**, as the pig might smell food on the child’s hand. Pigs and young children should never be together unsupervised.
- Dogs are natural predators to pigs, so must be closely supervised when with them. They should never be left alone.
- Pigs can bond closely with other pigs, but introductions can be difficult. Introductions should be made gradually.
- Before adopting a potbellied pig:
  - Check your local zoning regulations to make sure that you can have them.
  - Make sure that you have the time to care for them and that you have responsible caretakers to cover for you in the event of illness or when on vacation.
  - Make sure that your vet cares for this species, or prior to adoption, find one near you who does.

#### Feeding

- A potbelly pig can live to be 20 years old. To ensure a long life, monitor his weight, provide plenty of interaction and stimulation, and provide outdoor time and exercise.
- Potbellied pigs can range between 80 and 175 pounds. They reach maturity at 3-5 years old. It is very important to monitor their weight and not overfeed them, as **an overweight pig is an unhealthy pig**.

- Pigs thrive on a diet of pelleted grain, a variety of fresh vegetables, and occasional fruit. It is recommended that you feed your pig twice daily and allow yard time for grazing. When feeding, you should account for grazing and adjust amount of food accordingly.
- They also enjoy hay (don't use alfalfa). Provide low-fat foods such as carrots, cucumbers, celery, and leafy greens. Canned vegetables, corn, potatoes, dried fruit, cookies, and nuts are high in calories and will lead to obesity.
- Pigs need plenty of fresh water. You can add water to their food to help with hydration and make your pig feel fuller.
- Pigs are natural rooters and always seem to be hungry. It is important not to overfeed them. If your pig will spend most of his time indoors, create a rooting box using a cardboard box, some old towels, and some stones to weight it down. Place low-fat treats in the box under the towels. This provides stimulation and exercise.

### Health Care

- It is important to find a vet who is qualified to take care of your potbelly before you bring one home. Although it is relatively inexpensive to care for a pig, vet bills can be unmanageable, so you should be prepared.
- Your pig must be neutered/spayed. If left unspayed, females can develop uterine problems, such as tumors and infections. Unneutered males can be odorous and aggressive. Isoflurane gas is the recommended anesthesia, as injectibles can cause serious side effects.
- Pigs do not attract fleas.
- Pigs require yearly de-worming and vaccinations.
- Hoof trimming is needed 1-2X per year. Tusk trimming also may be required. You can learn to do this on your own or have the vet do it.
- **The biggest health problem in pigs is obesity**, which leads to arthritis, respiratory problems, and increasing immobility.
- Potbellied pigs will shed their hair 1-2X per year, often in the summer.

### Shelter & Fencing

- Pigs can be happy living indoors, but do need outdoor time to root, sunbathe, and engage in other pig behaviors.
- Pigs can live happily outdoors if provided the following: 1. a spacious outdoor enclosure (1/4 acre per pig: pigs should not be confined to a "pig pen") 2. a yard that provides both sun and shade 3. access to a creek, a small pond, a "doggy pool" or a man-made "wallow" in which to cool off on hot days 3. a well-insulated shelter that is heated in winter and safe from predators.
- A pig's outside area must be sturdily-fenced. A bottom rail is essential along the fenceline; otherwise, pigs will root underneath and escape.
- Pigs can get sunburn, so it is important to provide a way to get out of the sun. Sunblock can also be useful if your pig will be outside for long periods of time. A doggy pool is also a nice way for your pig to cool off on hot days.
- Pigs need soft bedding to sleep on. Indoors, this can be a dog bed or large crate with blankets. Outdoors, straw, hay, or blankets will work.

- How to “pig-proof” your home: make sure that cleaning products, insecticides, medicines, and other toxins are out of reach. Keep potted plants off of the floor and don’t leave bags or purses within reach. Pigs have an excellent sense of smell and will find food/snacks, including chewing gum. Cabinets might need to be secured with childproof locks. If your pig figures out how to open up the refrigerator, you might have to install a latch. Electrical wires should be taped down so your pig doesn’t trip over them.
- Pigs must have ample room to exercise. The combined indoor and outdoor space, as well as the age of the pig(s) will be taken into consideration when determining adoption approval.