

# Practical guidance

Linda McDonald-Brown from Bidgiemire Pig Arcs, presents the formula for estimating the dead weight of a pig.

## How to measure a pig

"Measure a pig? Why do you want to know how to measure a pig?" This was the first telephone query I'd received that had really puzzled me. Bidgiemire Pig Arcs gets asked many questions, such as where to find weaners, what paperwork is needed to keep a pig, etc. More often than not I know the answer and if I don't, my trusty dogeared



Figure 1



Figure 2

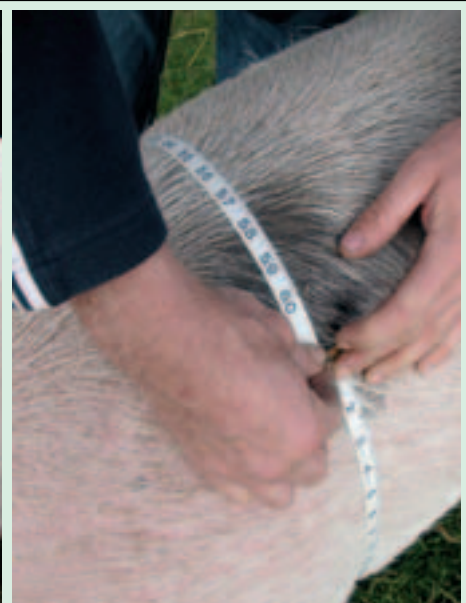


Figure 3

Pictures by Paul Jenner

### The formula

Find a long enough tape measure – a tailor's tape measure is recommended or, failing that, a piece of string which can then be measured against a tape measure. Do not use a metal tape measure as these are quite sharp and can cut the pig if he or she moves suddenly.

Measure in inches from the top of the head between the

ears (preferably without the head in the bucket), to the root of the tail (Figure 1). Multiply by the girth immediately behind the shoulders (Figure 2 and 3).

Depending on the condition of your pig, divide the results by either 13, 12 or 11 for lean, medium, or fat respectively (in Mrs Pig's case, it would be 11). You now have the dead weight in pounds.

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pig manual is always kept by the telephone. But this! My pig bible had never let me down, but it was not going to come up trumps on this occasion.

The caller – Edward – went on to explain that he had

heard it was possible to estimate the dead weight of a pig by measuring it then working to a formula. He told me that he had asked all his piggie friends, read books and looked on the internet, but to no avail. We were his

last hope, he said.

At this point, the concept of measuring a pig for dead weight did actually ring bells. I recalled hearing something at a show we had attended, but that was as far as it went. This was one question that I couldn't answer without proper research.

I promised Edward I would get back to him with the formula the next day and for the rest of the morning, I rang everyone I knew who had even the slightest association with pigs. It wasn't easy – lots of people had heard about the elusive formula but no one could give me an exact answer.

Just when I had almost exhausted everyone I knew, I suddenly thought of a friend who bred pigs, was very experienced and had written a book on their keep. He had to know! Sure enough he did. Thanking him profusely for getting me out of a sticky

situation, I put the phone down and armed with the one tape measure in the house (which is a tad too short for measuring a pig) I tried out the formula by measuring the only pig on the property that I knew would stand reasonably still – Mrs Pig, our wonderful GOS sow who gave us the inspiration to start our arc business.

The formula for estimating the dead weight of a pig, is shown below left.

Linda and her husband Graham run Bidgiemire Pig Arcs, a company that produces a large selection of arcs and farrowing accessories (see page 7). They also have registered Tamworth, Gloucestershire Old Spots, and Saddleback weaners for sale. Telephone 01237 431450 or visit the website at [www.pig-arcs.co.uk](http://www.pig-arcs.co.uk)

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