

# Ironwood Pig Sanctuary

Post Office Box 35490

Tucson, AZ 85740

Dear Supporter,

August 2016

I am often asked, "How many pigs do you have?" That number fluctuates frequently. Take the month of June 2016 for example. Our numbers dropped by 11 due to deaths and adoptions, but we increased by 10 for various reasons.

The first 5 gains were born here. Ruby came in late May after her owner passed away. Eleven days later she gave birth to her babies. Ginny, whose owner



Baby Girl

had also died, was next to arrive. She and her sister originally went to a family member whose dogs killed the sister. Ginny was then taken to an office complex, tied to a tree and left to be found by the staff as they left work that day. Luckily one of them knew about us and got in touch. Baby Girl is a young pig who had never been outdoors because she was raised in a trailer, spending a great deal of her time in the bathtub. She is obese, hairless and very pale.

Two young boars came just days apart from two families. Wilbert's gate was accidentally left open which allowed dogs to come in and attack the poor guy.



Ruby's Babies

for nearly 2 weeks before bringing her here. By then she was suffering from severe malnutrition and mange. Poinsettia is living at Ben and Mary's Tucson home to keep her isolated until the mange clears up. What a mess!

These ten pigs now have a home with us because of YOU. You are the reason we are able to continue helping these pigs whose lives were in shambles for reasons beyond their control. Thank you so much for



Poinsettia

being there for them as well as those who will need you in the future.

Sincerely,

Donna Thomason  
Sponsor Coordinator



Piggy

# Spays & Neuters

**W**e occasionally get phone calls from people who apparently don't understand the concept of a "rescue sanctuary." Some ask to buy breeding stock while others ask for babies then act shocked that we're not breeding pigs. With a population fluctuating from 555 to 580, we definitely do not want to add more pigs to the problem. Our ultimate goal is to end breeding, eventually solving the problem of abandoned and unwanted pigs.

The male pigs coming in to Ironwood are neutered as soon as possible, usually within a week of arrival. Males can remain fertile for up to 45 days after neutering and we are very careful to keep them isolated from other pigs during that time. We often hear of other rescue facilities dealing with "accidental pregnancies" because boars broke out of their pen and got in with the females. I am very proud to say that in our 15 years of existence we have never experienced anything of that nature.



Precious

Our first and immediate step to preventing more pigs is to get the males neutered. So far in 2016 we have had 16 males altered. Winter

Neutering a male pig is normally less expensive than spaying a female unless there are complications such as a cryptorchid male which requires a more extensive abdominal surgery. Neutering also greatly reduces the aggressiveness that boars (unneutered males) exhibit which escalates when they get around other pigs. That keeps our staff and other pigs safe. The recovery from surgery for males is usually quick and requires little extra staff time. The boys are usually up and raring to go within a day.



Garnie

was a little guy that had come to us in late 2015 but was not healthy enough for surgery until January. Oink's owner asked us for help in getting him neutered. We got that done and he did his recovery time at the sanctuary before going back home. Fourteen of them are new arrivals since January. We were lucky to have two other boys, Chucho and Bubby, come to us already neutered.

The second step of pregnancy prevention would of course be spaying the females. Things get a little more complicated with the girls. The surgery is not only more expensive due to taking more vet time but it is also more invasive and requires a longer recovery time. A lot more can and sometimes does go wrong with a spay surgery. We have to monitor the girls closely for swelling or bleeding. It can take several days



Ziggy



Sophie

before a female is up and eating properly on her own. Some of the older girls need IV fluids for a few days. More precautions have to be taken to keep the incision clean and dry for up to 3 weeks. In other words, it's time consuming and we can only handle 2-3 girls in their early recovery stage at a time.

It's not only the extra work and complications that accompany spaying a female that keeps us from getting all of our girls spayed. Some new arrivals such as Baby Girl are too overweight to even be considered for surgery. It's much too dangerous to go



Pemberly

under anesthesia and the fat makes the surgery more difficult. So we end up with a waiting list of females to be spayed. Some are on a diet and waiting to get thin enough. Others just have to wait their turn due to time factors.

So far in 2016 we have spayed 19 females. Most of them like Sophie, Sweet Pea and Princess are recent arrivals. Opal was spayed so that she could be adopted. Olive's owners didn't have a vet in their area, so they brought her here to be spayed, recover a few days then go back

home. Pemberly had been on the "diet waiting list" for months and had finally slimmed down enough to be safely spayed. Snort has



Phil

been with us quite a while and had just been biding her time until we had the opportunity to get her done.

Our goal is to have all of our pigs spayed and neutered. We currently have 51 females and 1 male that are not done. A note on the male...he was born at the sanctuary in June and is too young to be neutered. But believe me; we will get that done as soon as he's of age! Four of the females on that list are his littermates and also too young to spay. We rescued their mother

who was near to term with her babies when she arrived. (You'll be hearing more about Ruby and her litter in a future newsletter.) Some of those 51 girls are still dieting while others are considered too risky to spay due to their advanced age and/or existing medical conditions. Some are just waiting for surgery slots to become available. The constant flow of new arrivals, particularly the males end up using the majority of available surgery/recovery times. It sometimes feels like an uphill battle, but we keep chugging along and doing what we can when we can. With your support we can accomplish this goal.



Sapphire & Pearl

.....Donna

*If you would like to help cover the medical expenses for the 2016 spays and neuters of 33 Ironwood pigs, please designate your donation for "spay/neuter." The total cost of these surgeries so far this year is \$13,481.97. (This does not include those surgeries which were paid for by the owners of the two pigs who returned to their homes.) The pigs and people of Ironwood appreciate all of your support! Thank you!!*



Wilbert

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**AUGUST 2016  
UPDATE**

# **IRONWOOD PIG SANCTUARY UPDATE**



**Sweet Tea, Resident Since June 2015**