

# Ironwood Pig Sanctuary

Post Office Box 35490  
Tucson, AZ 85740

Dear Friend,

February 2020

Pigs make a lot of different kinds of sounds but in general are fairly quiet animals. As we go about our work here at the sanctuary we may hear pigs chatting with one another or with us, which involves a grunting or huffing sound. Some pigs have a sweet, soft voice like Jameson who coos. Bambi's voice is very deep and guttural, a trait of the Kunekune breed who are a talkative bunch. Oscar Hoo walks around talking to himself saying hoo, hoo, hoo in a repetitive way which is how he got his name.

At feeding time, the noise level goes up as the pigs gather excitedly, anxious for their meals. Mostly



they sort of mumble and chatter as they wait, but Dexter in the Northwest Field squeals in a super loud, high pitched way that is very distinguishable.

Everyone knows when the feeders arrive at his field when they hear him "singing". Douglas is also loud when it's time to eat, but he just screams at the top of his lungs.

Pigs will bark when they get spooked to send out an alarm to the rest of the herd. Rosalie is still skittish around people and is quick to



bark when you first enter her field. Sometimes we'll hear pigs yelling and fussing inside their houses. If

one gets up, that disturbs whoever else is there and they let each other know about it with loud complaints. If a pig is nervous or just dealing with something unknown, they make a squeaking sound by grinding their teeth. When pigs meet for the first time, they chomp at each other and clack their teeth together to sound big and scary.



That often includes foaming at the mouth.

Other sounds can be relaxing. I love to listen to a herd of pigs happily munching on their hay. It's a sound of contentment. Getting a belly rub also



produces a variety of contented sounds from moaning, soft grunting or even purring almost like

a cat. It is not very common, but some pigs snore which actually sounds pretty cute. Pigs have many ways to verbally express themselves. You just have to listen and pay attention.

Sincerely,

Donna Thomason  
Sponsorship Coordinator

# Dale

**T**his little guy has conflicting stories about coming to Ironwood. An email from a family member says he was a stray. Signs were put up in the neighborhood but no one ever claimed him. When staff arrived at the home to pick Dale up, the elderly couple there said he belonged to their grandson, but he had left him there saying he didn't want him anymore. They also had no interest in keeping him. Poor Dale! Either way, in November 2019 we added another boar to our population.

Getting Dale neutered was first priority. He was also walking



oddly on a front leg. On his first trip to the vet clinic he got x-rays of his bad leg then was neutered. X-rays showed that Dale's leg bones were not growing at the same rate, turning his foot to the side. A splint was put on to properly position the foot. That lasted less than 24 hours. As pigs often do, he had worked the splint off and was using it as a toy. The next attempt was a cast. For two days Dale refused to even stand



up with the cast on so it had to be removed. After neutering, males remain highly active and full of themselves for several weeks. Dale was going stir crazy at the clinic so was sent back to the sanctuary with nothing on his leg and a prescription of anti-inflammatory meds. His x-rays were sent out for further review and advice.



The review diagnosis did not match up with the vet's, so Dale had to go back for more x-rays. This occurred three weeks after his first visit. His walking had improved a good deal during that time. The second x-rays confirmed that Dale suffers from humeroulna incongruency, a condition in which the growth

plates get inflamed due to the humerus and ulna bones not quite matching up at the elbow joint. Rest and anti-inflammatory medication will help as well as simply growing up. It was estimated that Dale is 2-3 years old, so he is in the latter stage of his bone growth period. Pigs reach their full adult size by age 3.

Dale is an active young boy who loves to go exploring. He is a feisty character with a bit of attitude, but he is walking fairly well these days. He is living in an individual holding pen with daily



access to an exercise yard for increasing lengths of time as his condition continues to improve.

—Donna

*If you would like to help with Dale's medical bills, please allocate your donation in his name. His two visits to the clinic came to \$1,782.43. Your support is greatly appreciated!*



# The Craigslist Crew

**I**n October 2011 a man in South Tucson was selling a family of pigs on Craigslist that he advertised as “breeding stock”. When a representative of the sanctuary called him about getting all of the pigs, he rather rudely said he wasn’t interested and wanted to sell them. That’s when coworker Jonny and I showed up pretending to want pet pigs. We acted as if we couldn’t make up our minds and giddily offered to buy all of them which



Virginia

Virginia, whom we suspect is the mom, came with a bad limp which was later diagnosed as an old break that had calcified and was beyond repair. Her lameness prevented her from being able to physically handle the challenges that living with a larger herd would present. For that reason she, along with Olive and Nellie, was moved into a small field called Far Northwest. The girls have a very close relationship and we did not want to separate them. To this day they remain very



Mario

the greedy man readily accepted unaware that his pigs were headed to the place he had refused to listen to. Unfortunately, the dad had already been sold but Mario, Virginia, Nellie and Olive came to make Ironwood their home.

Mario was separated from the girls to be neutered right away. Later he joined the herd in the Princess Field where he still lives today. Mario, a healthy boy, remains wary of people but has several good piggy friends that he enjoys spending his time with.

connected. Elvis has become a good friend to them. Charmaine and Mayer are the other members of the small herd.

In early 2016 Nellie developed a severe ear infection that left her with a permanent head tilt. She no longer has any pain related to it and it adds to her overall cuteness. Olive has been very healthy throughout her years here.



Olive

Virginia went through a bad spell with her leg a couple of years ago and had to be away from her family for a while. When she returned in April of 2019, she was accepted by the entire herd which is unusual after such a long absence. Most days Virginia, Olive and Nellie can be found lounging and relaxing together. Mario is in the neighboring field, happy and content with his buds. Thanks to your generosity, this family of pigs has enjoyed a life of care and comfort for the past 8.5 years.

—Donna



Nellie



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# **IRONWOOD PIG SANCTUARY**



**Olive, Virginia and Nellie**  
See their story inside.