



Des Moines Register Photo

Boars from this first litter of nine "mini" pigs are selling for \$500, and gilts for \$1,000.

**FULL-GROWN SOWS WEIGH JUST 80 LBS.**

**Vietnamese "Mini" Pigs Make Great House Pets**

A rural Iowa couple recently got into the exotic hog business when they purchased a pair of rare Vietnamese "mini" pigs. Soon after the purchase, a litter of nine pigs was born. Half of those pigs have already been sold at \$500 for boars and \$1,000 for gilts.

Robert Briggs and his wife, Nancy, bought the hogs in August, 1986 from exotic animal dealer Dave Hale, Cape Girardeau, Mo. At that time they were two of only 27 Vietnamese hogs in the U.S. Hale originally brought his breeding stock to the U.S. from Canada.

Adult Vietnamese "mini" pigs weigh only about 80 lbs. at maturity and stand just 16 to 18 in. high. They've got wrinkled, funny-looking faces and a much friendlier disposition than the average hog, according to Nancy Briggs. "They make great pets because they're friendly, smart and they don't get any bigger than an average-size dog. Most of our interest has come from people who want to keep a hog as a pet but don't want a 300-lb. porker wandering around the house," Briggs told FARM SHOW.

Before coming to their farm near

Boone, Iowa, the pigs were cleared for disease. Robert Briggs is a veterinarian at the USDA National Animal Disease Center in Ames, Iowa. There hasn't been any disease problems with the animals and they have no special eating peculiarities.

The Briggs got their first litter last winter and they're expecting another litter this June. Although they haven't yet butchered any of the hogs, they've heard from people who have had a chance to try Vietnamese pork. "One fellow who served in Vietnam during the war told us

they taste as good or better than Iowa pork," says Nancy, noting that another market for the mini porkers may be as research animals or exhibits in petting zoos, thanks to their dog-like friendliness.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Robert & Nancy Briggs, Rt. 2, Boone, Iowa 50036 (ph 515 292-8628).



The 20-lb. calf, standing alongside a newborn normal calf, is off to a fast, healthy start despite its small size.

**"NO BIGGER THAN TWO TOMCATS"**

**Twenty Lb. Calf Off To A Healthy Start**

"The 20-lb. calf isn't any bigger than two tomcats," says Sheldon, Wis., beef producer Weldon Henricks, about the small crossbred Hereford calf he found in his feedlot one recent morning.

The heifer calf, which weighed only 20 lbs. at birth a few weeks ago, is just as frisky as one of a normal 75 to 100 lb. size, says Henricks.

"When I walked out in the barnyard, I saw a little dark spot and thought the calf was dead because I'd lost one only a few days earlier," Henricks notes.

"But when I reached down, it moved and then hopped and ran toward its mother. I couldn't believe how small it was. Its mother then came out of the feed barn and took charge."

When Henricks finally picked up the calf, he was surprised how little it actually was and how little it weighed. It wasn't any more than 20 pounds and when it stood up, it couldn't even reach its mother's bag."

He contacted Barbara Pennoyer, a neighboring dairy farmer, and she agreed to feed it milk at her farm. "The calf has been running all over her barn," Henricks says. At first Pennoyer fed it with a bottle. When it was first born, Henricks removed a needle from a syringe and used that to feed it so the calf would get some nourishment right away.

A veterinarian, who said he'd never seen a live, healthy beef calf that small, recommended 10 CCs of liquid vitamins every day for 10 days--about one third the amount he'd usually prescribe for a normal-sized calf.

"The calf was the second one for its mother. The first one was normal in size. I intend to raise the calf. It ought to be sort of fun to see how it gets along," Henricks notes.

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