

Girasol Farm

**Mini Pig Guide**

So I own a piggy now what?

Before diving into the care of your piglet there are a few very important things to always keep in mind.

* Never, ever put a pig down or give into a pig when they are squealing, you will have a squealer for life!
* **A pig is always hungry**, no matter the size, big, farm, hog, mini, they are pigs and they are always hungry, **don’t give in!** They need to keep a strict healthy diet.
* Pigs are stubborn; **you have to be the BOSS**!

As a courtesy to our customers this document has been created as a guide, although it applies in general to most piglets, they too are individuals and you might have to change up a few things to make it work for you and your piggy.

**Before your piggy comes home…..**

* Set up a small area, a playpen is perfect, for your piglet. In this area have a soft blanket to snuggle in and fresh water.
* Make sure there aren’t any drafts. A sick piggy is a sad piggy. If your piggy is on a porch where he/she is going to be getting chilly, a heating pad would be appreciated by your piggy, they love 90 degrees!
* Piggies do not like to potty in their beds so put a puppy pad or wee wee pad in there; 90% of the time they use it. They are very smart and figure it out very quickly.
* Set up a day to day guide on adjusting your piglet, most piglets will adjust more quickly because they have been socialized. If your piglet spent a lot of time in a crate during transport, start slowly it’s quite stressful for them.

**What to expect the first day…..A scared piggy.**

Your piglet has just left its herd, its family and everything it has come to know as normal. Imagine if you were dropped by airplane in a foreign country without a companion, to start all over, scary isn’t it?

**The first thing you need to do is give your piggy its space.**

* Place your piggy in its small holding area with fresh food and water and walk away. **Your piggy needs time to adjust, let him/her explore their area before you start to interact with him/her.**

Kids and other pets may be very excited, you don’t want to cause your new piglet more stress and anxiety, a place away from all the commotion might be best the first day.

**What to expect your second day…..**

It’s time to get to know your piggy. Go ahead and sit next to your piggy and talk to him/her.

* Offer your piggy small pieces of food out of your hand, your piggy may or may not take it at this point, but the fastest way to a piggy’s heart is through its stomach LOL.
* If your piglet is okay with being held, go for it. You should note that in general piglets do not like to be picked up because of their fear of falling. **Don’t grab your piglets over the shoulders, scoop them up in your hands**, it makes them feel more secure, but **expect SQUEALING** when you pick up your piggy, some get over that and some don’t.
* **Never put a piglet down if they are squealing,** you are giving them “their way” and it’s a bad habit to start. Once they are older you won’t be picking them up much, but it is a good idea to make sure they are used to being handled, makes health care easier.

**What to expect your third day….**

Let your piggy start to roam and get used to the new home and now you might be able to introduce a pet or two slowly. Our piggies are used to dogs and cats. But a new pet may be different. Keep offering small food morsels out of your hand, then put them in your lap until your piggy is comfortable crawling up in your lap.

* Once your piggy is comfortable start to slowly (did I mention slowly) start offering scratches on the sides, belly, etc…..this is how you will bond with your piggy.

**Day 4 and on….**

Each day spend time with your piggy, building trust and bonding. Before long, you will notice your little piggy following you everywhere you go, resting with you while watching movies and taking walks.

Remember, time with your piggy is good, too much time and catering too, will be a spoiled piggy. **So be careful not to spoil your piggy,** you have the next 18 years with your new companion.

Socialize your piggy! All piggies are different and it’s absolutely TRUE, pigs are individuals and they will all socialize differently. Some pigs might be ready to be a part of your family the first day, so use common sense and be courteous to your piggy’s feelings.

**What do I feed our piggy?....**

We are shooting for 12-16% protein in our feeding program, which is perfect for our mini pigs (except when they are on mama’s milk), it promotes slow steady growth and keeps them lean and active.

As we research proper piglet feeding, our own personal feeding program has evolved, we use Pot Belly Pig feed or Mazuri Mini pig ELDER feed, along with about another 1 cup of fresh veggies (romaine lettuce, broccoli, cauliflower, celery, cucumber or any other veggie besides **iceberg lettuce, avocados or tomatoes**. In the morning or sometime during the day you can supplement a small slice of fruit (apple, persimmons, a few raisins, etc). We usually don’t start fruits until your piglet has readily accepted veggies. If you want to use a mini pig, Mazuri mini pig food is the “gold standard” of mini pig food, it contains all the vitamins, minerals and nutrients a healthy piggy needs. When you use a mini pig commercially prepared feed, give feed according to Mazuri labels. Only buy Mazuri ELDER feed, **We** **skip the youth and the adult because the protein in these two bags exceeds the needs of these piglets and is more suited towards big American farm hogs**.

Our adult pigs get a heaping 1 cup in the morning, 1 cup (heaping, not level) at night, with veggies each night, such as lettuce leaves, carrots, even a small piece of fruit. We feed according to Mazuri’s manufacturer directions on the bag. 2-2.5% of your pigs’ weight, we personally feed more without any added weight gain, our goal is always a healthy pig first and foremost.

If your piggy is getting too fat, cut back on the food; if it looks too thin add a bit. You can tell your piggy is full by his/her little tummy getting round after a meal. You don’t want your piggy too full as it will lead to obesity and they do throw up if they gorge themselves. However when your piggy is going through a growth spurt that round tummy may not be as apparent, as long as they are eating all their food you are good.

Many people wet their pig food, which helps with their hydration. If your pig is eating and rushing to the water bowl, you can try wetting their food because it’s probably too dry for your pig. The other thing you can do is once a week (try picking the same day each week). Squeeze an Omega 3 capsule over their food along with some vitamin E. If you have an indoor piggy, you can give a children's chewable vitamin with iron. If your piggy goes out and plays in the dirt, they get all the iron they need from the soil.

As treats, keep a big box of Cheerios in the car and a box of raisins. They love to root and search for cheerios. It keeps them greatly entertained.

In the winter we mix warm water in their feed to make their tummy warm.

**IMPORTANT!** If you buy a whole bag of mini pig food (25 or 50 pounds) you MUST break it up into 1 gallon zip lock bags and freeze everything except one bag at a time. The bags tend to **grow mold** (even if not moist) and if eaten by a piglet has the ability to KILL them, its causes C-Diff a very deadly disease and it’s really hard and costly to save them. So please follow this guideline.

**NOTE ABOUT NEUTERED AND SPAYED PIGGIES**!

Just like when you alter your dogs, pigs too tend to decrease their activity and metabolism; you have to decrease their feed to compensate. If you don’t want to decrease volume (because pigs love to eat) decrease their pellets and increase their veggies. Watch your piggy’s weight.

We do not want underfed pigs. But we don’t want porky pigs. An alternative food/feeding plan that is popular in pig groups:

We do not recommend this diet unless you are very savvy with nutrition and can insure your pig is getting all required proteins and amino acids. Pigs do not produce protein (they are born anemic) and if you don’t supply them, you will be starving your pig.

Diet consists of:

* ½-1 cup of oatmeal or whole grain in the morning and
* 1 cup of fresh veggies at night plus
* ½-1 cup of oatmeal at night.
* You can use carrots, squash, lettuce (not iceberg), whatever you like. 1 cup might be too much, so if your piglet’s belly is too full or tight cut back.

Remember this is an alternative eating plan, not to be added to piggy pellets.

**Remember never any avocado, dog/cat food or chocolate.**

**Potty training your piggy….**

When you start to potty train, you need to take your piggy outside or the potty area every two hours. When they do their business, use lots and lots of positive reinforcement and treats. Never harshly scold or spank your pig. When they have an accident,

Immediately take them to the appropriate area.

It is just like training a puppy but much quicker. If you are teaching them to go outdoors, **they usually train in a day or two** and before you know it they go to the door to ask to

use the bathroom, they prefer to go outside. Indoors generally takes about 3-4.

When they have slip ups, you want to make sure they aren’t drinking excessive water. Pigs do this out of boredom. Put them back into a small area with a litter pan and bed,

until they “get it”.

**Your piggy’s health care…..**

If you chose to vaccinate, most feed stores carry the vaccinations. They also carry many wormers, you can chose to inject a wormer like Ivomectrin or put the wormer in their water, it’s really a personal preference. Another method is to take a small piece of bread, measure out your Ivomectrin and put it on the bread then feed it to your piglet. If you piggy plays outside on concrete you may never need to trim his feet. If you do trim them start small and never trim between the toes.

If your piggy’s ears get dirty you can clean them with a damp washcloth. We rarely clean ears unless you can really tell they are dirty. Never go into the ear canal, only where your finger can reach and never with q-tips or any other device.

If cared for properly, fed property and given a warm place to sleep you will have a very healthy piggy that rarely needs to see a vet. Sometimes our pigs get allergies in the spring and their eyes get goopy, you can get eye ointment at a feed store for a few dollars, almost any of them work. Minor scratches and scrapes heal quickly on their own; if you have a deeper cut you can use a triple antibiotic ointment.

As you can see, handling your pig will come in handy during health care time. Keep this in mind when socializing them. Handle their feed, touch their eyes, feel their ears, etc….make sure that when you need to handle them it’s not new.

**Regular care….**

Dry skin - Use Extra Virgin Coconut Oil or second best is Aveeno, fragrance free lotion as needed.

* Bathing…some breeders bath a lot! We don’t, only if/when needed. Pigs tend to have dry skin, bathing dries them out even more. They don’t get smelly, unless you have a male that is unaltered or get into something smelly.
* Brushing…you can start this when they are young, it does stimulate the natural oils in the pigs skin and they enjoy it, as well as you will too!

Most of your daily care will be in the bonding and cuddling with your pig. An emotionally happy pig is a healthy pig.

**Outdoor time….**

Pigs need outdoor time. They love to explore, smell things and root. Yes, root. If you have a gorgeous flower garden you might want to keep your piggy out of it, or stay with your pig at all times. They love to turn over rocks, and they are so nosey! Ours get to go play all day, as long as we are at the farm.

**Leash training your pig….**

We should say harness train, a leash and collar won’t work for these guys. A harness made for a piggy is a must; they are all over the internet. Once your pig trusts you and lets you handle him/her you can start to harness train. Here are some simple steps to follow:

1. Show your pig the harness, let them see it and rub it on them, let them know it’s nothing to be feared, done with day 1.

2. On day 2, show them the harness and let them know you are going to put it on them. Go ahead and snap it on them and know that they are going to freak out a big. Let them, let them run with it for a few minutes. This will teach them that it will allow them to move freely.

3. On day 3, repeat Day 2. You are going to do this until they start to accept the harness, but no more than about 5 minutes each day. Leave the leash attached, they need to know what it feels like.

4. When your pig has accepted the harness, it’s time to walk them. Gently guide them, when they go in the right direction reward them, use your words, they are smart and learn quick.

5. Never leave your pig tied up with a harness and never leave the harness on your pig. Take it off and reward your pig for a job well done, they will look forward to your walks and know that when you get the harness out, it’s piggy and parent time!

* www.piggear.com makes a great harness or Ross Mill Pig Farm; both have fabulous reviews from our customers.

What’s next? This is up to you. Will it be tricks? Sleeping in your bed? Free range of the house? It’s your new pig and family member, you will be able to teach your pig whatever you want. They look to you as their family and they aim to please.

Although this is a broad guide, I hope it answers some questions for you and gives you some guidance. We found that on the internet there are many sources, some great, some are too vague to help, but over time you will develop your own methods. Each pig is an individual like you and I. Some methods will work perfectly; some will need to be customized. Patience is the key to a happy piggy and a happy piggy home. Remember to the whole world it’s just a piggy, but to your piggy you are its whole world.

We love to stay in contact with our piggy families; some have become our closest friends. We enjoy seeing pictures and hearing the stories. Friend us on our Facebook page, [www.Facebook.com/GirasolFarm](http://www.facebook.com/GirasolFarm) . We also like to provide you with support when needed. Many clients come up with new methods that we adopt. The more we share and communicate, the better off our piggies are.

