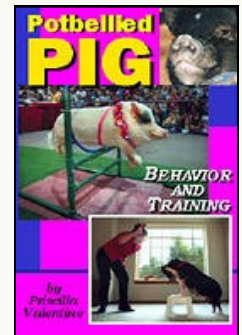


Toys

Whether indoor or outdoor, all pigs love toys, especially any toy with food. Old magazines, old shoes, old clothes (wear them so they have your scent and give them to the pig unwashed), infant toys, dog or cat toys and balls are all good pig toys. Be careful, piglets can get caught in sleeves, buttons, snaps, etc. Pigs also enjoy "Buster Cubes" (PetSmart.com) and "Busy Balls" (Pigs4ever.com) filled with food or treats. You can make your own inexpensive version from a whiffle ball, 2-liter soda bottle or plastic milk jug. Stuff the whiffle ball with plain air-popped popcorn, food pellets, frozen peas, etc. Or, punch holes in the soda bottle or milk jug, making sure they are big enough for the food to fall out when the toy is pushed or rolled. Put the treats into the bottle or jug, and the pig will push it around so the treats or food will fall out. For overweight or bored pigs, you may consider feeding the entire food ration this way too -- it's good mental stimulus and exercise!

Tricks

Please visit www.valentinesperformingpigs.com and click on "On-line Videos" to see some great piggy tricks that have been taught to pigs. Priscilla Valentine, former SCAMPP member, unfortunately passed away in 2012. She & her husband and their "star" pigs traveled the country performing for many audiences. These amazing videos are well worth watching. She published a behavioral/training book that can be ordered from Amazon.com.



Potbellied Pig Behavior and Training Book by Priscilla Valentine

Health Care

It can be difficult to find a veterinarian experienced in treating potbellied pigs. Potbellied pigs are NOT farm hogs. There are differences in their medical treatment.

Before allowing your vet to sedate your potbellied pig, be sure he knows the types of anesthesia to use and the amounts. The wrong drugs or dosages can be harmful or fatal to your pet. Isoflurane gas is the safest, most effective type of anesthesia for a potbellied pig with the least amount of side effects. The injectable dissociative drugs are common and effective, but recovery can be rough and delayed; you should either crate or hold your pig until the pig is fully recovered in order to lessen the stress and fear and possible injury to your pig. There are many other injectable drugs that can be used that are safer and provide a smoother, quicker recovery than the dissociative drugs; the drawback to these drugs is that they are very expensive.

If your pig is "freaking" out for a sustained period of time (not just for a few minutes when you pick him up or when he is getting his hooves trimmed), stop and let him calm down before continuing with whatever you are doing. Covering him up with a blanket may help to calm your pig down, but it freaks out some pigs because they feel "trapped" and confined.

The most common potbellied pig health problems are diet-related. Overweight pigs suffer from heart problems, entropion (eyelashes curling into the eye), fat-blindness (too much fat around the eyes), organ failure and arthritis. Overweight pigs are also a bad surgical risk should emergency surgery be necessary. Under-fed pigs (often in an attempt to keep them small) usually die from malnutrition or complications from malnutrition.