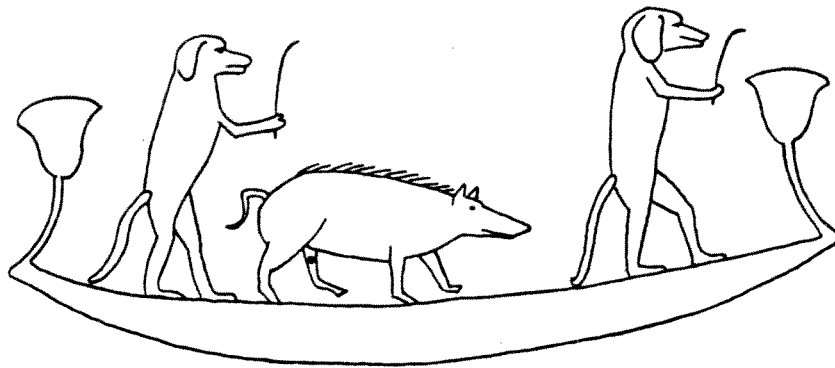


This is an article about the unknown talents of pigs. These animals have helped humans for millions of years.

40 Million Years of Pigs

by Alice L. Hopf



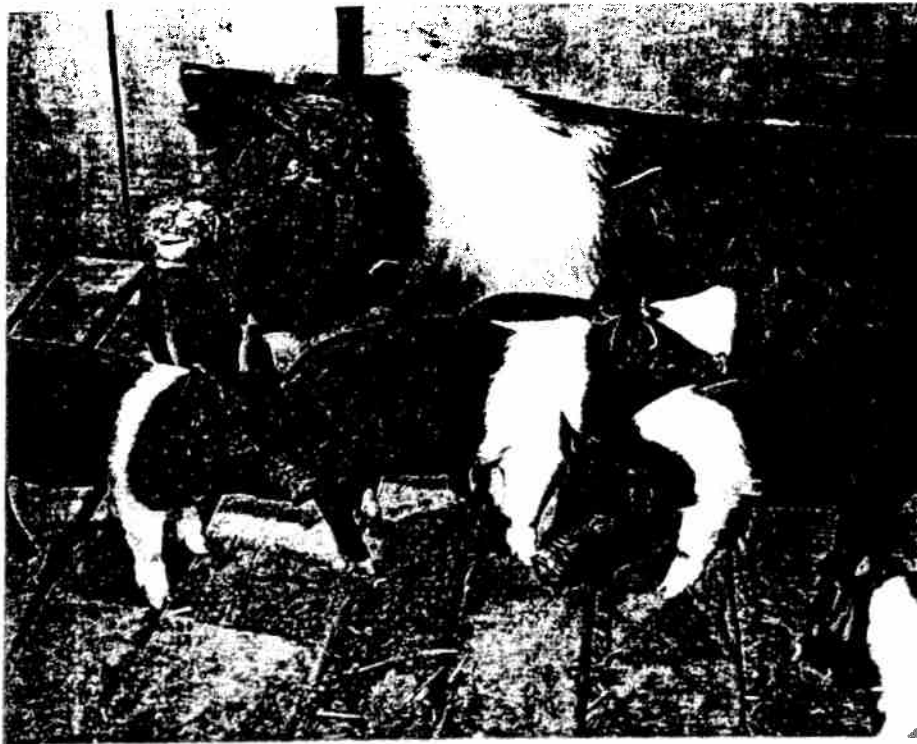
- 1 Pigs have been on our planet for about 40 million years and there has been very little change in them during that time. Even their habit of eating almost anything has stayed the same.
- 2 Farmers have raised pigs for many thousands of years. Bones of tame pigs have been found in houses from the New Stone Age. This was the time between 5,000 and 10,000 years ago, when people began to settle down to raise crops and live in small communities.
- 3 The pig is a hoofed animal, an ungulate, and belongs to a large group that scientists call the even-toed ungulates. Cattle, deer, goats, sheep, and camels are also in this group. These animals have kept the two largest toes—the second and third—to run on. The weight of the animal comes down between these two toes, which have grown into hoofs. The other toes have become weak and stopped growing. In some cases they have disappeared.
- 4 Perhaps one reason the pig has stayed alive through all these years is that it is a fighter. It has a set of sharp tusks and a deadly bite. It often fights rather than running away. Even a tame pig is considered a risky animal to approach in an unfriendly way.
- 5 The pig is so popular as a source of food that only now and then has it been used in other ways. The ancient Egyptians used the pig to help in their planting. Their little hoofs made holes just the right size and depth for the

seeds, and the animals were moved back and forth over the land to be planted. This was called "treading the seed."

- 6 Later, other people found useful work for pigs. In England long ago, there were laws against hunting. Deer were thought of as the property of the lord who ruled the area. Peasants were forbidden to hunt anything except small animals. For this reason they could not keep large dogs. Instead, they trained the pig as a hunting companion. Pigs have a good sense of smell. They are very smart animals—some say smarter than dogs.

- 7 In France, pigs are also used to look for truffles, a kind of black mushroom that grows underground. Truffles are very expensive and delicious to eat. Pigs use their snouts to dig up roots to eat, and they have been trained to smell out this treasure. Usually the pig has a ring around its snout to keep it from eating the truffles before the collector can put them in a basket.

- 8 Pigs have also been trained as circus animals. They can do anything that dogs can do. They can jump through hoops, dance, pull a cart, and walk a tightrope. They can even do things dogs





Reading

would not figure out, like opening the bar on a door.

- 9 Even though pigs have so much talent, people still have some bad opinions of them. To call another person a pig is a serious insult in almost every language. Our day-to-day language is full of sayings like “dirty as a pig,” “greedy as a pig,” and “don’t be a pig.” All of this is more an insult to the pig than to the person. Pigs are not naturally dirty. A domestic pig becomes dirty when it is shut up in a pen full of garbage. And a

pig is no greedier than any other animal. A cat or a dog will overeat—but not a pig. If it digs around in its food, it is to find the small pieces it especially likes, rather than simply eating everything in sight. And the pig is a good-natured animal. If it is treated with kindness, it will do almost anything that is asked of it.

- 10 The pig has come a long way. But it is still independent, curious, and brave—as well as smart. This is why it has lived for millions of years.

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1

According to the article, which of the following is true about pigs?

- (A) They have a poor sense of smell.
- (B) They are used for hunting deer.
- (C) They have changed little over time.
- (D) They are born with five toes.

2

How do scientists know that people raised pigs thousands of years ago?

- (A) There are old stories about circus acts with pigs.
- (B) Scientists know cattle and pigs have the same kinds of feet.
- (C) The way people hunt for truffles has not changed in years.
- (D) Scientists have found the bones of pigs in very old ruins.

3

Which of the following animals has toes like a pig?

- (A) Bird
- (B) Lizard
- (C) Camel
- (D) Squirrel

4

What will a pig probably do if someone threatens it?

- (A) Run
- (B) Fight
- (C) Dig
- (D) Jump

5

A pig is a risky animal to approach in an unfriendly way. Which of the following means the same as risky?

- (A) Large
- (B) Unpopular
- (C) Greedy
- (D) Unsafe



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6

"Pigs use their snouts to dig up roots to eat, and they have been trained to smell out this treasure." Which of the following is most like a snout?

- Ⓐ A nose
- Ⓑ A foot
- Ⓒ A tusk
- Ⓓ A tail

7

In France, why is a ring placed around the pig's snout?

- Ⓐ To protect the collector from the pig's sharp tusks
- Ⓑ To show the area where the pig is supposed to hunt
- Ⓒ To keep the pig from opening its mouth very wide
- Ⓓ To give the collector something to tie the pig's leash to

8

According to the article, where might a person see a pig jumping through a hoop?

- Ⓐ On a farm
- Ⓑ At a circus
- Ⓒ In a field
- Ⓓ In a forest

9

Which sentence from the story tells how the author feels about pigs?

- Ⓐ "The pig is a hoofed animal, an ungulate, and belongs to a large group that scientists call the even-toed ungulates."
- Ⓑ "Farmers have raised pigs for many thousands of years."
- Ⓒ "Their little hoofs made holes just the right size and depth for the seeds, and the animals were moved back and forth over the land to be planted."
- Ⓓ "All of this is more an insult to the pig than to the person."

10

This passage is an example of what form of writing?

- Ⓐ Fairy tale
- Ⓑ Tall tale
- Ⓒ Nonfiction
- Ⓓ Fable

How have pigs been useful animals throughout history? Explain your answer using information in the article and your own ideas.