

# THE MYTHOLOGICAL "TEACUP" PIG

Please do not believe stories about "teacup" pigs. "Teacup pigs" do not exist. Well, actually they do.....but ONLY when first born! After that, they can get up to 100-200 pounds. SCAMPP members receive calls weekly from people who purchased so-called "teacup" pigs and have become very disappointed that their pigs did not stay as tiny as promised. Therefore, there are many homeless, abandoned, abused and neglected "teacup" pigs in shelters and sanctuaries; so many that there are not enough homes and shelters for them all. Many are euthanized because there are not enough homes to take them. We are overflowing with requests from owners and shelters who want us to place their no longer "teacup-sized" pigs. For that reason, we discourage breeding; due to the fact that there are so many pigs that already need homes FIRST. WHY bring any more into the world that will be dumped later when folks learn the truth that "teacup" pigs do not stay teacup size. Those breeders are only out to make \$\$\$\$. ALSO, there are zoning ordinances concerning pigs (many cities and counties do not allow them)....please check your zoning ordinances because many of these pigs are confiscated, turned in or dumped, due to Animal Control violations. The cute tiny pigs so-called "teacup" pigs you see in photos are newborn babies....they are only teacup-size for a short while....

I have had potbellied pigs for over 19 years and I have belonged to SCAMPP Potbellied Pig Club for just as long. I've heard story after story about these so-called breeds of pigs that "stay small." I have seen many of these so-called "micro-mini" or "teacup pigs" that are now the size of a normal potbellied pig.

There are many breeders out there that tell people that potbellied pigs will stay small if you do not feed them a lot. HOWEVER, underfeeding a pig, or any animal for that matter, will cause serious health problems and deformities. As for the so-called "teacup" or "micro-mini" pigs, these are just normal potbellied pigs that have been chronically underfed and malnourished in an attempt to keep them small. Their life span is maybe five years or less. This is because the pig stays tiny, but the organs continue to grow as for a normal size pig. Teacups, Micro-Mini's, European, Blues – those are all fancy names made up by breeders. All potbellied pigs within the United States come from the same line.

The term "miniature pig" is a term used to describe "small" mature pigs. Miniature pigs are generally considered to be about 1/10 the size of a commercial farm pig. Given that farm pigs can approach and even exceed 1,000 pounds when full-grown, it is obvious to see that the term "miniature" is both relative and very subjective. Keep in mind that weight is often not the best way to describe a pig. Pigs are very solid and "hard-bodied." It does not take a very "big" pig to weigh 100 pounds. It is often best to describe a pig in terms of size, not weight. In dealing with inexperienced pig people, we often ask them to describe the size of their pig in relation to the size of a dog. Most people can relate to and visualize the size of a dog better than they can a pig.

An average potbellied pig at maturity will probably be in the 90-150 pound range if not overweight. This is the size of a small to medium sized dog in terms of height and length. We have seen potbellied pigs at well over 400 pounds, these have simply been grossly overfed and under-exercised and/or have been cross-bred with other pigs - even farm pigs. The smallest healthy adult potbellied pig we have seen was about 60-75 pounds at maturity. Keep in mind that size (length and height) are a function of genetics and are predetermined in the pig. Weight is mainly a function of how much the pig eats. Pig owners can affect their pig's weight through feeding and exercise, but not the pig's eventual size. Potbellied pigs can continue to grow well into their fourth year.

Many breeders are frantically trying to breed smaller and smaller potbellied pigs in hopes that the smaller size will attract more buyers. In virtually every case, what we have found was a normal potbellied pig that has been chronically underfed and malnourished in an attempt to keep it small. This information has been verified with numerous sanctuaries and knowledgeable pig people. In the few instances where a very small (less than 20 pounds) pig has been bred, it has been the result of inbreeding or very concentrated cross-breeding. These pigs tend to be sickly and unhealthy pigs with a myriad of health problems and very short life spans.

**BEWARE OF BREEDERS!!!** Most breeders are only in business to make money. They will misinform you and tell you anything to encourage you to buy from them. They have been known to tell people that their pigs are "micro-minis" or "teacup pigs" and that their pigs will get no more than 30 pounds. They will show you the cutest teeniest tiniest newborn piglets, fewer than 10 pounds or so, then show you the parents of the piglets. Keep in mind that pigs can breed when they are only 3-4 months of age. Therefore, naturally if they have bred the parents at 3-4 months of age, the parents will obviously still be fairly small, yet the breeder will tell you the parents are "full-grown." Remember, pigs continue grow until 3-4 years of age.

Every year hundreds of potbellied pigs are abandoned, "thrown away" or die, due to lack of information and knowledge. Many potbellied pigs are abandoned because buyers had unrealistic expectations, or were given the wrong facts. Remember that underfeeding causes malnutrition and sickness.

This is why we strongly suggest **ADOPTING** as opposed to buying from breeders. Shelters, sanctuaries & foster care facilities are overflowing with potbellied pigs that have been abandoned & neglected because so-called "micro-mini" or "teacup pigs" got "too big." We strongly feel that these pigs need loving homes FIRST, before bringing any more pigs into the world. To buy from breeders only encourages breeders to breed more, which in turn causes the older pigs to die in shelters, sanctuaries & foster care or abandoned and left to die alone out in the deserts or turned loose on the streets. These pigs deserve to have a loving and warm home with true pet lovers.

Therefore, realistically speaking, a 13" - 24" tall, full-grown 90 - 250 pound potbellied pig is a "miniature" compared to farm hogs which can average as much as 800 or more pounds at three years of age. As with humans, some potbellied pigs are bigger or smaller than other potbellied pigs of the same age.

We have members who have rescued potbellied pigs that need homes, and members who network with others who are trying to place unwanted potbellied pigs in homes. Please look at the Adoption pages in our newsletters, on our website, and at <http://www.petfinder.com> to see just a few of these precious pigs that need loving homes.

If you still want to purchase a "teacup pig," if you **INSIST** on buying one, force the seller to write up a contract that if the pig is over the weight "promised" at one year, you get all your money back. Therefore, hopefully, the seller will be discouraged from making such ridiculous claims if it is put in writing and a penalty will be incurred right where it hurts....in the pocket book!

For more info and photos: <http://scampp.com/TeacupPigs.html>