



Micro- and Mini-pigs

RSPCA COMPANION ANIMALS POSITION STATEMENT



THE SUITABILITY OF MICRO PIGS AND MINI PIGS AS PETS

Micro- and mini-pigs appear to be becoming increasingly popular and are often advertised as cute pets that are easy to look after. However, the RSPCA is very concerned about their suitability as pets.

Micro- and mini-pigs have very specific welfare needs that must be met to keep them happy and healthy. For example, all pigs have a strong desire to root, which means they need continual access to suitable areas for rooting, otherwise they can become destructive. Being small may make it difficult for micro- and mini-pigs to keep warm, so they must always have access to a suitable shelter that includes a comfortable, dry lying area and appropriate bedding. Without a stimulating environment, micro- and mini-pigs are highly likely to show negative behaviours, such as stereotypic behaviour (behaviours that are repeated without an obvious purpose). Micro- and mini-pigs need to be housed in social groups with other friendly, similar-sized pigs, not only because they are social herd animals but also because they can become aggressive to their owners if housed alone. Under the Animal Welfare Act, 2006, pet owners are legally required to meet the needs of their animals. Due to their complex needs, the RSPCA is concerned about how well micro- and mini-pigs can be cared for by non-specialist keepers.



Anyone considering purchasing a micro- or mini-pig must first consider carefully whether they will be able to provide for its needs. Owners must ensure they have the time, finances and facilities required as well as access to expertise, specialist veterinary care and the ability to comply with the many laws surrounding pig keeping, which relate to issues such as movement, registration, identification and feeding.

Without these considerations, the RSPCA is worried about the fate of micro- and mini-pigs once the novelty of owning them has worn off.



FURTHER CONCERNS REGARDING THE BREEDING OF MICRO PIGS

Micro-pigs are the product of selective breeding. This means they are bred generation by generation, selecting the smallest each time. This process often involves inbreeding, which has associated welfare problems including decreased fertility and increased risk of deformities. The RSPCA believes that no animal should be bred primarily for how he/she looks, but with health, welfare, quality of life and temperament in mind.



FURTHER INFORMATION:

- [RSPCA care information for pet pigs](#)
- [Information on the Animal Welfare Act](#)
- [Defra 'new pig keepers guide'](#)
- [Defra information on the laws about keeping pigs](#)
- [Animal Health 'advice for owners of pet pigs and 'micro' pigs' \(accessible from the further information section on our Pigs as Pets webpage\)](#)

Links to the web pages of other organisations are provided for additional information only and do not imply any endorsement by the RSPCA of those organisations or of any content on the website.



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