



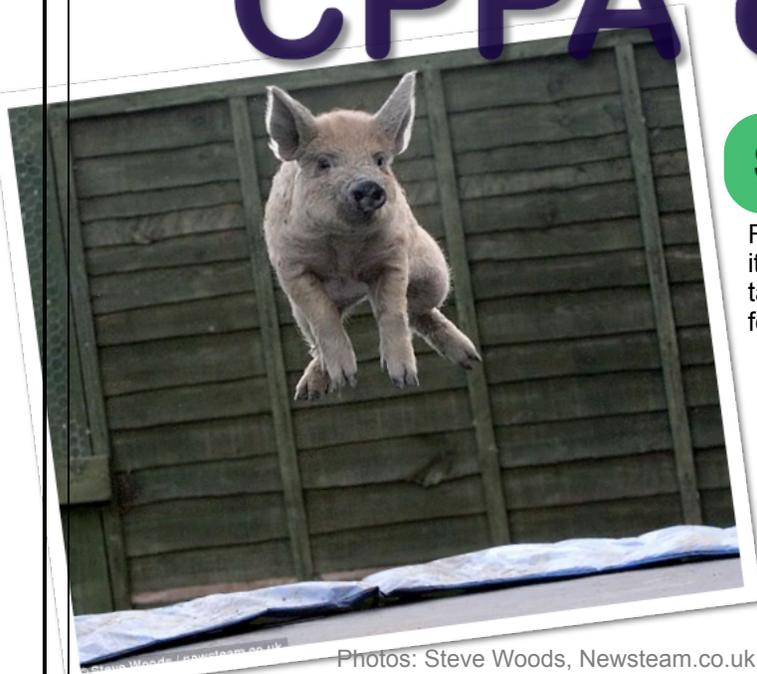
CPPPA eNEWS

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SWINE FLEW

From the Telegraph UK comes a story so oddly heartwarming, it's practically ready-made for Disney. Scarlett the pig has taken up a peculiar hobby—jumping on the family trampoline for up to 45 minutes at a time.

You can read the full story on the Telegraph's website [here](#). Unfortunately, there is no video to go along with the story. We'd practically fly to England ourselves to see that.



Photos: Steve Woods, Newsteam.co.uk



STOP!

Don't touch that teacup!

Stories about miniature teacup pigs keep showing up in magazines, newspapers, and on TV. The trouble is, teacup pigs are a hoax - they're basically regular potbellies, inbred until they develop (slightly) stunted growth, shortened lifespans, and other medical maladies.

Visit www.teacuppig.info for the truth about teacup pigs, and spread the word!

NEED AN EMERGENCY RIDE? CALL THE PET AMBULANCE

If you happen to live in Contra Costa, Solano, Yolo or Alameda County, you may want to put (925) 526-6306 in your speed-dial. That's the number for Animal Medical Services, a 24-hour ambulance service for pets. Check out <http://petambul.websiteanimal.com/#> to see all AMS offers.

PIGS PROVE TO BE SMART, IF NOT VAIN

BY NATALIE ANGIER

We've all heard the story of the third Little Pig, who foiled the hyperventilating wolf by building his house out of bricks, rather than with straw or sticks as his brothers had done. Less commonly known is that the pig later improved his home's safety profile by installing convex security mirrors at key points along the driveway.

Well, why not? In the current issue of *Animal Behaviour*, researchers [present evidence](#) that domestic pigs can quickly learn how mirrors work and will use their understanding of reflected images to scope out their surroundings and find their food. The researchers cannot yet say whether the animals realize that the eyes in the mirror are their own, or whether pigs might rank with apes, dolphins and other species that have passed the famed "mirror self-recognition test" thought to be a marker of self-awareness and advanced intelligence.

To which I say, big squeal. Why should the pigs waste precious mirror time inspecting their teeth or straightening the hairs on their chinny-chin-chins, when they could be using the mirror as a tool to find a far prettier sight, the pig heaven that comes in a bowl?

The finding is just one in a series of recent discoveries from the nascent study of pig cognition. Other researchers have found that pigs are brilliant at remembering where food stores are cached and how big each stash is relative to the rest. They've shown that Pig A can almost instantly learn to follow Pig B when the second pig shows signs of knowing where good food is stored, and that Pig B will try to deceive the pursuing pig and throw it off the trail so that Pig B can hog its food in peace.

Science has confirmed something all pig owners already know: our ever-hungry, nap-loving friends are just about the smartest critters on Earth.

This article was originally printed by the *New York Times* in November 2009. For more on this topic, as well as other pig info, click [here](#) to register and listen to the audio podcast that goes along with the article (it's embedded right into the page - you just have to click the triangular "Play" button.)

Or, for a fee, you can even check out the full [scientific report](#) that inspired the story.

They've found that pigs are among the quickest of animals to learn a new routine, and pigs can do a circus's worth of tricks: jump hoops, bow and stand, spin and make wordlike sounds on command, roll out rugs, herd sheep, close and open cages, play videogames with joysticks, and more. For better or worse, pigs are also slow to forget. "They can learn something on the first try, but then it's difficult for them to unlearn it," said Suzanne Held of the University of Bristol. "They may get scared once and then have trouble getting over it."



Click [here](#) to see Hamlet, the videogame-playing pig. He shows up around the two and a half minute mark.

(Continued on page 3)

Pigs are Smart (continued from page 2)

Researchers have also found that no matter what new detail they unearth about pig acumen, the public reaction is the same.

“People say, ‘Oh yes, pigs really are rather clever, aren’t they?’” said Richard W. Byrne, a professor of evolutionary psychology at the University of St. Andrews. “I would recommend that somebody study sheep or goats rather than pigs, so that people would be suitably impressed to find out your animal is clever.” His feigned frustration notwithstanding, he added, “if you want to understand the evolution of intelligence and social behaviors, it’s important to work on animals like pigs that are not at all closely related to us” but rather are cousins of whales and hippos.

So far, and yet so near. Last week, an international team of biologists released the first draft sequence of the pig genome, the complete set of genetic instructions for making the ruddy-furred Duroc breed of *Sus scrofa*. Even on a cursory glance, “the pig genome compares favorably with the human genome,” said Lawrence Schook of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, one of the team leaders.

“Very large sections are maintained in complete pieces,” he said, barely changed in the 100-million-plus years since the ancestors of hogs and humans diverged.

Dr. Schook is particularly eager to see if the many physiological and behavioral parallels between humans and pigs are reflected in

our respective genomes. Pig hearts are like our hearts, he said, pigs metabolize drugs as we do, their teeth resemble our teeth, and their habits can, too. “I look at the pig as a great animal model for human lifestyle diseases,” he said. “Pigs like to lie around, they like to drink if given the chance, they’ll smoke and watch TV.”

Pigs have been a barnyard staple for at least 8,000 years, when they were domesticated from the wild boar in Asia and Europe. Domestication was easy, given that they loved to root around in dump sites. “The pigs were hard to hunt, but if you put the garbage out, a lot of them would be drawn out from the woods,” Dr. Schook said. “After a while, people realized, we don’t have to hunt them. All we have to do is put a fence around our garbage.”

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Buy a book; help a pig: Elouise, The Extra Special Pig

One of life's main passions for artist and author Tanja Hudson has been the many animals that have come into her life. She has rescued countless and currently has given her home to at least 25 pets. They range from potbellied pigs to donkeys, parrots, dogs, cats, bunnies and fish. All have a special place in her heart and have inspired her with their unique personalities which have become the basis of this story.

Tanja hopes to inspire children to learn to connect with the animals that come into their lives, to always have the compassion for their well being, and to help

animals that are in need of a voice.

Book profits will go toward the care of animals in need. (\$5 for each soft cover/ \$4 for each hardcover).

Extra info: she adopted her pig Elouise from Ross Mill Farms in PA; the book is on a self-publishing site called blurb.com. You can preview or purchase the book directly through: <http://www.blurb.com/bookstore/detail/432356>



Video break: How the world looks to your pig

Have you ever wondered what a pig sees? Here is a 25 minute video showing a pig's eye view of going to the park.

The video was taken in Florida by Marlie (the pig) and Tom (her dad). If you're prone to motion sickness, you might not want to watch the video - when Marlie sees something she wants, she runs for it, taking the camera for a real ride. Otherwise it is so much fun! Marlie knows EXACTLY where she wants to go. <http://www.vimeo.com/9612367>



Pigs are Smart (continued from page 3)

Pigs were tireless composting machines. "They fed on our scraps," Dr. Byrne said. "Everything we produced, they turned into good meat." Pork is among the world's most popular meats; in many places, pigs are a valuable form of currency. "In parts of New Guinea, they're so important to villages that they're suckled by people," he said.

Of course, pigs aren't always handled so lovingly, and these researchers denounced factory farms. "I'm German and I love sausage, but I would never eat pork that isn't free range," Dr. Held said.

Even in domesticity, pigs have retained much of their forebear's smarts. Dr. Byrne attributes pig intelligence to the same evolutionary pressures that prompted cleverness in primates:

social life and food. Wild pigs live in long-term social groups, keeping track of one another as individuals, the better to protect against predation. They also root around for difficult food sources, requiring a dexterity of the snout not unlike the handiness of a monkey.

Because monkeys had been shown to use mirrors to locate food, Donald M. Broom of the University of Cambridge and his colleagues decided to check for a similar sort of so-called assessment awareness in pigs. They began by exposing seven 4-to-8-week-old pigs to five-hour stints with a mirror and recording their reactions. The pigs were fascinated, pointing their snouts toward the mirror, hesitating, vocalizing, edging closer, walking up and nuzzling the surface, looking at their image from

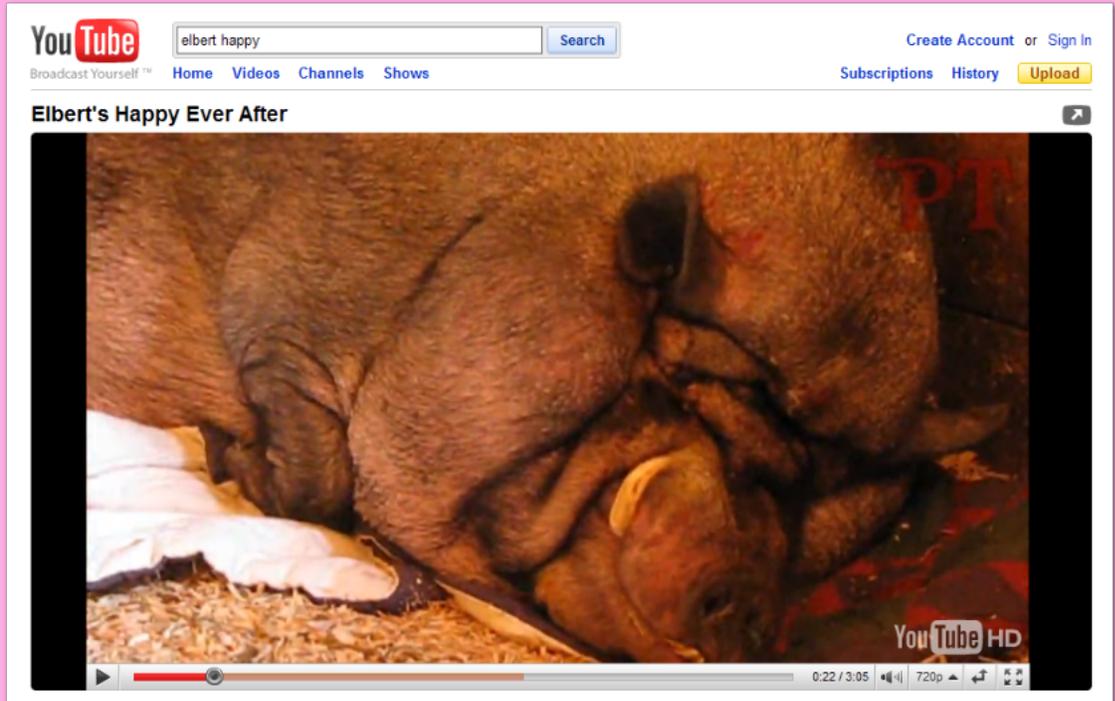
different angles, looking behind the mirror. When the mirror was placed in their pen a day later, the glass-savvy pigs greeted it with a big ho-hum.

Next, the researchers put the mirror in the enclosure, along with a bowl of food that could not be directly seen but whose image was reflected in the mirror. They then compared the responses of the mirror-experienced pigs with a group of mirror-naïve pigs. On spotting the virtual food in the mirror, the experienced pigs turned away and within an average of 23 seconds had found the food. But the naïve pigs took the reflection for reality and sought in vain to find the bowl by rooting around behind the mirror. No doubt the poor frustrated little pigs couldn't wait to get home, crack open a beer and turn on the TV.

Video Break: Elbert's Happy Ever After

WARNING: The first 94 seconds of [this video](#) are TOUGH to watch. Elbert was morbidly obese and badly neglected. He could barely move around, and it's tragic that he had to live this way.

However, the rest of the video is uplifting and hilarious. Watch it, and be sure to read the descriptive info, as well as [this page of the CPPA website](#), to learn how to help a morbidly obese pig become happy and healthy again.



Above all, NEVER let this happen to your own pig. Most stories about pigs with weight problems don't have such a happy ending.

Final thought: A cute, true story written by Maria Shriver

I want to begin with a true story from which we can draw a worthwhile lesson.

As you might guess, the Schwarzenegger household is something of a menagerie.

An Austrian bodybuilder, a TV journalist, four children, a dog, the normal goldfish and hamsters and so forth -- and in recent years we added a miniature pony and a pot-bellied pig.

It's not unusual for me to look up from working on the budget or something to find a pig and a pony standing there staring at me.

Now, the dog's food, which we keep in a canister with a screw-on lid, sits on the top of the dog's kennel.

The pony has learned to knock the canister off the top of the kennel, and then he and the pig wedge it into the corner.

There's this ridge on the lid of the canister, and the pig with his snout pushes this ridge around and around until it loosens, and then they roll the canister around on the floor until the food spills out.

I don't know how they ever figured all of that out.

It's like humans figuring out how to create fire.

But it is the greatest example of teamwork. I love it.

So one lesson to draw from the pig and the pony story is what we can accomplish when we work together.