



# CPPPA eNEWS

NOVEMBER 2010

## A MOO-TIFUL RELATIONSHIP



Photo: [www.thelocal.de](http://www.thelocal.de)

According to a heartwarming story at [www.thelocal.de](http://www.thelocal.de), this is a photo of Freddy, a female baby wild boar who, apparently lacking any family of her own, has adopted a herd of cows as her new family. She has even begun teaching herself to moo.

At the time the story was written, Freddy, originally thought to be male in case you're wondering about the name, was estimated to be around four months old. She had lived with the herd for seven weeks already, sleeping with them, nibbling grass with them during the day, and even suckling from one of the nursing cows.

The farmers wonder if Freddy will stick around through the winter. Clearly, they've no experience with a pig that has made up its mind.

## CPPA HOLIDAY PARTY IS FRIDAY, NOV 20

This Friday, Nov 20, 2010, CPPA will hold its annual Hog-I-Day Party at the Christensens' home in Pleasant Hill. It's always a lot of fun. Good food, good people, and good pig stories. Riff, Standlee and RJ are already looking forward to it. It's a potluck starting at 5pm. We will not have any games or raffles, but we WILL have our usual pig ornament exchange. So start searching for those ornaments now!

Dont miss it! RSVP to [info@cppa4pigs.org](mailto:info@cppa4pigs.org) with what you want to bring. We'll reply with directions, etc.

For those of you who missed our Build Your Own Pizza Party on 10/18 at the Sears' home in Livermore... you missed a really fun afternoon! Violet the pig was a star and hung out with us all afternoon. It was a small group, but what fun we had. Thank you Holly, Richard and Violet for sharing your home with us!

# ELBERT'S DIET PLAN

BY LYDIA WEAVER

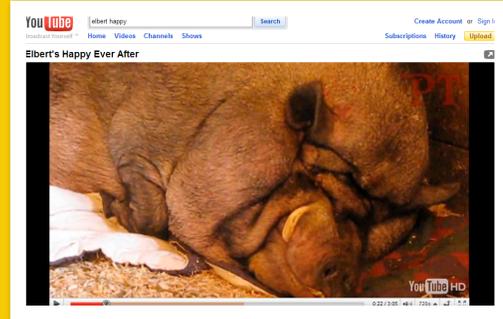
When Elbert arrived here in August of 2008, we "guesstimated" he weighed at least 260lbs, or more than twice what he should have weighed. His feet were so overgrown he could not get them out in front of himself in order to stand up and even try to walk. Because of those neglected hooves and his great weight, he was forced to crawl on his knees in order to move at all.

My strongest memory of that day was fighting tears while I told the man dumping this pig that I was not sure I could save him. I was absolutely terrified of the whole situation. I'd dieted pigs before, several times, but had never seen obesity this extreme. I felt desperately inadequate to even begin this journey. The whole idea seemed impossible, because any way I looked at it, no matter the angle, all I could see were things that could go drastically wrong, and all of them I imagined would be life threatening, if not absolutely fatal, to Elbert.

Elbert had reached this extreme weight due to his previous owner feeding him a diet of dry dog food kibble. He didn't just feed him dog food in separate meals, but instead left dog kibble lying in front of Elbert at all times. Any of us who have pigs know there is little in this world they'd rather do than eat. That fact, combined with Elbert being kept confined in a house at all times with no exercise to speak of was a recipe for disaster. He was kept indoors 24/7 on a concrete floor and with a litter box. When I inquired about him going outside, I was told he couldn't physically get outside and had not been out of the house in several years.

Right from the start, beginning on the day of Elbert's arrival here, we changed everything about his situation. First, we trimmed his severely overgrown hooves. We waited until he was lying flat on his side, this particular time being on his right side, then my husband took a firm hold on the two right legs that were touching the ground and gently but firmly pulled up enough on them that Elbert could not get

Some of you may recall the video "[Elbert's Happy Ever After](#)" showcased in our March 2010 newsletter. It was an amazing then-and-now chronicle of how Elbert went from morbidly obese (even for a pig) to trim and healthy.



As a follow up, we thought we'd print this story (also on the [CPPA website](#)), written by Elbert's keeper Lydia Weaver, on how she engineered and executed Elbert's fat-to-fit transformation. It's long, but it's also great diet advice that could help you save a pig's life someday!

them under himself and get up. That allowed me to work on his feet, and I worked quickly with a pair of GE brand horse hoof nippers to get them all trimmed before Elbert could become too terribly stressed about being held down.

Next was changing the most important thing, which was Elbert's diet. This meant no more dog food at all. Pigs are not dogs, and there is nothing in dog food that is truly beneficial to pigs. Dog food has far too much protein and fat, as well as far too little fiber to be a diet of choice for pigs. Pigs are designed to eat vegetation, not processed corn and chicken byproducts frequently found in dog food.

To replace the kibble that had been the mainstay of Elbert's diet for years, I fell back on the tried and true product that has done so well for me in the past, Mazuri Elder Pot Bellied Pig Feed. Mazuri is a small company, a subsidiary of Purina, and they make a line of feeds designed specifically to meet the needs of pet pigs. If you have a Purina feeds dealer in your area, they can most likely order Mazuri products for you.

The general rule of thumb for adult pigs is that they should be fed one pound of food per one hundred pounds they should weigh. That would mean that a pig that should weigh a hundred pounds would be fed approximately one pound

*(Continued on page 3)*

### *Elbert's Diet Plan (continued from page 2)*

of pig feed per day. Ideally, that would be divided in two to three feedings throughout the day, so that he isn't overly hungry between meals.

Bear in mind that this amount can vary depending on age, activity level and natural metabolism of the pig involved. Pigs are like people, and some can stay leaner or heavier than others on the same amount of feed, so naturally you must monitor the status of the pig in question and adjust his or her feed accordingly.

I wasn't sure exactly how much Elbert should weigh, because his shape was so distorted by obesity, but I knew that we had to get weight off him as quickly, yet safely, as possible. I made an assumption that he might need to be approximately 130

lbs, and started to feed him accordingly.

I began with 3/4 cup of Mazuri Elder pellets twice a day, and then added fresh vegetables from my garden to both help him feel full longer, and to get extra vitamins/minerals and fiber into his diet. I chopped zucchini, yellow squash, tomatoes, cucumbers, green beans, lettuce, etc., basically any non starchy type vegetable I had on hand, at a rate of approximately 2 cups twice a day.

I also added small amounts of watermelon rind, grapes, apples and just an occasional tidbit of banana, especially if I needed to get medication into him. If I had fed strictly pellets, of course I would have fed him more of them, but since I added the

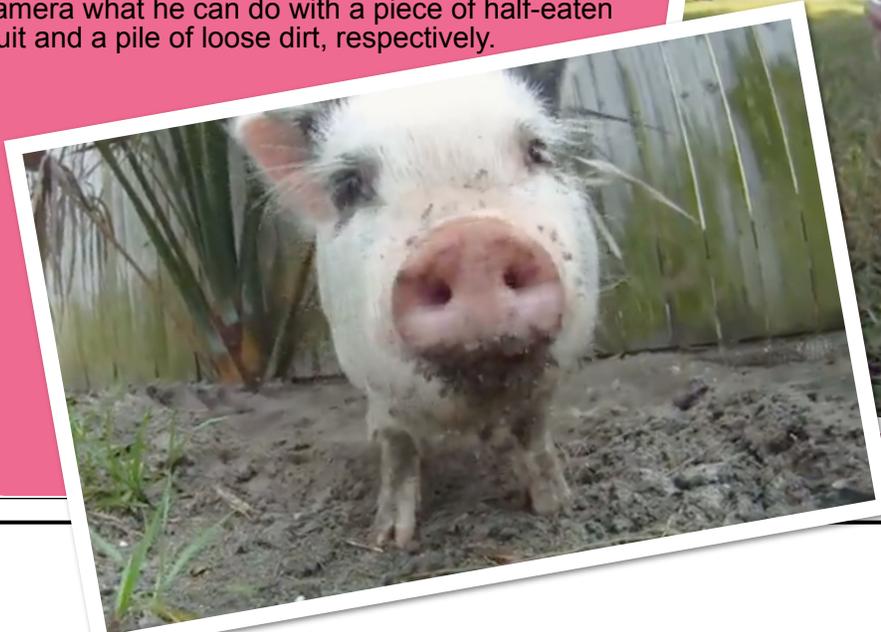
veggies, I cut back some on the amount of pig feed to balance the daily caloric intake.

Again, being like people, pig dieting doesn't work long term without adding exercise. Elbert was severely challenged in this area, due to the extensive joint damage he'd suffered from his situation. His knees are permanently bent and twisted outward, which handicapped his exercise efforts, and because he had been unable to exercise for so long, his muscles were atrophied to the extent that even when he tried to stand up, his muscles would shake and tremor until he could no longer hold the position. Then he'd drop back to his knees or lie back down to rest. He was so uncomfortable that he didn't want to try to get up more than once or twice at best, so I had

*(Continued on page 4)*

## **Video Break: Cappy's Apple Core and Filthy Pig 09-06-10**

We've showcased YouTube videos from user Schnoidz (real name: Tom) before - honestly, the man has five potbellied pigs and even more video cameras, so can you really expect us to resist? Two of his latest and greatest are [Cappy's Apple Core](#) and [Filthy Pig 09-06-10](#). Both star the adorably photogenic and energetic Cappy, who shows the camera what he can do with a piece of half-eaten fruit and a pile of loose dirt, respectively.



## The Lighter Side: How to Give a Pill to a Pig

by Chris Christensen

### Step One:

Insert pill in soft cookie (or anything else that the pig likes...everything)

### Step Two:

Toss it in his mouth followed by many more things that the pig likes (at least a bowl full)

### Step Three:

Watch the pig greedily devour all that you have fed it.

### Step Four:

Watch the pig daintily spit out the totally untouched pill on the floor and walk away.



### *Elbert's Diet Plan (continued from page 3)*

to find something to encourage Elbert to keep trying.

Motivation for Elbert came in the form of a grape. Before his meals, I would hold a grape in front of him, like the proverbial carrot on a string, and encourage him to walk several steps before rewarding him with his treat. In the beginning he could make about 4 steps before collapsing to his knees again, but over the course of about a week, he was able to go six steps. I repeated this at every meal and as often as I could, I would also repeat it at other times during the day.

Before long, I realized that I could see real progress every few days. I could get 8 steps, then he could make the journey all the way across his stall to get to his feed. Then he could follow me as I walked backward

around the stall pulling his feed bowl with me. It wasn't easy. Every step required a Herculean effort on Elbert's part, but day by day he was getting stronger, and was able to both stay up longer and walk farther. Elbert was beginning to heal, and I was beginning to hope. Maybe we could be successful after all.

One other important thing we had to address with Elbert was his pain level due to his arthritic knees. From the beginning, I started him on a good joint supplement that included glucosamine, chondroitin, MSM and hyaluronic acid. I found it easiest and least expensive to use a horse supplement with these ingredients. It comes in a pelleted form, which Elbert just eats right along with his pig feed.

For his pain, I talked to my veterinarian and we decided to

go with meloxicam given once daily. We chose this medication for two reasons. First, it is an NSAID, and those can be rough on the tummy for some humans as well as animals, but meloxicam is known to be not as severe as some other NSAIDs.

Secondly, and fortunately for me, because this drug is a generic form of the human medication, Mobic, it is available at several pharmacies like Wal-Mart, Kroger, Ingles, etc., on their generic \$4 programs. It comes in a small, oblong tablet that is easily pushed into the stem end of a grape, and Elbert eats it as if there is nothing at all added to the grape. In over a year of use, Elbert has never shown the slightest degree of gastric upset from the medication. Without addressing this vital aspect of Elbert's healing, I don't think he would

have made progress nearly as quickly as he did. It's hard to be motivated to exercise when you are in constant, unrelenting pain, and keeping that problem well in hand has undoubtedly contributed to his success.

By the end of his first year here, Elbert showed miraculous progress. Looking at him now, you'd never know he's the same pig he was in 2008. The change is so drastic that it's easy to forget that progress was slow, painful, and especially for the first months, difficult to see. It is important to believe that even when change seems elusive, it *is* happening. When you think you'll never see that pig healthy again, that's the time you must fiercely stick to the program. My only regret over that first year is that I failed to actually measure Elbert to document exactly how much he lost. If I had it to do over, I would have measured him around the jowls and girth at

least once a month. Regardless of the exact number, it is clear that Elbert has lost a whole pig in size, if not more. Once he got his strength and stamina built up enough to go outdoors, he became an unstoppable force. Elbert is a pig on the move, despite his crab-like gait, constantly traveling around the yard grazing, seeking the best spot to catch some rays and of course, making hopeful stops at the back door asking for a treat. Perhaps he's making up for those early years of his life that he lost while being confined and nearly fed to death, but Elbert is everywhere, greeting every visitor with sweet gruntings, and demonstrating his best belly flop to ask for a tummy rub from anyone that will show him the slightest bit of attention. There is no way for any of us to know what sort of lifespan Elbert will have. Because of the severity of his joint damage, he may well not get to enjoy a normal pig's

full lifespan, but we are determined to make whatever time he has as enjoyable as possible.

My most fervent wish is that people will see Elbert's story and finally begin to understand the importance of feeding pet pigs properly. We are understanding more and more as time passes how vital a role nutrition plays in our pigs' longevity.

The encouraging thing about Elbert is that if you have a pig that is overweight, or even morbidly obese, he proves that there is hope for a positive change. It is in our power to help these pigs, and they deserve no less than our best effort. I can testify that Elbert has been worth every minute of time, every cup of vegetables chopped, every step of physical therapy we took together, and every grape he was rewarded with. I know that your pig will be the same for you.

## Your vote is needed - let's band together to help pigs!

[The Animal Rescue Site](#) is having another shelter voting contest. The last few times, we rallied together and picked one potbellied pig rescue/sanctuary to vote for. Instead of each of us voting for our favorites, which means none of our organizations would get anything, we pick one potbellied pig organization, and we all vote for it. This way that one organization has a chance of winning their state's contest. That means money for the potbellied pig rescue we supported.

So CPPA is asking you, your family and friends to help out. Please vote daily, and from EACH of your computers, iPads, phones, etc. Please vote for *Hamalot Pot Bellied Pig Rescue, in Sand Springs, OK*. We've met the owner, Tracy several times, even before she sold her home to buy land to open a potbellied pig sanctuary. She is dedicated and deserving. Please go to [this link](#) and give her your support.

If you would like a daily email reminder, please go to [this link](#)

and subscribe. Remember to vote from EACH of your computers. In our house alone, we can legitimately vote seven times a day! So please don't forget. There are more than 600 people on this list. If everyone votes even once a day, Hamalot Pot Bellied Pig Rescue has a good chance of at least winning the state and maybe even a weekly prize!

This contest will go until **12/29/2010**. On behalf of CPPA and all the pigs you'll be helping, thank you!

# Baa, baa, black ... pig ... why do you have wool?

What you are looking at is a rare breed of pig called a Mangalitzza, which is somehow on the brink of extinction despite being a perfect blend of two of the world's most cuddly farm animals.



Mangalitzas' woolly fur can be red, black, or white-blonde, and helps them survive the harsh winters in Austria and Hungary, where the species originated. You can learn more about the pigs in this story in the UK's [Daily Mail Online](#), which we encourage everyone to read in its entirety. They're fascinating creatures - for instance, their hair is great for making trout flies - and we don't even have to tell you they're cute enough to want to hug, do we? No, of course not.

## RX: new MOBILE vet for SF Bay Area!

We are very lucky to have a new mobile veterinarian that is willing to work on potbellied pigs in the Bay Area. Our "boys" LOVE her. She has already passed the Riff test. He laid on her feet while she petted him. If Riff lays on your feet, you pass. I would like to introduce you to the Christensen family's new veterinarian, Dr. Dana Conly.

Even though she was born and raised in the Bay Area, Dr. Dana has always been fascinated by livestock and horses, and her family has had a pot-bellied pig snorting around the yard since high school.

She attended Stanford University for her undergraduate work, and UC Davis for veterinary school, where she focused on large animal medicine. After completing an equine internship in Texas, she returned home to start a mobile practice caring for horses, cattle, goats, sheep, llamas, alpacas, and, yes, pigs! She will travel to most locations within 50 miles of her home in Orinda, and does hoof/tusk trimming, vaccinations, arthritis maintenance, and emergency care."

Please contact: Dr. Dana Conly, at [dana.conly@gmail.com](mailto:dana.conly@gmail.com) or phone 925-765-9917.

# Hog-i-day Gift Guide: Pig stuff we don't need but still want

Thanks to the wonder of the internet, it has never been easier to find mountains of pig-shaped goodies for our holiday wish lists. Here are just a few of the truffles we're hoping to dig up this year.

Piggy USB drive & memory card reader [usb.brandocor.com](http://usb.brandocor.com) - \$8



Pig planter from [www.frankoma.com](http://www.frankoma.com) - \$27



Pig candle holder from [www.swedensfinest.com](http://www.swedensfinest.com) - \$42

Keepsake book, baby-sized overalls, family tree and stuffed toy from [hammiedownz.com](http://hammiedownz.com) - \$30



11" x 17" Family Tree Suitable for framing



The Legend of Hammie Downz Storybook 4" x 6" Board Book



Pig bench from [www.plowhearth.com](http://www.plowhearth.com) - \$170. Plow and Hearth has a ton of other pig items in addition to this. Just search for "pig".



Pig end table by [Unica](http://Unica) - \$2619