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## Recommendations for Swine

Pigs are smart and social animals who need clean conditions, high quality feeds that meet their needs, and social/mental enrichment to thrive.

**Feeding:** Most swine will need at least some sort of commercial swine feed. There are many types of grower and finisher (or maintenance) pellets that can aid you in meeting your pigs' nutritional needs. Your pigs will benefit greatly from also receiving fresh feeds: fresh grass, vegetables, and fruits. Also, pigs love hay (especially alfalfa) and tolerate alfalfa or hay pellets and hay well. Avoid excess bakery products and "empty calories." Not only are these not healthy for the pigs as individuals (ex: your sows may not produce as many piglets or may have more complications with producing piglets) but the meat product that is produced will be of nutritionally inferior value.

Note: pigs kept as pets easily become obese. Careful feeding including adding fresh foods to the diet, limiting treats and snacks, and adding exercise can prolong the life of your pig!

**Deworming:** Worms are the most common reason that backyard pigs do not thrive. Carcass size and quality are adversely affected. All pigs will get worms, very likely in high enough numbers to seriously damage the health of your pigs, unless management practices are in place to prevent them. Testing feces can help tremendously in planning a parasite management program. My clients are offered free fecal testing. For those who wish to take advantage the the forms and instructions are found on my website under the client education tab, parasite section. Worms are worse in areas where pigs have lived for long periods of time as the eggs of the parasites that cause the most common trouble are very hardy and can survive many years of dry summers and freezing winters.

### General Deworming Guidelines:

If you are purchasing piglets and the animals are to be placed on virgin ground: Deworm before they arrive and again 15-30 days after arrival. Safeguard is my product of choice because it is easier on pastures, meat withdrawals are not extended (no withdrawal), and comes in a crumble that is easy to feed to pigs.

If you are purchasing piglets and the animals are to be housed where pigs have been previously, then consider testing aggressively and deworming as much as monthly based on test results.

If you raise sows: Deworm 2-3 weeks before farrowing date and again after farrowing.

Piglets: Deworm 10-20 days after weaning then as above for purchased piglets.

**Minerals:** Swine need minerals like all livestock. Most trace mineral blocks will work fine. Because of the high amount of grain and varied diet that most pigs get, selenium deficiency is

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not as common as in livestock that eat primarily hay and grass in Vermont. Swine tolerate high levels of copper and copper can have a positive effect on growth. Copper can also help reduce parasite burdens.

**Feet trimming:** Meat pigs on pasture rarely need their feet trimmed. You may need to monitor your sows if you have them and they do not move around much. Foot trimming in pigs is not easily accomplished and you should consult your vet or a swine expert. If you have a pet pig, I strongly recommend training them early to have their feet held and rasped. It is OK to make this the one time weekly then they get a truly succulent treat. If you can teach your pigs to tolerate foot trimming, you will be able to keep their feet in good shape for their whole lives, reducing lameness and pain from inappropriately trimmed feet. Most pet pigs who are not trained need annual (or more) anesthesia to permit foot trimming.

**Vaccinations:** Will depend on what kind of pigs you have. Pet pigs have very different needs than production animals. Pet pigs should be vaccinated against tetanus, rabies, and respiratory diseases annually based on your vet's recommendation. Commercial swine need more. Here is an example of a very basic production animal vaccine schedule:

	Gilts and sows 5 weeks before breeding	Sows 2 weeks before breeding	Gilts 5 weeks before farrowing	Sows and Gilts 2 weeks before farrowing	Piglets 1 weeks of age	Piglets 4 weeks of age	Piglets 6 weeks of age	Piglets 10 weeks of age	All breeding animals annually
Diarrhea in piglets caused by E. coli, rotavirus, Clostridium			Prosystem RCE	Prosystem RCE					
Respiratory disease in all pigs: Atrophic rhinitis, pneumonia, pleuropneumoniae, Erysipelas. (Bordetella, Pasteurella, Actinomyces, Erysipelothrix )			Rhini Shield TX4	Rhini Shield TX4	Rhini Shield TX4	Rhini Shield TX4	Porcilis APP	Porcilis APP	
Abortion in sows and gilts: parvo, leptospirosis.	Farrowsure Gold B	Farrowsure Gold B							
Rabies and Tetanus									ImRab (rabies) and Tetanus toxoid
**Prosystem and Porcilis need to be rehydrated so you want to plan to do all animals who qualify at same time!									