

UC Agriculture & Natural Resources

4-H, Youth and Family (includes home livestock)

Title

Swine - From the Animal's Point of View, 5: Pig Care and Responsibility

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Authors

Smith, Martin H
Meehan, Cheryl L
Ma, Justine M
et al.

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SWINE : *From the Animal's Point of View*

5

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

There is a lot to know about the raising of and caring for a pig. Having a pig is a big responsibility and you need to understand its behavior, housing requirements, nutritional needs, and aspects of its health care in order to prevent injury or disease. Knowledge of these essential facts is the foundation to becoming a successful pig caretaker. By applying this knowledge carefully and thoughtfully, you can properly maintain the health and well-being of your pig and ensure it a high quality of life.

Concepts and Vocabulary

- **Care:** Having concern for someone or something, which leads to tending or overseeing that person or thing.
- **Responsibility:** Being accountable for one's actions or behaviors.

Life Skills

Critical thinking, decision making, disease prevention, problem solving, sharing

Subject Links

Science, Language Arts

Overview of Activity

This activity, entitled *Pig Responsibility*, provides different scenarios that involve issues relating to caring for and raising a pig. Youth will need to use the knowledge they have gained from the previous publications in this curriculum as they read the scenarios and answer questions concerning the proper care of pigs. Youth will discuss, reflect, and suggest alternative solutions for each scenario.

Pig Care and Responsibility



The content in this curriculum is designed to introduce youth to swine behavior, needs and care. Additional emphases include life skills and positive youth development. This is not a guide to raising swine for market or exhibition.

MARTIN H. SMITH, Cooperative Extension Youth Curriculum Development Specialist, University of California, Davis; **CHERYL L. MEEHAN**, Staff Research Associate, UC Davis; **JUSTINE M. MA**, Program Representative, UC Davis; **NAO HISAKAWA**, Student Assistant, Veterinary Medicine Extension, UC Davis; **H. STEVE DASHER**, 4-H Youth and Community Development Advisor, UC Cooperative Extension, San Diego County; **JOE D. CAMARILLO**, 4-H Youth and Community Development Advisor, UCCE, Madera County; and UC Davis Undergraduate Curriculum Development Teams.

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ACTIVITY 1

Pig Responsibility

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Owning an animal is an important responsibility. Domesticated animals depend on us to provide for their needs, such as safe and comfortable housing, healthy and nutritious food, and proper veterinary care. When we make the commitment to care for one or more animals, these responsibilities become a part of our everyday activities.

Time Required

45 to 60 minutes

Concepts and Vocabulary

Care, responsibility

Life Skills

Sharing, critical thinking, problem solving, decision making, disease prevention

Subject Links

Science, Language Arts

State Content Standards

Science

- Sixth Grade:
 - » Investigation and Experimentation: 7d

Language Arts

- Fourth Grade:
 - » Listening and Speaking Strategies: 1.7, 1.8
- Fifth Grade:
 - » Reading Comprehension: 2.4
 - » Listening and Speaking Strategies: 1.5
- Sixth Grade:
 - » Listening and Speaking Strategies: 1.5
 - » Speaking Applications: 2.5a, 2.5b

Suggested Grouping

Pairs or small groups

Materials Needed

(* = *Materials provided in curriculum*)

- * *Pig Responsibility Stories*
- Flip chart paper
- Pens, pencils, or markers

Getting Ready

- Divide the youth into small groups.
- Make sure there are enough sheets of flip chart paper and writing utensils for each group.
- Make enough copies of the *Pig Responsibility Stories* for each group to have a story.

OPENING QUESTIONS

Have the youth work in pairs or small groups. Pose and discuss the following questions:

1. **What does being a “responsible animal owner” mean to you?** Ask the youth to share their ideas verbally or write their thoughts and ideas on the paper provided.
2. **What types of things do you think a responsible owner should do for his or her animal?** Ask the youth to share their ideas verbally or write their thoughts and ideas on the paper provided.
3. **What types of needs do you think pigs have, and how do you think an owner can best meet those needs?** Ask the youth to share their ideas verbally or write their thoughts and ideas on the paper provided.
4. **Describe some situations where you think it might be hard for an owner to keep up with pig care responsibilities. What might be the consequences of this?** Ask the youth to share their ideas verbally or write their thoughts and ideas on the paper provided.

PROCEDURE (EXPERIENCING)

Inform the youth that they are going to review a story about youth who are in situations where they have to make decisions about how they are going to care for their pigs.

Give each group of youth one of the *Pig Responsibility Stories* below. Encourage them to discuss their answers to the follow-up questions together and then record their ideas on paper. Once the small groups of youth have discussed their stories, they will present their ideas to the larger group as a whole.

SHARING, PROCESSING, AND GENERALIZING

Follow the lines of thinking developed by the youth as they share and compare their thoughts and observations; if necessary, use more targeted questions as prompts to get to particular points. Specific questions might include:

1. **Can you think of an example where you have had to make a difficult decision about caring for your pig?**
Please describe the situation.
2. **What are some ways that youth can learn to make the most responsible decisions about caring for their pigs?**
3. **Have you ever known someone who was not a responsible animal owner? What caused you to be concerned about the way that they cared for their animal? What, if anything, did you do in that situation?**

CONCEPTS AND TERMS

At this point, volunteers need to ensure that the concepts of care and responsibility have been introduced to or discovered by the youth. (Note: The goal is to have the youth develop concepts through their own exploration and define terms using their own words.)

CONCEPT APPLICATION

- For youth who have a project animal or pets, ask the youth to review how they take care of their animals. Is the care they are providing sufficient for the needs of their animals? Would they deem the care they are providing to be sufficient and appropriate for the needs of the animals? If not, what needs to be changed in order for the animals to receive sufficient and appropriate care?
- For youth who do not have a project animal or pet, ask the youth to observe and review a friend's animal. Remind them to make sure to ask permission from the owner before observing the animal. Does the youth believe that the care being provided is sufficient for the needs of the animal? If not, what needs to be changed in order for the animal to receive sufficient care?

REFERENCES

- McGlone, J. et al. 2010. Guide for the care and use of agricultural animals in research and teaching (3rd ed.). Federation of Animal Science Societies. www.fass.org.
- Farley, J. L., and W. J. van Riet (eds.). n.d. Swine care practices. California Pork Industry Group and University of California Cooperative Extension. www.vetmed.ucdavis.edu/vetext/local-assets/pdfs/pdfs_animal_welfare/swinecareprax.pdf.

PIG RESPONSIBILITY STORIES

What Should Alan Do?

Alan and his family have just moved from their former home in the city to a small rural town about 50 miles away from a major city. Alan was a bit nervous moving to such a small town because he wasn't sure what to do with his spare time and he was afraid he wouldn't make any friends. At school, he saw a flyer on joining a pig club and raising pigs. It seemed interesting so he decided to talk to his parents about it. Later that night, Alan told his parents about the club. They thought it was a great idea and that Alan should join it. The only requirement was that he needed to take full responsibility for a pig. Excited, Alan started to do some research on how to get a pig and how to raise it.

The first pig meeting was great. Alan met a lot of really cool people, and he started to feel like he was fitting in. Alan started hanging out with people from the club, and they helped him prepare for getting a pig. They helped build a pig shelter and a fence around the area where the pig would be housed. While putting up the fence, one of Alan's friends pointed out some feral pigs roaming around the outskirts of Alan's property. Alan remembered from his research that pigs are social animals. Unfortunately, he didn't have enough money to buy more than one pig, so he decided to leave a small opening in the fence so his pig could interact with the feral pigs.

Later that week, Alan picked out a pig at an auction. He bought a 3-year-old Yorkshire pig that he named Porky. Alan was really excited and brought Porky to his new home. Alan did a great job taking care of Porky. He always made sure Porky's home and enclosure were clean. He always fed Porky and gave him clean water before going to school and after school. Alan wanted to make sure Porky was mentally stimulated while Alan was at school, so he bought lots of toys for Porky to play with and bought a kiddie-pool that he filled with mud so Porky could wallow in it.

One day after coming back from his club meeting, Alan noticed that the feral pigs were inside the fence and were interacting with Porky and eating food from Porky's food trough. Porky looked like he was having fun, so Alan let the feral pigs stay. When the feral pigs left, Alan refilled Porky's water and food trough and played with Porky for the remainder of the afternoon.

A few days later, Alan noticed that Porky wasn't as active as he usually was. He didn't eat all his food in the food trough and was laying down most of the time when Alan went to check up on him. Alan also noticed that Porky was coughing a bit. It appeared as though he had the flu. So Alan made sure Porky had enough food and water and added extra bedding to make sure Porky was comfortable.

The pig club planned to visit each club member's home to see everyone's pigs and evaluate each pig's housing. Alan was really excited because he felt Porky's housing was great and he wanted to show off Porky. Porky still was sick, but seemed better than he had been a few days before, so Alan thought it was okay for people to visit Porky. The visit was a success and everyone liked Porky and his housing.

A week later at the club meeting, a few youth mentioned that their pigs appeared to be sick. Some reported that their pigs were not eating, were coughing, and were just very lazy. Alan noticed that these symptoms were very similar to Porky's symptoms. However, he wasn't sure if he should tell the club leader—he was afraid the other pigs might have gotten sick because of Porky. He didn't want to get kicked out of the club. He finally felt like he had friends and he didn't want to lose them.

Questions for Discussion

1. What, if anything, do you think is wrong with Porky?
2. What do you think could have caused the problem?
3. Is Alan meeting his responsibilities as a pig owner? Why or why not?
4. Who could Alan talk to for help in deciding what to do?
5. If you were in Alan's situation, what would you do and why?
6. What could Alan have done to avoid this situation?

What Should Diane Do?

Diane loves pigs. Everything in her room revolves around pigs, from the bed sheets to her stuffed animals. Diane has always begged her parents for a pet pig but they always said no. However, on Diane's 7th birthday, her parents surprised her with a piglet. Diane was so happy and couldn't stop thanking her parents. Diane named her piglet Gracie.

Diane and Gracie became quick friends and were practically inseparable. Gracie at first slept in Diane's room until Diane was able to clean out her parent's old barn. While Diane was cleaning the barn, Gracie would constantly follow Diane around and watch with great curiosity. Diane went shopping for Gracie, buying tons of bedding, food, toys, and feeders. Once Diane got everything organized and arranged for Gracie, Diane took Gracie to her new home. Gracie seemed really excited, sniffing everything and adjusting to her new home. The rest of that afternoon Diane and Gracie played together and took a nap together under a tree.

After reading some books about pigs, Diane learned that pigs like to wallow. So her next project was to build a mud pool for Gracie. One afternoon, Diane dug a pig hole near the barn and filled it with mud and water. While Diane was doing this, Gracie was sleeping under a tree. When Diane was done with the wallowing hole, she called Gracie to come over. Gracie did a running start and jumped into the hole. Gracie just loved it!

As the months started to go by, it got colder and colder. Diane was afraid Gracie might get sick from the cold so she added more bedding in Gracie's stall. One day, Diane's friend Kathy asked Diane if she could keep her pig Lori at Diane's barn, since she was going out of town for a little while. Diane happily accepted and let Lori stay in another stall at the other

end of the barn. Diane didn't let Gracie and Lori play together because she noticed that Lori had some diarrhea and she didn't want Gracie to get diarrhea too.

A few days later, Kathy came to pick up Lori. Unfortunately, Diane had been feeling a little sick so she hadn't cleaned out Lori's stall. After Kathy and Lori left, Diane brought Gracie into the house because it started to snow. In fact there was so much snow that the part of the barn that housed Gracie collapsed. After the snow stopped, Diane decided it was safe to put Gracie in the far end of the barn in the stall that Lori had used. A few days later, Diane was feeling back to her normal self. She went to check on Gracie and noticed that her feces were watery and covered in mucus. Gracie hadn't been eating all of her food the past few days, but Diane had just figured it was because of the cold weather. However, today, Gracie looked especially weak and thin. Diane didn't know what to do. She wanted to ask her parents for help, but she didn't want them to think she was unable to take care of Gracie on her own.

Questions for Discussion

1. What, if anything, do you think is wrong with Gracie?
2. What do you think could have caused the problem?
3. Is Diane meeting her responsibilities as a pig owner? Why or why not?
4. If you were in Diane's situation, what would you do and why?
5. What could Diane have done to avoid this situation?

What Should Gary Do?

Gary has always been an overachiever. He always participates in many extra curricular activities, even when he might not have the time for it. His best friend told him about a foster project where a person takes care of a pig for a few months and then helps adopt it out. The project focuses on responsibility and learning how to care for a pig. Gary thought it sounded like a great experience and thought the skills he would learn would be great to know later in life. Gary asked his parents if it was okay to foster a pig. They were a little hesitant at first because they were not sure he would have time to foster a pig. Gary convinced them, however, saying that yes he would have time to take care of a pig.

He went to the foster project headquarters and talked with the person in charge about fostering a pig. The person in charge had Gary sign a few documents and gave him a booklet on how to raise a pig. The agency offered pig classes, but Gary decided not to take them because he didn't have time and because he thought the handout would be sufficient on its own. That night, after doing his homework, Gary read the booklet and started to prepare for the foster pig.

With the help of his best friend, Gary prepared the pig's housing in the backyard. He also went out and got all of the basic necessities for raising a pig. The next day, he went to pick up his foster pig. It was a one-year-old male Duroc named Bob. Bob was a little uncomfortable at first in his new home. He didn't eat much the first few days, but later started to adjust and eventually became very comfortable in his home, eating very well and enjoying life.

In the beginning, Gary took really good care of Bob. He fed him daily and changed Bob's water every day. When the bedding appeared dirty, Gary would change it. Gary also got an inflatable pool and filled it with dirt and mud for Bob to wallow in. Since Gary had other activities he had to go to, he didn't have much time to play with Bob.

As the weeks passed, Gary started to get really busy. One week, he had three different projects he had to help put together for clubs he belonged to. He was swamped and sometimes would not have time to clean Bob's feeders or bedding. He would just dump out the loose old food and put fresh food in the feeder without scrubbing it out. He would only change the water when it appeared dirty. He would also just put new bedding over the old bedding. At times, he was so busy that he asked his little brother to help feed and take care of Bob. But his brother would sometimes forget to feed Bob and refill his water bowl.

After a few very busy weeks, Gary started to check up on Bob more often and interact with him. One day, Gary noticed that Bob was just lying on his bedding. When Gary went up to Bob to get him up, Bob didn't move; he just lay there. Gary noticed that Bob had a lot of saliva running from his mouth and that he seemed to be having a hard time breathing. Gary was really worried about Bob, but didn't know what to do.

Questions for Discussion:

1. What, if anything, do you think is wrong with Bob?
2. What do you think could have caused the problem?
3. Is Gary meeting his responsibilities as a pig owner? Why or why not?
4. Who could Gary talk to for help in deciding what to do?
5. If you were in Gary's situation, what would you do and why?
6. What could Gary have done to avoid this situation?

What Should Tony Do?

Tony's family is big on pigs. His mom and dad and brothers and sisters have all participated in raising and showing pigs. They even created a pig club for the local neighborhood. The entire family has enjoyed the experience of raising pigs and Tony was next in line to experience it. So for Tony's 15th birthday, Tony's parents bought him his first pig, a 1-year-old sow that Tony named Harriet.

Tony felt lucky to have a family that was already knowledgeable about how to raise and show pigs, but he didn't always want to look to his family for help. Tony wanted to prove to his family that he could be a great pig caretaker without any help, whether it was a matter of asking for advice or asking for money. Tony went to the club meetings his parents held, but most of the time he was on his own taking care of Harriet.

A show was coming up and Tony wanted to win first place. He thought he had a good chance of winning because Harriet looked great and was well taken care of. Tony always made sure Harriet's home was clean and comfortable. Tony noticed big stacks of hay in the corner of his parent's farm so he decided to feed the hay to Harriet to save some money. He would clean and change Harriet's water every day.

About one week before the show, Tony wanted Harriet to be energized for the event. He heard from a friend that feeding a high-energy, low-protein diet will do the trick to help boost Harriet's energy. Tony's friend had already won many shows, so Tony was really excited with this advice and started to feed Harriet this new diet right away.

The day of the show was very hectic. Tony woke up late for the show and quickly got everything together in time to be picked up by his friend's parents. They loaded Harriet into the trailer with the other pigs and started on the road. The fair was about 2 hours away so they didn't make any stops along the way. Even though there

was an accident on the road, they made it to the fair just in time. However, because Tony came in late, there were no individual pens available for Harriet. The only place he could put her was in a crowded pen. Eventually, things started to calm down and the day turned out to be very successful. Harriet placed first in her division, and Tony was very happy. His parents were really proud of Tony when he told them the news.

Tony was so proud of Harriet that he fed her lots of little treats when he got home. A few days later, Tony noticed that Harriet was not eating as much as she usually did. He also noticed that she produced some vomit near her water bowl. Tony thought the treats were the cause so he stopped feeding her the treats.

The next day, Harriet did not look good. She appeared very weak and did not get up when Tony came near. He saw that she had not eaten the night before and hadn't drunk any of her water. Her skin looked pale, and he noticed that her feces looked dark and bloody. While Tony was cleaning Harriet's pen, he noticed that she would occasionally grind her teeth. Tony was really worried about Harriet but wasn't sure if he should ask his parents for help because he didn't want to appear to be a bad caretaker.

Questions for Discussion

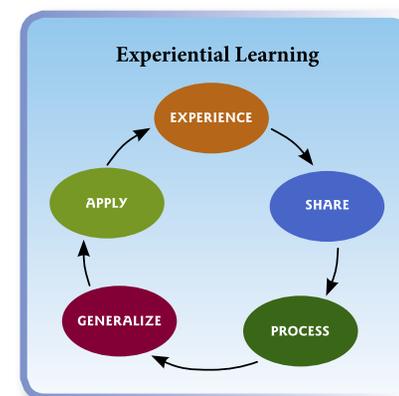
1. What, if anything, do you think is wrong with Harriet?
2. What do you think could have caused the problem?
3. Is Tony meeting his responsibilities as a pig owner? Why or why not?
4. Who could Tony talk to for help with this decision?
5. If you were in Tony's situation, what would you do and why?
6. What could Tony have done to avoid this situation?

GLOSSARY

- **Balanced diet:** Eating the right types of food in the right amounts to maintain a healthy body.
- **Basic nutrients:** Substances that help maintain a healthy body. These include carbohydrates, proteins, vitamins and minerals.
- **Care:** Having concern for someone or something, which leads to tending or overseeing that person or thing.
- **Competition:** A struggle between individuals for food, space, and other important requirements for survival.
- **Direct contact:** Physical contact between an ill person or animal and a healthy person or animal.
- **Disease:** An abnormal condition that affects the normal function and health of an organism, decreasing the health of that organism.
- **Disease prevention:** Taking the necessary steps to prevent humans and/or animals from getting sick.
- **Disease transmission:** To transfer a disease from one person or animal to another.
- **Dominant:** Having influence, control, and authority over others.
- **Environmental needs of humans and swine:** The things that both humans and swine need in their home or living area to help them survive and live comfortably.
- **Essential nutrients:** Nutrients that humans and animals must have to live and function properly.
- **Germs:** A microorganism that has the potential to cause diseases.
- **Health care monitoring:** Closely observing an animal's health, behavior and activity everyday to determine what is normal or abnormal about your animal.
- **Illness:** Being unhealthy or in poor health.
- **Indirect contact:** When an uninfected person or animal touches the contaminated surface (e.g., table top) of an inanimate object (e.g., food dish).
- **Life stages of swine:** Swine are categorized in different stages of development or life stages. Swine at each life stage have different nutritional requirements to grow and stay healthy.
- **Olfactory receptors:** Structures that aid with an individual's sense of smell. The more receptors you have, the better your sense of smell.
- **Prenasal bone:** A bone found in the snouts of pigs. This bone allows them to use their nose to dig for food in the ground.
- **Preventative health care:** The act of maintaining the health of humans and animals by preventing them from catching an illness or disease.
- **Responsibility:** Being accountable for one's actions or behaviors.
- **Rooting:** The act of pulling out or removing items from under the ground.
- **Rooting-disk:** A disk found in the snout of pigs that is very sensitive, allowing them to explore the surrounding environment.
- **Social dominance:** In a group, there are individuals that lead and have authority over others in the group.
- **Social hierarchy:** A system where individuals are ranked from top to bottom according to authority or importance.
- **Social order:** A system in place that keeps a group stable and functioning.
- **Subordinate:** Belonging to a lower level or rank in a group.
- **Tactile receptors:** Structures that aid with someone or something's ability to feel and touch items in the environment. The more receptors you have, the better your sense of touch.
- **Wallowing:** To roll around in the mud.

APPENDIX

The activities in this curriculum were designed around inquiry and experiential learning. Inquiry is a learner-centered approach in which individuals are problem solvers investigating questions through active engagement, observing and manipulating objects and phenomena, and acquiring or discovering knowledge. Experiential learning (EL) is a foundational educational strategy used in 4-H. In it, the learner has an experience phase of engagement in an activity, a reflection phase in which observations and reactions are shared and discussed, and an application phase in which new knowledge and skills are applied to a real-life setting. In 4-H, an EL model that uses a five-step learning cycle is most commonly used. These five steps—Experiencing, Sharing, Processing, Generalizing, and Application—are part of a recurring process that helps build learner understanding over time.



For more information on inquiry, EL, and the five-step learning cycle, please visit the University of California Science, Technology, and Environmental Literacy Workgroup's Experiential Learning website, <http://www.experientiallearning.ucdavis.edu/default.shtml>.

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University of California
Agriculture and Natural Resources
Communication Services

1301 S. 46th Street
Building 478 - MC 3580
Richmond, CA 94804-4600
Telephone 1-800-994-8849
510-665-2195
FAX 510-665-3427
E-mail: anrcatalog@ucanr.edu

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