Care of Pot Bellied Pigs

Introduction:
Pot bellied pigs first entered the United States in 1985. Since then, their popularity as a house hold pet has been growing rapidly. Newborn pigs weigh around two pounds, but mature animals can reach 5-100 pounds. Their lifespan is between 12-15 years. Female pot bellied pigs reach sexual maturity at 7 months and males at 5 months.

Captivity Requirements:
Pot bellied pigs are comfortable in temperatures between 60°-70°F. Pigs tolerate cold temperatures better than hot temperatures. Shade and access to water to necessary for any pig housed outside. They also require a nesting area for sleeping. Exercise, preferably grazing outdoors, is essential to prevent obesity.

Diet:
We recommend feeding primarily a pelleted diet formulated specifically for potbellied pigs; these diets can be found online or at specialty pet stores. The pig’s higher fiber requirements can be met with the occasional fresh vegetables and fruits and hay. Potbellied pigs are very prone to obesity, so it is important not to overfeed them. Allowing them to graze outdoors and offering food in puzzle toys can help reduce calorie intake and provide mental stimulation.

Medical Care:
- Pot bellied pigs should have a medical check up annually. We strongly encourage owners to handle their pigs frequently and acclimate them to contact with strangers to reduce the potential stress associated with a veterinary visit. We offer house calls for larger pigs that are difficult to transport.
- Most people choose to spay/neuter their pigs to reduce aggression, urine marking, and odor. Both procedures are best performed while the pig is young. Males can be neutered as soon as their testicles descend and females can be spayed at as early as 3 months of age.
- There is some debate about whether to administer commercial swine vaccines to pet pigs. Unless your pet pig will come in contact with commercial swine, we generally do not recommend vaccines at this time.
- Pigs are prone to GI parasites, so an annual fecal exam is recommended.
- Pigs are prone to hoof problems (especially if overweight). These problems can be irreversible if left untreated, so have your pig’s feet evaluated by an experienced veterinarian if you notice hoof overgrowth or lameness.