

Information Guide

To Keeping, Raising And Training Pet Pigs In Australia.

Hi, my name is Georgia Gowanloch and I own Australia's famous performing porkers "The Wonder Pigs". They have performed many times on Australian television, International networks, at agricultural shows and special events around Australia. I have successfully raised and trained many pigs for obedience and to learn tricks. I have 8 pigs in total and they have their own houses and are never confined into pens. They free range on 900 acres, with 14 dams and 2 creeks. They are all obedient with good temperaments and range from 60 kilos to 160 kilos. Size has never been an issue or problem for my family or me.

I have put together the following information for anyone who is thinking about getting a pet pig. The information should only be used as a **GUIDE** to help you keep your pig/pigs healthy and happy and to help understand your pig's needs & characters a little better. The information is also based on my experience as a pig owner and trainer. Some health topics were advised and assisted by my Vet. The information is useful, interesting and brutally honest.

Important Information - Please Read Before Buying A Pet Pig

Before considering buying a pet pig, check with your local council or shire to see if there are any restrictions, obligations, requirements or regulations with which you need to abide?

Important Things To Remember When Looking To Buy A Piglet

Always inspect the pigs

Look at their environment & where they're kept

How are they treated?

Look at the breeding pigs (parents) – their age, size, weight, temperament & litter size

Look for tusks on the boar (tusks should be well and truly visible over 3 years of age) – If the tusks have been trimmed or removed, ask to inspect the pigs mouth – if the breeder declines your request be wary

Any information about their breed and/or history

Never trust or take someone's word over the phone

Photos can be deceiving unless taken at shoulder height of the pig with a measuring stick beside it

Compare prices to other breeders

Always ask questions

Important Points and Questions To Consider Before You Decide To Buy A Pet Pig.

Are pigs allowed in your city or town? (eg: local council or shire permission and/or special permits required?)

Will your pig be living in a backyard or on a farm?

Do you own or rent your property?

How will you house your pig?

Will the pig be kept indoors or outdoors?

What will the pen size be?

Do you have a fenced yard?

Is your backyard landscaped?

What type of house will the pig have for protection?

Will the pig have shade, sunlight and a dry area during the winter?

If the pig is going to spend most of its time indoors, will the pig be able to go outside when you are not home (eg: a piggy door)?

For pigs that will be allowed in the house, what type of floor covering do you have?

Is your house child proof?

Have you owned a pet pig?

Are you aware the size of an adult pig?

Did you know that pigs continue to grow till about 3 or 4 years of age?

Have you seen a 4 or 5 year old pig?

Is everyone in the family happy about adopting a pig?

Do you own other animals? If so what types?

Do you have children? If so what age(s) are they?

A pig's life span is estimated at 10 to 15 years. Are you aware of this?

What are your long term plans if the pig lives for 15 years?

Are you aware of proper feeding and where to buy pig food? (eg: no meat, no swill)

Do you have a vet who or can will work on pigs?

If you are adopting a second pig to go with a pig you already own, are you able to fence train the pigs so that they can visit with each other for a week or two before putting them together?

Would you consider rescuing a pig in need of a loving home rather than buying one from a pig breeder?

What age, sex, colour, breed and size pig(s) are you looking for?

There Is No Such Thing As A Miniature Pig – There Is However A Manageable Size Pig

There is no such thing as a miniature pig, or a pig that grows to the size of a Jack Russell or Beagle, not in Australia or anywhere else in the world. I have never seen any and believe me if they existed, I would be the first in line to buy one. I am on 3 Pig Lists with world wide members and no one has a fully grown adult pet pig that is less than 50 kilos.

Think about this, a fully-grown male Wombat grows up to 65 kilos and a fully-grown female Wombat grows up to 45 kilos, these are heavy, stocky, robust animals just like pigs, so how could a pig when fully grown weigh 30 kilos? Bullmastiffs and Rottweilers aren't bred down to 30 kilos, because it isn't possible to have such a large animal bred down that small.

Some breeders are genuine and honest and will tell you that their piglets will grow to a reasonable and manageable size of about 60 to 80 kilos or more but not less. Other breeders are just really good "Sales" people, telling you what you want to hear. Some breeders also keep their breeding pigs confined in pens and are fed once or twice a day with out exercise and tend to look thin or underweight, but if given the opportunity to graze on grass and eat like a "free range" pig they would look a whole lot different.

Miniature Pig Breeders?

Before we get started I would like to share some important information with you. In the last 7 years searching for a "real" miniature pig, my quest took me to South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales, looking for something that just didn't exist. Disappointing?? Absolutely!! I visited several breeders, taking photos, viewing pigs, asking questions, listening to their information, knowledge and perhaps their intentional or unintentional lies about size?? Petite, Pee Wee, Pigmy, Mini, Dwarf, Midget, Shrimp, Tiny, or what ever these breeders want to call them? These breeders "swear" that these extraordinary small pigs exist, but where are they? Why is it that many people, including myself have been tricked into buying these 30 kilos pigs to find out they are still growing. I'm not out to sabotage businesses or give breeders a bad reputation. I just think people selling pigs should be honest to potential pig buyers and new pig owners.

Here is an example: A good friend of mine was told by a “miniature pig breeder” that the breeding trio she purchased would grow to a maximum of 70 kilos. The boar grew to 200 kilos and the two sows grew to 150 kilos and 120 kilos. After de-sexing and retiring those pigs, she bought another breeding trio from another “miniature pig breeder”, who told her they would to a maximum of 30 kilos, the boar grew to approximately 90 kilos and the two sows are about 60 kilos and 70 kilos. (fully-grown). See how easy that was? To be told one thing and to get another! And it didn’t happen overnight, it took 3 years to find out!! It is realistic to say a “manageable pet pig would grow to about 60, 70 & 80 kilos or more rather than 30 or 40 kilos.

Potbelly Pigs & Kunekune Pigs in Australia

There are no Vietnamese Potbelly Pigs in Australia and probably never will be, due to our very strict quarantine laws. Potbelly pigs are not as small as you think. A typical, full grown, potbellied pig can weigh from 50-115 kilos, though the majority of them are somewhere between 50-80 kilos. Their height varies, some are 50cm high at the shoulder, and others are less.

There is no importation of live pigs, frozen semen or embryos into Australia. Even Kunekune Pigs from New Zealand are not permitted here.

Size

How Big Will My Pig Grow? - This is the first and most important question asked when enquiring about or buying a pet pig.

A pig's size is determined by genetics, exercise and diet. Underfeeding a pig will not "keep it small". It is simply an act of cruelty.

A pig will continue to grow until its bones stop growing. Overfeeding will make the pig overweight (Fat).

Pigs grow quickly within the first 12 months then continue to grow more slowly until they are between three and four years old. Your tiny piglet will grow into a 60 kilo or more adult. **Don't believe anything else!** Pigs generally live up to 12 years, every year after that is a bonus!! Some have been known to live over 15 years.

Pigs will eat almost anything that is offered as **they have astronomical appetites.** Unfortunately obesity is a huge problem with pigs. Signs of obesity are rolls of fat around the face, inability to feel hipbones and lack of visible waistline. Overweight pigs suffer from heart problems and arthritis. Underfed pigs (often in an attempt to keep them small) can die from malnutrition or other complications.

Companion & Manageable Size Pet Pig Breeders In Australia

If you wish to contact a Pet Pig Breeder, please contact me on: **(02) 6946 2699** or e-mail me at: ducati@dragnet.com.au for a list of recommended Pet Pig Breeders that I have visited – remember these are not “Jack Russell” Or “Beagle” Size Pigs - (they don’t exist) these are a “Manageable” sized pigs, more like the size of a Labrador, German Shepherd or Bullmastiff.

New Arrival

The first 24 hours are always the most difficult for you piglet, as it has just left its mummy, siblings and other piggy friends and is going to be looking for them. It may runaway from you, as it does not recognize you as its new parent or friend yet. When you bring your pet piglet home, it

will need to earn your trust and feel safe with you before it can be handled easily, once that's achieved you can begin training it.

Confine the piglet to a safe and secure area, allowing it to run around and investigate. (eg: your laundry or a small pen). Unfamiliar surroundings and people will probably scare the piglet. Place food and water in an easy to reach area. Sit beside your piglet, offering it food, patting it, or placing it on your lap. Introduce family members and pets to the piglet once it has gained your trust. Be patient and don't panic or feel disappointed if your piglet doesn't let you near it. Give it time and within a short space of time your piglet will be your best friend.

Georgia's Tip... Some other things that can help settle your piglet are soft toys and food, such as pieces of fruit. If it is still feeling scared and discontented during the first night, a large box, cage or crate with a blanket over it might help settle it, or place it beside your bed or your children's bed so it responds to the sound of a voice. That didn't work with any of my piglets, all of them ended up sleeping in our bed.

Handling Your Piglet & Bonding Together

The easiest way to pick up a piglet without stressing it is to pick it up with both hands around its body. Pigs feel uneasy when their feet are off the ground. **(In general, piglets don't really like being picked up, some eventually get used to it.)**

Piglet Care

If you get your piglet in the colder months a puppy jumper is ideal. Piglets are sensitive to sudden temperature changes.

After a week or two, you might decide to begin leaving the piglet outside more often. During this time your piglet might squeal when you leave it on its own. The piglet will eventually learn to amuse itself. As they are social animals, they will bond and socialise with other animals.

Should your piglet begin to show cantankerous and irritable behaviour and seek your attention by squealing, be firm and don't respond from the start and you should see changes in its behaviour within a few days. Pigs are very headstrong and stubborn animals and will usually persist until they get their way.

Georgia's Tip... You've heard the terms....."Stubborn As A Pig?? Or "Pig Headed"? You know what they really mean when you own a pig!!

Behaviour

Be prepared for a surprising new experience!! Pigs are complex animals. Each pig has his or her own personality and character and every pig you get will be different (if you get more than one) some are sooks and some are independent, but all pigs are mischievous, affectionate and incredibly intelligent. Their intelligence can sometimes make them a bit of a handful.

Pigs are generally sensitive, head strong, curious, inquisitive and playful which can make them demanding at times. All pigs are strong, robust animals they can open fridges, food pantries and cupboards or any other places where food may be hiding in their continual pursuit of food. They investigate everything with their snouts. As a result, they might tip over things in your house. Their continual insistence for food can turn them into beggars.

Pigs, no matter what shape, breed or size make great pets for the right people and the right environment. They are one of the smartest of the domesticated animals and learn very

quickly, their intelligence makes them easy to train. Their loyalty and affection towards family members as well as other pets and animals is extraordinary because they bond so quickly. **A lonely pig is a sad pig.**

Pigs in nature are used to lots of exercise. They will walk up to 60km a day. They love to walk and follow you around. They are easily trained to wear a dog harness. All pigs love attention and a good scratch on their bellies, underarms, chin and behind their ears. They will happily grunt and snort in appreciation. When you enter a pig's pen, the pig will come up and say hello, nuzzling you till you give it a scratch.

Georgia's Tip... Never wear new or clean clothes around pigs, even the cleanest pigs will put nose prints and slobber on you.

Why Pigs Dig

Pigs, although are intelligent animals can also be very destructive. They love to dig, root, plough and excavate your yard or paddock. They will do it with joy, enthusiasm and attention to detail. They also love to graze. So why prohibit your pig from digging? They were created with a nose that's a digging tool. It's their natural instinct to dig, in search of food, starchy roots and grubs in the soil or to cool themselves in warm months. The soil is also a good source of iron and other minerals. Attempts to stop a pig digging are not always successful. Rings or wire through the nose, trimming of the snout have all been tried but failed. Pigs will find alternative ways to dig such as using their lower jaw.

Georgia's Tip... Pigs are raised primarily for pork production. I don't know why anyone would want to eat such a cute animal. Pigs are one of the smartest of the domesticated animals ... so ... Eat More Chicken!!

Housing & Outdoor Runs

If you live in Suburbia and are thinking about getting a pet pig to put in your back yard....please think again!! Heavy fines are imposed if no permit or permission is given to you by your local shire or council, not to mention removal of the animal may be ordered.

Personally, **I'm against Pet Pig Breeders selling pigs to people to keep in their backyards!!** Why? For several reasons, firstly I own 8 pigs and know what pigs are like, I've seen a backyard after pig has lived in it, no grass, holes the size of "meteorite craters" mud, dirt and mess!! Pigs are destructive, they dig, they investigate everything, are in continual pursuit for food and they wallow in mud. Your backyard will be **trashed** in very little time. Keeping your pig in a pen all day isn't a life for any animal and putting a nose ring to stop it digging is simply cruel (so don't get a pig if you would have to do those things).

I have been contacted to rescue and re-home many pigs due to their size living in backyards over the past few years.

It's most unfortunate that pigs have a stigma attached to them that they are dirty and smelly animals because they wallow in mud, but the truth is pigs are very clean animals, they don't smell and are extraordinarily intelligent.

It disturbs me greatly to find that Pet Pig Breeders who advertise "backyard pigs" can all of a sudden change a "farm animal's status into a "backyard pet." If that's the case, then why aren't goats, sheep, cows and horses being encouraged to become backyard pets either?? Goats are as equally destructive as pigs. My goats have eaten everything in my yard, plants and flowers they've chewed shoes, door mats, clothes from the line, not to mention my car's aerial,

windscreen wipers, door trimmings and dashboard and are great escape artists too. (I love my goats they are really lovely animals) Sheep, horses and cows make great pets but you don't see them being advertised as backyard pets. So why does the poor pig get singled out from this group of farm animals?? Money hungry breeders perhaps, trying to make a quick buck??

The minimum space recommended for your pig is at least one acre or a pen the area of a tennis court or bigger with some access to grass. Pigs need space and graze on grass just as cows, sheep and horses do.

Pigs will defecate and urinate in the same area, usually far away from where they eat, drink and sleep. If you are planning on keeping your piglet outside, shelter is required such as a large dog kennel. They require shade areas from the sun and shelter from wind and rain. Straw or hay is recommended for their bedding, because they usually like to burrow into it to sleep. Other bedding materials can be used but avoid dusty materials.

It is suggested that you build a run or holding area in which you can catch the pig, treat it or lock it away if necessary. If the run has a cement floor, don't leave the pig on it for long periods of time. They can develop disabilities in their legs, which can lead to permanent problems. Sows squat to urinate and may slip if the surface is wet. Remember they like to defecate and urinate away from rest areas.

If you have a pet pig that lives in your backyard, please remember it has some special needs. If you keep your pig confined for too long in a small pen with out access to other areas or paddocks, it could affect its health.

Fencing

Secure fencing, including electric fencing, is important and usually a successful way of keep pigs from entering other properties, vineyards, orchards or nearby roads, unless you want them to consume any excess fruit, veggies etc... Pigs are intelligent and learn where their boundaries are quickly.

Pigs can jump, but don't generally jump high. A 900 mm high fence will easily keep your pig in. Pool fencing makes a good enclosure.

There is special pig fencing or pig wire available, strained tightly to star posts or wooden posts at approximately 2 metre intervals makes an excellent enclosure.

If you choose to use chicken wire or other materials, make sure your pig's snout can't get stuck, caught or injured in it. Pigs being curious animals will dig and try and find a way to escape.

Pigs & Mud

Pigs don't sweat because they don't have sweat glands. On hot days pigs love to wallow in mud to cool their bodies. You've heard the term "**Happy As A Pig In Mud**". They are truly at their happiest when wallowing. Your pig may dig its own hole in the ground to cool down.

Five or more centimetres below ground level is cooler than at ground level. Mud also keeps them free from external parasites and protects their skin from sunburn. Pigs generally don't like deep water or swimming. An alternative to wallowing is providing a cool area such as a shed with good ventilation.

Biting & Nipping

All animals bite, including pigs. Animals will usually bite from fear or aggression. Piglets are born with “needle teeth”. These teeth fall out during adolescents and are replaced with adult teeth. It is your responsibility as an animal owner to teach your pig manners and obedience.

Georgia’s Tip... I hand fed all my piglets. It teaches them to be gentle and not snatch food. Start teaching your piglet as soon as it has gained your trust, using the words “no biting” if they snatch food. Remember to praise them for taking food gently.

Training

If your piglet is being naughty, give it a light, quick tap on its snout and say “**No**” This is the best way of disciplining or punishing it. Your piglet will react to composure and generosity. Take it slowly and teach one thing at a time. Do not over train other wise it can become bored or uninterested.

Georgia’s Tip... If you want to be able to lead your pig around by harness, start as early as possible. You will find it easier if two people put the harness on for the first time. The piglet will probable squeal because you are restraining it. After a few times having the harness fitted the piglet will be fine. Leave the harness on the piglet for an hour, so that it gets used to having it on. Increase the time gradually till it is used to wearing it. If the piglet bucks and wobbles about in the harness when you are trying to walk it, try distracting it with some food (such as dried fruit, sultanas or bread) but don’t overdo this or it will get used to being fed when walking on its lead.

Tricks To Teach

My Performing Pigs can do up to 16 different tricks. A simple trick to start with is “Circles”. You hold the food in front of their nose and do a 360 degrees turn or circle saying the word “Circles” making sure the piglet is turning slowly following the food in your hand. You can also teach them to sit. Pigs sit easily, they have a balance point beyond which they fall back and eventually sit. I find the best way to teach them to sit is when bottle-feeding them because you have control of the bottle. If they will not sit, gently place your other hand on their bottoms and push down. They’ll learn to sit eventually. You can also teach your pig to do lots of other tricks the key is time, repetition, patience, praise, reward and a lot of love. You piglet can become a “Wonder Pig” too.

Toilet Training Piglets Kept Indoors

Put some newspaper down where the pig went to the toilet, leave a small piece of dung on the paper and gradually move the paper to where you want the pig to go or alternatively place the dung in the litter tray (filled with kitty litter) using the word “toilet” or “potty“. Training is very similar to a dog or cat

Because pigs are very clean animals, when kept in a small yard or pen, they will defecate in one place. This makes house training with a litter tray easy. Eventually you should teach them to go outside, usually after they wake up or have had a drink or a feed.

Georgia’s Tip... From my own experience I have found both males & females easy to toilet train. You do get accidents (such as on the lounge or bed, if you are raising you piglet in your house), but they eventually go to the litter tray or outside. I prefer to use a “recycled paper” cat litter, such as: “Breeders Choice” as it is free of toxins and chemicals that others may contain. When stressed, pigs “defecate” more than “urinate”. Sometimes when picking up a piglet when it doesn’t want to be picked up.... it might accidentally defecate on you.

Feeding

It is **ILLEGAL** to feed left over meats from your table or any other meat products to your pig.

If you wish to continue feeding you piglet milk, the recommended Milk Supplement is called “**Di-Vetelact**” (available from your Vet or Pet Shop) Be sure to follow instructions correctly, as incorrect concentration may lead to scours or diarrhoea.

Scours is the main problem encountered with piglets. E. coli bacteria can cause scours. Other causes are when piglets are very stressed, changing milk from their mothers to powdered milk supplements, and moving location (eg: leaving its mother and arriving to its new home).

Fluid replacement is important if your piglet has scours as it may dehydrate and die. An Electrolyte Solution can be added to their drinking water. Contact your Vet for advice.

If you don't want to bottle feed your piglet, that's fine. You can still give them a milk supplement to be sure they are getting enough calcium while their bones are still growing. Some cereal mixed with Di-Vetelact is a yummy breakfast for your piglet. Make up 250mls of Di-Vetelact milk add 1 wheat-bix or some bran flakes and even some pellets (but no more than 1/4 of a cup) add 1-2 table spoons of yoghurt, some chopped banana, kiwi fruit, pear, or any other soft fruit.

Georgia's Tip... I bottle fed all my piglets. It's a good way to have them bond with you and other family members. Also it makes raising and training easier when they know you are the food source. Finally because I train my pigs to perform tricks, I want to be sure they are getting enough calcium for their growing bones.

Supplementary feeding of grass morning and night is a good idea. This can commence after the age of 2 weeks. Feed no more than a 1cup of grain based food or pellets. Introduce vegetables, fruit and bread etc.... on the side. **Remember, everything in moderation.** Get into the habit of feeding at regular times, (eg: same place and time) so your pig becomes familiar with its feeding pattern. Don't feed your feed pigs snacks as they will become beggars and harass you constantly for food.

Georgia's Tip... I feed my piglets twice a day until they are six months old, then once a day, usually in the afternoons. They get treats throughout the day such as dried fruit and fresh fruit, mainly apples. I hand feed snacks and treats when training my pigs, it teaches them to be gentle and not snatch food from my hand. Pigs graze on grass, so don't think that grass isn't a good food source. Grass fattens up calves and lambs and it will fatten up our piglet too. If your piglet has no access to grass then substitute it with fruit or vegetables, a little bread or a hand full of mixed nuts, or household veggie scraps.

Do not feed your Pig Grower's Pellets as this will fatten you pig and make it grow too fast. An “Alpaca Feed Mix” or similar is also ideal as it has various grains, corn, sunflower seeds, pellets, lucerne, molasses and other goodies in it. **I use a mixture of calf pellets, alpaca meal & horse feed (it's got everything in it)**

If you run out of pellets or dry feed, they replace it with fruit or vegetables till you get some more. **Do not over feed your piglet, as your piglet has a small bone structure and over feeding can cause skeletal stress.**

Georgia's Tip... In winter when the grass is scarce, I supplement with a good meal at night. In a large pot, put in 1-2 cups of pasta or rice and assorted chopped veggies, cover with water, boil for 15-20 minutes, stirring occasionally. It stores in the fridge for days. When raiding or cleaning the fridge, you'd be surprised how many leftovers (excluding meat or meat products) you can feed your pig. When fruit begins to soften or ferment, make a fruit salad and store it in the fridge, your pig will love it. My pig's favorite fruits are apples and watermelon.

Your piglet will go through stages of "taste bud changes". You will find that it spits out for example, apples and eats bananas or it eats watermelon but not kiwi fruit. This will all change when they begin to mature. They will eat anything and everything and they will have their favourites too.

Water

Fresh water must be provided daily in a strong bowl or dish, as they love knocking it over and attempt to wallow on hot days.

De-Sexing

Some breeders de-sex their piglets before selling them (which should be included in the cost when buying it) however **it is up to the new owner to de-sex their piglet, not the breeder!! It is your responsibility as a pet owner to de-sex your pets.**

Piglets are no different to other pets such as kittens, puppies, rabbits etc... The recommended age for de-sexing a piglet is 6 months of age. Some breeders de-sex female piglets at 4-5 weeks of age, which I disagree with. You don't see kittens and puppies being de-sexed at that age, so why should piglets be any different?? By de-sexing them too young, we really don't know if we are doing them any long term damage by removing hormones they need while growing into adulthood. **Pigs can reproduce from about 9 months of age.**

By having the males de-sexed they are free of the odour that boars get & by having female's de-sexed it stops them coming in season every three weeks.

If you have purchased a breeding pair, **your pigs should be a least 12 months old before they begin breeding.**

Tusks

A female pig has tusks but they don't continue to grow like those of a male. Female's tusk are about 1-2 cm long and don't need to be trimmed or removed. Tusks on a male (boar or barrow) can grow up to 5-7 cm long. There are two techniques used on tusks. Most farmers and pig breeders trim them down to keep the pig easy to maintain and control. The animal has to be restrained in this procedure. The other is to have them permanently removed by an experienced Vet. Pigs in the wild use their tusks as a digging tool and as a weapon to fight off predators. Most pigs will run from danger and would only charge if cornered or threatened.

Georgia's Tip... All my male pigs have had their tusks permanently removed, but they grew back on two of my pigs. This is a very delicate operation and there is no guarantee that all the roots can be removed successfully, this procedure should only be done by an experienced Vet. The end result is that the tusks don't grow back if correctly removed. Some vets remove the pigs "needle teeth" thinking that they are the tusks and by the time the tusks grow, it's too late to remove them. The recommended age is 5-6 months no later as the roots begin to set into the gums and anaesthetics can be a problem in older pigs.

Permanent Tusk Removal

For permanent tusk removal contact Georgia at: ducati@dragnet.com.au for more information on this procedure.

Anaesthetic & Pigs

Pigs are susceptible to a condition called "**Malignant Hyperthermia**". Some anaesthetic agents may increase the risk of you pig dying from this condition. Check with you vet to be sure the anaesthetic being used is safe for pigs. Gas anaesthetic should be avoided.

Vaccinations

All piglets should be vaccinated before they are sold. They should have had their first Vaccination shot at 4 weeks and a second shot at 6 weeks before they are sold. The Vaccine is called "**Lepto-Eryvac**" which offers protection from the two most common infectious diseases (**Leptospirosis and Erysipelas**). It is recommended to vaccinate your pig every twelve months.

Parasite Control (Including Worming)

Your piglet or piglets should be wormed before they are sold. Pigs may suffer from internal parasites (commonly called Worms) and external parasites (mites and lice). There are very few products on the market that kill both worms and external parasites.

The life cycle of most parasites is about 21 days from hatching to laying eggs.

Should you find little insects on your piglet, you are most probably seeing sucking lice (Haematopinus suis). These are insects normally found on pigs and are not capable of living away from the host pig. They are transmitted from pig to pig on contact and are not transferable to other species such as: humans, dogs and cats.

Note: Only adult and immature lice are killed by the Ivomec treatment. Should your pig have lice eggs on its coat you will need to wait till those eggs hatch before they are susceptible to the treatment?

Regular Worming Treatment

The product used to kill the parasites (internal "worms" and external insect lice) on your piglet is **Ivomec Antiparasitic Injection for Pigs**. This product is injected under the skin of the neck and is also available as an oral preparation called **Ivermectin Premix for Pigs**. (You should be able to buy it or order it from your local Stock & Station Agent, Produce Shop or Stock Feed Supplier or Vet)

Ivermectin, the active ingredient of both of these products (it is the drug of choice for your pig) will effectively rid your piglet of immature and adult lice but due to the presence of lice eggs on your piglet's coat, you will need to repeat the dose of **Ivermectin** at two weekly intervals (3 times) to catch all hatching eggs. Once this is done, provided your piglet does not contact another pig with lice your piglet should remain lice free forever.

By medicating your pig three times at two weekly intervals and provided he does not come in contact with untreated pigs and your property has not previously had pigs on it, he should remain free from all internal parasites, provided that he is kept on clean, non-contaminated ground.

If you have purchased a "**breeding sow**" she is able to pass on a particular worm on to her piglets through her milk. Treat her 7-10 days before farrowing to stop the piglets getting this type of worm. You should consult your Vet for advice as to what is best.

Insecticides only kill immature and adult lice. Adult lice lay eggs that are not affected by insecticides. Flea rinses, will kill adult lice but are usually toxic chemicals and again do not kill the eggs, so that they will need to be repeated twice at two weekly intervals. **Due to their toxicity they are not recommended.**

Skin

All pigs have naturally dry skin. If your piglet's or pig's skin is drier than usual or flaky and scaly, use some olive oil to moisten it, freshen and restore it to a healthy condition but be careful with white skin pigs as they can sunburn easily. It may be useful to do this in the late afternoon or evening. If the problem persists, then a worming product might be the solution.

Some pigs lose their coats in summer and others thin out (like most animals) and grow a thick coat again for the winter. Don't panic if hands full of hair are coming off your pig in summer months, it is normal.

Breed History

It isn't necessary, but nice to know a little history about where your piglet's family and ancestors came from?

Certificates

Some breeders give you a Certificate with your piglet, with details of its date of birth, age, sex, parent's names, worming, vaccinations, age, colour, de-sexing etc... It's not necessary or important to have one, but it's nice to keep a record with important information.

Georgia's Final Tip... your pet pig, should not have too many health problems if its given adequate space, good housing and shelter, a place to wallow, plenty of water, the right diet, regular walks and exercise, and plenty of love, attention, belly rubs and regular worming. Your pig should remain happy and healthy for many years.

Pig Chat Group

If you are interested in joining a Pig Chat Group, Australia now has its and its "very own" called Pet Pigs Australia.

If you wish to join my group you can chat with other pig owners, make new friends and talk about your beloved pigs. The group is for those who love pigs, own pigs, who want to learn more about pigs, are a new pig owner, or if you are thinking of getting a pet pig.

Pet Pigs Australia invites you to share your pig stories, photos, knowledge and experience with other members. It takes a lot of dedication and commitment to raise healthy and happy pet pigs.

Topics discussed cover, raising pigs, their diet, behaviour, housing feeding, diseases, weight, medical, training, breeding and more, any questions welcome.

This group welcomes overseas pig lovers to join, no matter what breed, shape, size and colour your pet pigs are, this is a friendly pig chat group!

There are currently 30 members including members from the UK, USA, Canada, Poland and many Australian members in the group.

If you are interested in joining Pet Pigs Australia click on the link below:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/PetPigsAustralia/>

Hope to chat with you soon!!

Georgia Gowanloch
Pet Pigs Australia - Group Owner & Moderator

Copyright – All Rights Reserved

For More Information On Raising & Training Pigs, General Advice, Piglet Enquiries, De-sexing & Permanent Tusk Removal contact:

Georgia Gowanloch

“Happy Farm” PO Box 8 Adelong NSW 2729 - Australia

E-Mail: ducati@dragnet.com.au

Tel/Fax: 02 6946 2699 or Mobile: 0413 842 031

Piggy Names

Here are some famous & common names pet pigs are given to help you if you can't decide.

MALE

Porky
Oscar
Percy
Arnold
Albert

FEMALE

Holly
Nellie
Dotty
Georgia
Missy Piggy

BOTH SEXS

Bacon
Pork Chop
Spam
Freckles
Piglet

Einstein
Wilbur
Chester
George
Harold
Nigel
Ralph
Cody
Stanley
Beavis
Benson
Casper
Boris
Fergus

Zack
Dino
Rupert
Elmo
Gomez
Basil
Gus
Kevin (as in Kevin Bacon the Actor)

Honey
Lilly
Ruby
Rosie
Mini
Lucy
Princess
Babe
Cindy
Molly
Pearl
Daisy
Matilda
Violet

Iris
Ethel
Bonnie
Isabelle
Tiffany
Gracie
Jasmine
Chloe
Doris
Petunia
Angel
Priscilla
Thelma
Bella
Poppy
Charlotte
Lulu
Peppa
Millie

Oink
Grunt
Dozer
Piggy
Buddy
Hoover
Truffles
Dusty
Digger
Nipper
Fatso
Crackle

FACTS ABOUT PIGS

Pigs belong to the animal group **Mammals** they are warm-blooded animals that suckle their babies.

Although primarily raised for their meat, pigs are one of the smartest of the domesticated animals.

Males are called **boars** males that are de-sexed are called **barrows**.

Females are called **sows** they can give birth beginning at 8 months to usually 8-12 piglets.

Young first time mothers are called **gilts**.

All newborn baby pigs are called **piglets**.

Pigs can live up to 15 years they have an acute sense of smell, excellent hearing and eyesight.

Pig manure is a valuable fertilizer and compost additive for the veggie patch, vines and fruit trees.

Pigs are the fourth smartest animal group in the world, following humans, apes, chimps, whales and dolphins.

Pigs do not have any sweat glands, on hot days they must wallow in mud or shallow water to cool down. People think that because of this, pigs are dirty animals but in fact pigs are very clean, intelligent creatures and learn very quickly.

Pigs are covered with coarse hairs to a greater or lesser extent depending on the breed and whether they are kept indoors or outdoors.

The skin in all pigs should be shiny and free from loose, dead skin, scabbiness or wrinkles.

The tail is generally curled (though some healthy pigs hang them straight down intermittently when feeding)

All pigs have 44 teeth. Adult males often have two sharp tusks, which they use as digging tools and as weapons. Because these tusks can be dangerous, farmers usually clip them off.

Pigs investigate with their mouths like human babies. Anything strange is often explored and possibly tasted, nibbled or bitten.

A pig's nose is called a **snout**. In farm pigs, the snout may be either long and narrow, or short and broad. The snout should be moist, clean and shining, it is highly mobile as well as being extremely strong.

A pig's foot has four toes, which end in hooves. The middle hooves are often webbed. The other two toes do not touch the ground while the pig is standing.

Many anatomical and physiological features of the pig are identical to humans. For example, insulin from the pancreas of the pig is used to control diabetes in humans.

Pigs belong to the pig family **Suidae**. **Suidae** belong to the **Artiodactyl** family, a subgroup of the **Ungulates**. **Ungulates** are hoofed (mostly) herbivorous mammals.

Pigs are **Omnivorous** - that is, they eat both meat and plants in the wild, most farm pigs eat a mixture fruit, veggies & grain. Corn is the grain that makes the best pig food. It is **illegal** in Australia to feed commercial, farm and pet pigs any type of meat.