



Animal Crackers

Pot-Bellied Pigs

Miniature potbellied pigs have become a popular (and expensive) household pet, seen frequently on television and in the news media. There are three registries, a newsletter and even a book, "The Pampered Pig."

These miniature pigs are about 15" to 19" tall and generally weigh from 40 to 70 pounds. They require the same veterinary care as all swine and the same diseases affect all pigs, small and large.

If you are considering a pig as a pet, it's important that you "piggyproof" his living area. It is said that they can destroy lawns and open doors and closets. Anything edible, particularly common household products and chemicals, must be stored out of reach. Miniature pig chow is available and overfeeding should be avoided. Pigs can be trained to use a litter box or to ask when they want to go out. They do best if the temperature is above 60 F. Heat lamps or pads may be needed if the temperature is any lower. In hot weather, shade and plenty of water are needed. A small wading pool is a suggestion - pigs can swim.

Contact a veterinarian near you before you bring a pig home as a pet. Find and meet your veterinarian before you need help. Also, check local regulations about keeping livestock.

For many years, pigs have been household pets. A miniature pig with its harness and leash is sure to attract attention. They can be kept in a city apartment. With proper care, their life expectancy is about fifteen years. Be sure you understand all that is necessary to keep the pig well and happy. Give careful consideration as to whether or not it will fit into your lifestyle.

Registration Statistics

In 1989, there were 1,257,700 dogs registered with the American Kennel Club. There were over a million dogs registered every year in the 1980's. The top five breeds were the same in 1988 and 1989 - cocker spaniels first, followed by Labrador retrievers, poodles, golden retrievers and German shepherd dogs. Rottweilers and Chow Chows continue at the top of the chart, ranking 6th and 7th in 1989. Dachshunds, beagles and miniature schnauzers are the others in the "Top Ten."

There are 130 breeds registered by the AKC. The list ends with Ibizan hounds, Pharaoh hounds, wirehaired pointing griffons, clumber spaniels, field spaniels, Sussex spaniels, English foxhounds, otterhounds, American foxhounds and harriers.

More sporting breeds are registered than other groups. They are followed by non-sporting, toy, working, herding, bound and terrier groups.

It has been estimated that there are 52.4 million dogs in the United States and 54.5 million cats. However, more households own dogs. Regardless, it's quite evident that dogs and cats are firmly established as part of our life styles. In the face of increasing anti-dog legislation, responsible dog ownership is essential. Don't select a breed just because it is popular. Look at adults as well as puppies. Consider how much grooming and training will be required. Try to pick a breed that will be a member of your family for its lifetime. Give it enough training to make it a canine good citizen. Unfortunately, animal shelters receive about as many purebreds as mixed breeds which have been "rejected." Don't contribute to the canine overpopulation problem.

AKC Limited Registration

Limited Registration may be requested by the owner of the litter at birth. The registration certificate for such a dog carries notice of this limitation and any offspring cannot be registered with AKC. Also, the dog may not be entered in breed competition at a championship dog show. It may, however, be entered in Obedience Trials and Tracking Tests, as well as in licensed Field Trial and Hunting Tests.

Serious breeders are concerned about indiscriminate breeding and work toward improving breed characteristics and eliminating inherited defects. Litters are graded and some individuals are selected for showing and breeding while others are considered more suitable as companions. Puppy purchasers who have decided on a particular breed usually want "papers" as proof of the puppy's background. Limited registration would be used for these companion dogs. If, as the puppy matures, it can be considered a show prospect, the owner of the litter at birth may apply to AKC for removal of the limitation.

Most breeders cull litters. This may mean euthanizing puppies with deformities or to reduce the size of the litter. There will be puppies that are considered not quite good enough to be show and breeding quality. These are the companions that are candidates for limited registration. This gives the new owners assurance that they are getting purebred animals that are not the product of haphazard commercial operation. Except to an expert, these dogs are good examples of their breed.

The Flea Tapeworm

Fleas serve as intermediate host of the common parasite of dogs and cats, *Dipylidium caninum*. This tapeworm also is found in many other carnivores (foxes, beavers, jungle cats, etc.) and its distribution is worldwide. The parasite can be transmitted to humans - most reported cases are in young children.

The infection is diagnosed by finding proglottids (tapeworm segments) in the stool. Motile segments may be seen on the hair coat or bedding or dried segments which resemble rice grains may be noticed. A fresh stool sample may be covered with motile proglottids which crawl away - they may not be seen in the sample presented to the veterinarian.

In dogs, the most commonly noted sign is irritation caused by passage of the segments, including constant rubbing of the perianal area and scooting. Usually the adult tapeworms in the intestinal tract produce no signs unless they are present in large numbers.

An adult tapeworm may be up to 70 cm. in length. The colex or holdfast is attached to the mucosa of the small intestine with 100 or more segments. The segments may be passed while the head remains attached. Gravid segments containing egg packets pass out with the feces. Eggs are eaten by flea larvae and complete their development in the adult flea. When the flea is eaten by the dog or other host, the adult tapeworm develops.

One drug of choice for treatment is praziquantel which causes the tapeworm to detach and disintegrate in the intestine. This drug requires a prescription. However, the control of fleas is important to prevent reinfection which results in what the owner may consider treatment failure.

Flea control requires treating both the animal and its environment. Consult your veterinarian about

this. Thorough cleaning of living quarters is essential. Vacuum cleaning helps disrupt the life cycle of the flea, but change the bag frequently - an adult flea may live more than a year. Complete eradication may be impossible but regular treatment of the animal, house and yard will help.

Hypothyroidism

Hypothyroidism (reduced activity of the thyroid gland) is difficult to diagnose accurately. The use and interpretation of thyroid function tests is somewhat controversial. Clinical signs include abnormalities of the skin and haircoat. Hair loss without itching usually occurs. Desiccated thyroid and synthetic preparations are used for treatment. Most affected dogs show improvement after about a month or six weeks. It is reported that the use of thyroid hormone results in hair regrowth in some nontyroidal diseases.

The disease is reported more frequently in certain breeds of dogs and most cases occur in adults. Reproductive problems are another sign of hypothyroidism. These include absent or abnormal heat periods along with reduced conception rates. Weight gain and changes in behavior may be noticed.

The canine press recently has had numerous articles about the possibility of inherited thyroid deficiency and its relationship to a depressed immune system. This raises the question of whether or not an animal with a confirmed diagnosis of hypothyroidism should be used for breeding.

Many of the signs associated with thyroid deficiency may occur in other diseases. If the condition has been diagnosed correctly, treatment may be required for a lifetime.

Book Review

In the Spotlight, A Guide to Showing Pedigreed and Household Pet Cats, by Carolyn M. Vella and John J. McGonagle, Jr. Howell Book House, 866 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10022. \$19.95.

This book covers all you need to know if you are interested in showing your cat. There is information about the major cat federations which register cats and sanction cat shows. These are the American Cat Fanciers' Association (ACFA), Cat Fanciers' Association (CFA), Cat Fanciers' Federation (CFF) and The International Cat Association (TICA). Each federation has a Standard of Perfection for the breeds it recognizes and makes its own rules governing activities. Cats may have titles from each federation. Complete information is given about registering cats and entering shows.

Preparation and grooming for a show is clearly explained. Bathing and drying the cat, cleaning the ears, removing tear stains from the eyes, tooth cleaning, clipping, combing and brushing are discussed. Important reminders include never using any product that has not been made specifically for cats and never using bleach or hair dye; this is not condoned by any cat federation.

Show awards are explained and there is an excellent glossary. A Kitten is under eight months old and at least four months old the day of the show. A Household Pet is a non-pedigreed cat usually required to be altered by a certain age. Premier refers to altered cats.

At a show, cats in competition are caged in the judging ring. The owner stays at ringside and the judge handles and places the cats, rating them against the Standard of Perfection for the breed.

This is a good reference book for any cat fancier, spectator or exhibitor.