

Feeding your Pasture Pigs & Piglets

It is recommended to feed a small amount in the morning and at night. These pigs eat both grass and feed very well.

Supplementing with a small amount of grain is the best way to ensure they get the necessary minerals they need in their diet.

When your soil is deficient in a certain mineral or minerals, then the grass they are eating will also be missing those minerals.

It is recommended to give each of the piglets about a 1/2 of a pound of feed both morning and night at weaning and increase the amount based on growth rate until about three months when they should be getting the adult amounts. Recommended feeding for full grown (non-lactating) sows and boars is a half of a scoop (about one pound) both morning and night during the growing seasons when there is ample grass.

It is recommended to increase the feed for adult pigs to about a whole scoop (2 pounds) both morning and night in the middle of winter or during the cold non-growing season when when they don't have grass growing. The IPP's enjoy certain hay. Their favorite seems to be a soft grass hay or alfalfa hay. Supplementing their diet with hay when the grass isn't growing and it is really cold out will give additional nutrition and benefit the pig's health. All of the piglets go through growth spurts periodically and increasing their feed is necessary at that time. By the time they are 3 months old, they should be fed the same as the adult pigs. The Idaho Pasture Pigs can live outside all year long. Having a good shelter, such an A-frame house, is the best way to ensure they stay warm during the winter months and to provide them with shade in the warm months. Straw is recommended for bedding as it provides loft and warmth during cold months as well as during farrowing.

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Pasture Care

The pigs are going to dig a little in your fields if the grass gets too tall for them to eat, so please make sure you cut the grass down if it gets too high. Mowing the pastures during the growing season will help keep the grasses at a good grazing height. Pigs are physically unable to rotate their heads like other animals, so they have to eat from the top down. Grasses that are taller than 8 - 10 inches will be difficult for pigs to eat and if you have smaller piglets, it may have to be shorter than that. If you have dandelions, the pigs are going to dig them all out. They absolutely love dandelion roots and will find every one to eat. Depending on your location, there may be other grasses or legumes the pigs' find just as delicious. Once they are gone, the pigs' will continue to graze and your pastures will grow in with grasses.

It is extremely important that your grazing pigs get the necessary minerals and vitamins they need or they will start digging in the ground trying to get more. Paying special attention to selenium is important, as a lot of the ground in the United States is deficient in selenium. The best way to get an accurate test of what is in your soil is to get it tested. The pigs tend to make additional wallows in wooded areas and along fence rows. They will nose the ground in the early spring looking for the fresh green shoots that want to start growing. They are not rooting and once the grass starts to grow, they stop and graze normally.

To determine how many pigs you can raise on your property, the best way to figure that out is to get the local carrying capacity for your area. The general rule of thumb is that for every one cow you can raise per acre, you can raise ten adult Idaho Pasture Pigs.



For additional information regarding the complete breed standard, becoming a Registered Breeder, using the online system, and additional educational topics, please visit the Registry website.

Idaho Pasture Pigs



*Idaho Pasture Pig
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Idaho Pasture Pigs

The Idaho Pasture Pig (IPP) is a breed of pig composed of the Duroc, Old Berkshire, and Kunekune pig. These are true “grazing” pigs that are very gentle in nature, have great personalities, and are easy to work with, smaller in size than traditional pigs, great mothers, able to live outdoors all year round, and can grow extremely well with a diet of primarily grass.



Litter Size:

The average litter size of the Idaho Pasture Pigs is 5-7 for a gilt (first time mom) and 8 – 10 for a sow.

One of the benefits of this breed is their smaller mature size. Ideally, sows should mature out at 250 – 350 pounds whereas the boars should mature out at 350 – 450 pounds. When feeding a diet of primarily grass, the butcher pigs should reach a butcher weight of about 230 – 250 in approximately 10 months. .



Breed Standard

Disposition:

Friendly and curious disposition. Aggressive behavior definitely disqualifies the pig from breed selection. A natural maternal instinct to protect the piglets is desired.

Head:

Medium length snout with an upturn or dish on the end to allow grazing and discourage rooting. The snout should be wide and compliment the overall shape of the head. It should not be tapered, not be long and straight, nor should it be completely snub and dished, all of which disqualify pig from breed selection. Eyes are symmetrical and set well apart. Teeth must be set well in mouth with no over or underbite. Ears can be erect or drooping. Wattles may or may not be present.

Shoulders:

Medium neck that blends well from head to shoulders. Well developed and noticeable shoulders that are proportional to the rest of the body. There should be a noticeable difference in the sows and the boars with the front shoulders of the boar being more broad and pronounced. Boars will normally develop a shield at about 2 years of age.

Hams & Legs:

Well developed and pronounced hams that are full all the way down to the hock. The legs should be straight coming down from the shoulders. They should be strong and keep the pig’s hocks to where it is standing up off of the pasterns with the cleats off of the ground. Some flex of the foot is desired to be able to traverse the ground properly. The legs should be square under the body to provide ease of movement.

Reproductive Organs:

All breeding stock, while meeting the above standards, must also, without exception, be free from congenital defects (e.g. umbilical and scrotal hernias, Atresia Ani (blind anus), cryptorchid boars, extra cleys, hermaphroditism, rectal and uterine prolapse). Two testicles are visible and/or able to be palpated in young boars. Undescended testicles do not fit breed standard.

Growth Rate

4 weeks	15 – 20 pounds
4 – 6 weeks	20 – 30 pounds
3 – 4 months	50-80 pounds
5 – 6 months	100-130 pounds
6 – 7 months	150 – 170 pounds
9 – 10 months	225 – 275 pounds

Shelters

The A-frame shelter is ideal for winter & summer shelter as well as farrowing. Pigs give off a lot of heat themselves, so their own heat will go up to the peak of the A-frame and come back down on top of themselves. They are basically able to heat themselves and stay very warm with straw as bedding even in temperatures below zero.

As a sow walks into the shelter, her back hits the slanted roof and she lays down. This will naturally leave a space behind her for the piglets and this will assist in preventing piglets from getting laid on.



Measurements are located on the picture

One main thing to remember is that there are multiple different ways to do shelters, wallows, feeding locations, waterers, shade, etc. with these pigs. Things will differ based on location, temperatures, and growing season. Do what works the best for you and your pigs.