



ANIMAL WELFARE ASSESSMENT CONTEST 2023



Pet Potbellied Pigs

2023 Animal Welfare Assessment Contest

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NOTES

1. THESE ARE FICTITIOUS ANIMALS AND SITUATIONS. They have been created using pictures and information collected from multiple sources to generate realistic, yet fabricated scenarios. Neither situation exists as presented here.
2. Please use the images provided throughout the presentation as well as text when making your assessment.

The Pigs: Marigold

- 3-year-old Vietnamese potbellied pig cross
- Marigold has had 3 litters of piglets of 5-7 piglets
 - All pregnancies and births were uneventful, and all piglets survived
 - Piglets were sold or given to friends, family, and neighbors
 - Marigold's last litter was born ~4 months ago
 - Caretakers are not planning on any more litters and have neutered Marigold's mate



The Pigs: Petunia

- 8-month-old American potbellied pig
- Petunia was obtained from breeder at 7 weeks of age
 - Breeder advertised her as a 'micro' pig that would not grow over 11kg (25lb)
- Spayed 1 month ago



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Overview of Home

Marigold

- Small farm in countryside on 4-ha (10 acres)
 - Large pond
 - Mix of mature bushes and trees and pasture
- Temperate climate zone
 - Summer: high ~32C (92F), 95% humidity
 - Winter: average ~11C (52F) with lows near freezing
 - Most of year: ~10-21C (50-70F)

Petunia

- House in suburbs on 0.2 ha (0.5 acre)
 - Mostly grassy lawn with some flower borders and 2 big oak trees
- Continental climate zone
 - Summer: high ~29C (85F), 70% humidity
 - Winter: average ~0C (32F), snows often from December to March
 - Most of year: ~8-18C (47-65F)

People

Marigold

- A couple in their 60's are Marigold's caretakers
 - Both are retired
 - At least one (if not both) is usually home all day
- Have >30 years of pig experience
 - Raised Landrace pigs for show and meat sold at farmers market ~20 years
 - Switched to potbellied pigs ~10 years ago

Petunia

- Petunia lives with a family of 4
 - 2 Parents, have full-time jobs
 - 2 children, ages 5 and 8 years old
 - Play sports and have practices most evenings and games on weekends
 - Teenage neighbor pet sits
 - Watched Petunia once for a long weekend. Things went well, but they were a bit afraid of her
- Have had many pets—but never livestock
 - Did not know much about pigs before bringing Petunia home

Other Animals: Marigold

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- Marigold lives with 3 other adult potbellied pigs
 - 2 female siblings born and raised with Marigold on the caretakers' farm
 - 1 adult male obtained as a piglet from a neighbor
 - All generally get along well
- A flock of egg-laying chickens, 8 sheep, barn cats, and 2 indoor small-breed dogs also live on the farm
 - Animals are housed with own species and are supervised if they are ever mixed
 - Central barn houses the sheep (and cats) and stores feed and farm implements
 - Chickens roam the property during the day and are kept in a coop at night

Other Animals: Petunia

- No other pigs in the home
- Petunia lives with an older cat and 3 mature dogs
 - Dogs range in size from 6 kg (15 lb) to 34 kg (75 lb)
- Petunia and two bigger dogs spend time together in house and yard
 - Follow each other, lie down together, eat side by side, generally peacefully
 - Occasional growling/showing teeth (dogs) or grunting/shoving (Petunia) over food or toys
- Small dog jumps on furniture when Petunia is around
 - Seems accepting of her as long as he's in a secure position
- Cat avoids Petunia if possible
 - Hides when she is in the house
 - Hisses and swats at Petunia if they encounter each other in tight spaces



Housing: Marigold

- Marigold lives outside with the 3 other pigs
- At night, pigs are enclosed in a 3 x 3m (10 x 10ft) insulated wooden shed near the farmhouse
 - Large door with ramp, 'piggie' door to covered area
 - Deep-bedded with straw plus blankets in one corner
 - Large, no-spill water trough in covered area
 - Window fan in shed, large industrial fan in covered area
- Shed is within a 15 x 15m pen (50 x 50ft)
 - Galvanized wire hog panels 1.5m tall (5ft)
 - Strand of electric wire at bottom of fence turned on at night
- After breakfast, pen gate is opened to allow pigs free access to 1.2-ha (3-acre) pasture that includes the pond



Housing: Petunia

- Petunia spends most of her time indoors in a tiled mudroom 4 x 5m (13 x 17ft)
 - She is crated at night and while family is at work/school
 - Baby gate between mudroom and rest of house
 - Litterbox with pelleted paper
 - Mudroom is also the laundry room
- Dog door from mudroom to outside
 - Left open morning and evenings
- Yard 9 x 15m (30 x 50ft)
 - Grass mix, mature tree, sand/clay soil



Food: Marigold

- Fed commercial diet formulated for active adult minipigs
 - Fed according to recommendations for 50kg (110lb) pigs
 - Morning and evening = 1/3 of daily pellets mixed with water, divided among 4 rubber tubs spread around pen
 - Midday = 1/3 of pellets scatter fed in grassy pasture adjacent to pen
- 1/4 bale of grass hay also provided in morning
 - Flakes are placed in 5-6 places around pen
 - Hay put in shed and under sheltered area if wet or snowy
- Every other day, pigs receive fresh zucchini, cucumbers, and other vegetables scattered in pasture outside pen
- Portions of pellets and hay are increased in winter



Food: Petunia

- Fed commercial diet formulated for young minipigs
 - Fed according to breeder recommendations
 - Morning and evening = ½ of pellets in large bowl in mudroom
 - Fed alongside dogs, sometimes eats their food
- Regularly gets an apple a day or leftover salad veggies
 - When in the kitchen, sometimes eats food spilled on floor
- Kids try to sneak her treats while watching TV in evenings
 - Fruits, popcorn, pretzels, potato chips, occasionally candy



Water: Marigold

- Large water barrel with nipple drinker in pen near shed
 - Topped off daily with fresh water
- 3 portable waterers in pasture
 - Checked every other day
 - Topped off when less than half full using tractor hauling a water tank
 - Relocated several times a year
 - Only 1 kept filled in winter



Nipple
drinkers

©Rural Sprout

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Water: Petunia

- 2 large water bowls
 - Shared by Petunia and dogs
- Water bowl in mudroom and yard are dumped and refilled by parent each evening
 - Sometimes knocked over by Petunia and dogs when they play
- Outdoor bowl has muddy water or dog slobber and other detritus floating in it regularly
 - In winter, water in outdoor bowl often freezes



Cleaning

Marigold

- Wet spots and manure removed daily from straw ins shed and covered area
- Straw in corner of covered area where pigs defecate and urinate is removed and replaced weekly
- Straw is completely removed and replaced in spring, mid-summer, and end of summer
- Hay is removed when dry and brown or if it appears soiled
- Water barrel in covered area is cleaned/scrubbed every other week in the summer and monthly in the winter
- Pasture tanks cleaned monthly while in use

Petunia

- Bedding in Petunia's crate is washed 2x/week
- Crate is wiped with pet safe cleaner while bedding is washed
- Food and water bowls are dumped and rinsed out daily
- Bowls are washed in dishwasher every other day
- Petunia's indoor litterbox is scooped daily with litter added as needed
- Box is disinfected and litter fully replaced ever 2 weeks
- Manure (pig and dog) is picked up daily from the yard

Veterinary Care

Marigold

- Marigold has yearly veterinary exam at local mixed-practice veterinary clinic
 - Marigold is heavily sedated and/or anesthetized
 - Exam includes hoof trimming and dental evaluation with cleaning and trimming if needed
- Marigold receives yearly tetanus and Erysipelas vaccinations
- She receives topical flea, tick, and parasite medication in the summer
 - Owners administer following vet's directions

Petunia

- Had foreign body surgery 1 month ago at university veterinary hospital (>2h away) after ingesting inedible object
 - Spayed also at this time
- Otherwise has not seen vet
- Owners not sure if Petunia was vaccinated when they purchased her
- Owners have been searching for vet clinic with pig experience
 - Especially after cat scratch turned red
 - Used Neosporin and it seemed to heal

Health: Marigold

- Marigold weighs 45kg (99lb)
 - Her body condition score is a 3
- Her tusks are well-trimmed
- Marigold's hooves are long in front; she still walks normally
- Skin is a little flaky and dry in winter
- When she shed last spring, she was pruritic, which continued into the summer
 - Visit to the vet led to medication, after which she seemed better
 - Her hair grew back; she has not started itching again
- Every other day, Marigold has mucous-like discharge and crusts around her eyes
 - The couple wipes them with baby wipes
 - Vet said discharge was due to mild entropion of upper eyelid



*On a 1-5 scale with 1 = emaciated and 5 = obese

Health: Petunia

- Petunia weighed 8kg (18lb) a month ago when having surgery
 - Her body condition score is a 2*
- Her hooves appear normal
- She gets sunburn on her back under areas of white hair
- Skin on her back also shows some brownish discoloration



© Mini Pig Info



Example of mini pig with Petunia's skin

Example of mini pig with Petunia's body condition score

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*On a 1-5 scale with 1 = emaciated and 5 = obese

Time in House: Marigold



- Marigold and other pigs spend Sunday inside the home with the couple
- They are allowed in the family room, kitchen, dining room, and bathroom
 - The couple has pig-proofed these rooms
 - The pigs have their own couches, blankets, large dog beds, and lounge chairs
- They watch TV with the couple and keep them company while they cook and bake
 - Marigold gets treats during this time
 - The pigs 'ask' to go outside when they have to defecate or urinate
- When pigs are indoors, they seem to get along with the 2 small-breed dogs
 - They are never alone together in the house

Time in House: Petunia

- Petunia is allowed out of mudroom into rest of house most evenings and some mornings before work/school
- Mostly hangs out with family in the kitchen, dining room, and family room
 - She likes to snuggle and get scratched while kids watch TV or play video games while sitting on big floor pillows
 - Gets scolded for walking in front of screen
- Sometimes goes into bedrooms where she 'explores' the kids' toys and dirty clothes on the floor



Human-Pig Interactions



Marigold

- The couple spends time outside with pigs daily while gardening, doing chores, or sitting outside
- Marigold interacts with the couple
 - Trots to fence when they approach the pen
 - Follows couple around pen and house
 - Leans into legs while getting her back scratched
 - Often rests or explores near the couple
- Relatives and friends visit at least monthly
 - Marigold gradually warms up to allows scratches, belly rubs, and attention
- Marigold readily moves in and out of house, shed, and van when lured with food



Petunia

- Parents got Petunia for kids who fell in love with idea of a pig after watching a popular movie
 - Kids "play" with Petunia, sometimes dress her up
 - They think it's cute when she squeals and runs
 - Allows kids to hug her and likes to cuddle
- Petunia grunts eagerly in her crate when people come to let her out
 - She runs into people as she scampers around after being let out
- Repetitively noses owners' legs sometimes when sitting with them on the floor or couches

Enrichment: Marigold

- The pigs spend most of their days outdoors in the pasture, pen, and shed
- They have straw in the shed and covered area of pen
- A portion of food and treats are broadcast each day in grassy pasture
- The pigs have created wallows in their pen and in the pasture



Enrichment: Petunia

- Petunia has a plastic pool in the mudroom
 - Filled with balls and fleece blankets
 - Parents often hide food or other toys among balls
- Outdoors there are sturdy pig/dog toys (Nylabones, jolly balls)
- Sometimes Petunia gets a foraging device outside
 - Given when dogs are not present, or dogs try to take it and competition occurs
- Goes on walks with family and dogs around neighborhood
 - She sniffs at everything and pulls lots on the leash
 - She is getting too heavy to carry long distances



Behavior Notes: Marigold

- Spring through fall, Marigold spends her days with other pigs on pasture
 - Rooting, exploring, resting under bushes, rubbing against trees, and wallowing in mud
Sometimes seen play fighting and scampering
- Shortly before dusk, the pigs wander back to the pen
 - They forage and root for food they missed earlier
 - They are fed dinner in the pen
- After dinner, they are closed in the shed for the night
- In winter, Marigold spends more time in the shed and pen
 - Pigs burrow, forage and root in straw in shed when it's very cold
 - Venture out more when sun is out



Behavior Notes: Petunia

- Petunia forages and roots in the house and yard
 - Searches for food among the balls in her pool
 - She chews on and sometimes eats pieces of kids' toys
 - Roots in laundry on the floor or in baskets
 - She does not go out much when temperature drops below 5C (41F)
- Petunia goes to the bathroom outside litterbox about once a week
 - She is scolded if caught in the act and pushed outside while the mess is cleaned up
- Petunia wallows in wet grass, mud or snow in yard
 - Petunia has tracked mud in house and gotten onto furniture while muddy several times
- She and dogs sometimes get competitive over food or toys
 - So far has been all posturing and vocalizing and Petunia usually retreats
- Cat swatted Petunia in the face and scratched her (missed the eye)
 - Petunia squealed, pooped, and ran away

