



# How to raise pigs

Tips and tools for  
pig owners



FEED GREATNESS®



## Welcome to being pig people

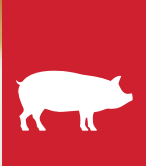
Maybe raising pigs is a new project for your family. Maybe it's a long-standing tradition. No matter how or why you're raising pigs, you want to do a great job caring for them.

Some of us at Purina Animal Nutrition have been "pig people" our whole lives. We grew up raising pigs, and we care for pigs at our working farm in Gray Summit, Missouri.

We developed this guide to help you make the most of your pig-raising journey. Find more information online at [purinamills.com/natures-match](http://purinamills.com/natures-match).


**Enjoy the journey!**  
**- Your friends at Purina**






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## Pigs 101: The basics

If you're thinking about raising your own pigs for the first time, you probably have a lot of questions. You're not alone, and we have answers.

### Should we buy pigs or breed our own?

For first-time pig owners, we recommend buying pigs from a neighbor or reputable local supplier. Many farm families could be willing to sell you pigs, give advice and support or recommend a veterinarian if necessary.

In this booklet, we will focus on things to consider if you want to buy young pigs and raise them to market weight, which typically takes between four and five months.

We recommend buying at least two pigs to start. Pigs are social animals and are most comfortable when living with companions.

Before you buy pigs, be sure to check whether your local municipality allows pigs and whether there are limits on the number of pigs allowed.

### How big will our pigs get?

In general, young pigs bought to be raised for meat are called "feeder pigs." People who raise pigs at home often buy them in March and April, when they weigh about 40 pounds and are between two and three months of age. We recommend you buy pigs weighing at least 40 pounds.

A common market weight is about 250 pounds. It will take a 40-pound pig about 120 days to reach that goal.



## Which pig is right for us?



### Barrow:

Castrated male. Great as a feeder pig.



### Gilt

Young female that's not yet produced offspring. Great as a feeder pig.



### Sow

Adult female that has produced offspring.



### Boar:

Intact male used for breeding.

### What kind of pigs should we get?

Like dogs and other domestic animals, people have bred pigs to have specific, desirable characteristics. In addition to having different physical attributes, breeds differ in how quickly they grow and how adaptable they are to new environments. Of course, these are generalizations. As you learn more about pigs, you will find out they are all unique.

Below are a few of the most common pig breeds. Most breeds have owner associations with websites describing the history of the breed and more about its characteristics.

<b>Efficient meat production</b>	Berkshire Landrace Yorkshire
<b>Gentle temperament</b>	Duroc Spot
<b>Hardy</b>	Crossbred Hampshire Chester White



## The right tools for the job

You won't need a lot of equipment to take care of your pigs, but a few things will help you get off to a good start.

First, a self-feeder is a good choice because pigs do best when they can eat on demand. Small, frequent meals keep pigs feeling satisfied and comfortable.

An automatic nipple waterer attached to a continuous water supply is a good choice, too. This style of waterer will provide steady water flow to the pigs with minimal risk of wasting water.

Fans for air circulation, a hose for sprinkling pigs on hot days and pitchforks or shovels for cleaning pens are also good things to have on hand before you bring home your pigs. Along with adequate bedding, consider using a heat lamp when the weather is cool and/or damp.

### Manure happens

If you choose to raise pigs, you can be certain of one thing: you will have pig manure. A 200-pound finishing pig creates about 9.8 pounds of manure per day.<sup>1</sup> (Remember, if you're raising feeder pigs, you will be caring for them from 40 pounds to about 250 pounds.) To avoid a mess, decide ahead of time what you will do with your pigs' waste, including manure, feed and bedding.

**For details about managing pig waste, deciding when your pigs need a heat lamp or other pig care questions, visit [purinamills.com/natures-match](http://purinamills.com/natures-match).**

### The right tools for raising pigs



#### Feeder

Ensure the feeder is clean and full with an adequate amount of feed.



#### Waterer

The waterer should have a continuous supply of clean, fresh water.



#### Bedding

Bedding should be kept clean and work with your manure management plan.



#### Sorting board

Used to help move and guide pigs.



#### Shovel and wheel barrow

Used to clean your pig pen.

## Straw, sticks or bricks?

What makes a good home for a pig? Pigs instinctively establish separate areas for:

- Eating
- Drinking
- Sleeping
- Eliminating waste

Be sure your pigs have enough room to move between the spaces they choose for these activities.

Inside a barn or shed, plan for at least 50 square feet per pig.<sup>2</sup> Ideally, your pig pen would be twice as long as it is wide. An 8- by 16-foot pen would be enough so two feeder pigs could stretch their legs.

If you are raising pigs outdoors in a pasture-type setting, plan for at least 20 square feet per pig. Even though they are outdoors, your pigs will still need shelter from the weather.

Pigs are smart and curious – and can escape if pens and pastures are not secured and closed adequately. You will save time and hassle in the long run if your pen is sturdy and you ensure feeders and waterers are securely placed. Pigs will turn small buckets or loose feeders into toys any chance they get.

### The right space for raising pigs



#### Space

Indoor pigs: At least 50 sq. ft./pig  
Outdoor pigs: 20 sq. ft./pig



#### Comfort

Shelter from wind and extreme elements.



#### Cleanliness

Room for separate wet and dry areas of the pen.



#### Air

Ventilation for fresh air without drafts.



#### Exercise

Enough room to walk around and stretch their legs.



## Be picky about what your pigs eat

You have many choices when it comes to pig feed. Think about what is important to you and look for it in the feed you choose. Do you need a convenient feeding option? Do you want the best value? You can meet these goals and more with the right pig feed.

One way to simplify feeding time is to choose a bagged complete feed.

Complete feeds are formulated to provide a balanced diet for pigs and developed with the right levels of protein and other nutrients to match your pigs' life stages. If you choose a complete feed, you won't have to do any mixing or supplementing. Just open, pour and watch your pigs enjoy!

Choosing the right feed is an important part of raising pigs. Like humans, pigs' bodies and health are highly influenced by what they eat. Providing a quality pig feed can support your pigs' well-being, as well as your goal of producing nutritious pork for your family.

### What to look for in a pig feed



#### Energy

Fuel to grow and be active



#### Protein

Body function, muscle and overall development



#### Vitamins, minerals and fiber

Multiple metabolic functions



#### Prebiotics and botanicals

Overall pig wellness

## A note about protein

Proteins are made of combinations of amino acids, and they are not all the same. In pig diets, one amino acid, lysine, plays a bigger role than others.

Without enough lysine, your pigs can't efficiently use the other essential amino acids in their feed.

Think of amino acids as bricks and mortar working together to build a wall. Imagine the supplier delivered too many bricks and not enough mortar. Even if the bricks were in perfect condition, they would go to waste because you can't build a wall without cementing the bricks together.

In this example, the "mortar" would be the lysine, and the "bricks" would be the other amino acids. Your pig can only use the other essential amino acids if he is consuming enough lysine. Excess amino acids would go to waste if you weren't feeding enough lysine.

Diets of only corn and soybeans are not likely to provide the proper balance of amino acids to support optimal pig growth with minimal waste. Look for lysine on the label when looking for a balanced diet for your pigs.

### Lysine is key in pig diets



A balanced pig diet includes the optimal ratio of lysine and other amino acids.

Think of lysine like mortar – without it, pigs can't "build" and maintain muscles and organs.



## General care

If you have between two and four pigs, you can expect to spend a half hour or so a day doing pig chores.

Here is a checklist you can use to get started to keep your pigs comfortable and safe.

### Daily pig chore checklist

- Pigs look good.
  - No runny noses or coughs.
  - No watery eyes.
  - No scratches or sore feet.
  - Active and have good appetites.
  - Not lying in the wet area of the pen or panting.
- Feeder is clean, and feed is available.
- Waterer is working.
- Bedding is clean and dry.
- Fans are working.
- Gates are closed and secured.
- We have feed for tomorrow.



## Product portfolio

Simple to feed and easy to find, **Nature's Match**<sup>®</sup> bagged feeds are designed to match your pig's nutritional needs without medication or ingredients of animal origin. **Nature's Match**<sup>®</sup> feeds contain plant-sourced ingredients and other functional compounds including vitamins, minerals, botanicals and probiotics. Simply stated, **Nature's Match**<sup>®</sup> bagged feeds are a convenient way to provide the nutrition your pigs need to thrive. We make great feed so you can enjoy the experience of raising pigs with your family.









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