



The Lowdown on Pigs

We have a pig on our farm. Her name is Carlotta.

Martok

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Photo by Sue Weaver Carlotta We have a pig on our farm. Her name is Carlotta.

We used to have two pigs, but they broke their fence one night and ran away into the woods. Our other pig was a feral hog named Wilma.

When Wilma was a tiny piglet, she got lost from her mama out in the woods; some nice people found her and bottle raised her on goat milk (goat milk is good stuff—ask me, I know!).

Then Mom bought her and brought her here. She was happy for a while but longed to be free. When Wilma ran away, Mom walked in the woods for days and days, calling her. She never came back. Mom was very sad.

Carlotta is half Wild Boar and half Ossabaw Island hog, so she looks a lot like Wilma did but Carlotta has cute, fringed ears.

Carlotta has never been wild, so when Mom called her she came home. Now she's an only pig, but she's happy because the horses let her live with them when she isn't sleeping in her hut in the pig pen.

Carlotta is smart! Pigs are smarter than most of us think. They can learn to do amazing tricks and play video games even better than chimps (and some people!).

Carlotta doesn't have any video games, but she does have a ball that she plays with. She also likes to play with Mom. Carlotta waits till Mom opens the gate and then Carlotta races out.

Then she walks around the yard ignoring Mom and chuckling under her breath while Mom shakes a bucket of corn calling, "Carlotta! Pig pig pig!" (that means, "Carlotta, it's time to eat").

Tame pigs have been around a long, long time. Scientists think they joined up with humans about 9,000 years ago in eastern Turkey and again later on in China.

That's almost as long as us goats, but we were the first species tamed.

Mom says pigs make neat farm pets—except when Carlotta is ignoring Mom's bucket of corn (I can't tell you what Mom says then). They're easy to take care of and they'll eat your leftovers, so your 'fridge doesn't get too full. There's even an email group called Big Pigs for people who keep full-size or feral pigs as pets. Maybe you need a pet pig too!

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