

### Porker's a pet for the heart

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**Pam Edgar**  
September 30, 2008 12:00am

**THERE'S no doubt that Bruce the recalcitrant pig of Uki has hogged world headlines after taking a local woman hostage to his appetite.**

Caroline Hayes ended up being locked in her house in northern NSW after her 80kg guest became a little too insistent on his feeding rights, head-butting her front door at 4am demanding more dessert. But what else would you expect from a growing boy?

Vegetarian Caroline didn't want him for her dinner table, despite having to ward him off with a broomstick in the middle of the night.

Bruce is lucky and he's different, in that his plight attracted some public notoriety and even sympathy.

The lives and deaths of five million of his piggy pals killed each year in Australia fail to raise a blimp on our ethical radars.

Bruce got a lucky break. Well, kind of.

He has been taken to a free range piggery to become a breeding pig, to well, breed more pigs to be eaten by humans.

Bruce was just doing what pigs love to do - seek out human company, affection . . . oh and yes, yummy treats. He is after all a pig.

And how do I know these things?

Sharing your life with nine pigs certainly takes you into their inner sanctum and also allows them into yours.

Some years back I decided to create **Edgar's Mission Farm Sanctuary** at Willowmavin, near Kilmore, named after the first pig I rescued. At just three weeks of age Edgar Alan Pig oinked his way into my heart and changed my life forever.

Protecting farmed animals like Edgar became my calling, in recognising the daily challenge that they present to us.

Their voicelessness challenges the best within us to protect them from harm.

I received dozens of emails and calls from people wanting to save Bruce.

With those calls came the hope that he would give voice to what all farmed animals might say if they could speak: I don't understand why you want to hurt me, my life is precious to me as yours is to you.

Designating them "farm animals" and denying them protection from acts of cruelty under Victorian law does not mitigate their suffering, nor our

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culpability for it.

Hens suffer on battery farms, sheep suffer if castrated without anaesthetic.

Of all the animals I have seen, pigs are by far the most social, as Bruce so eloquently displayed in Uki.

His sense of fun was not lost as he tossed thongs, pillows and sods of earth, and showed intelligence too, far keener than domestic dogs or cats.

Inquisitive, affectionate, occasionally obedient . . . I could well be describing the family dog but, no, I'm describing my pigs.

I can't but smile when I think of my dear Edgar and his deep guttural belly grunts he gives on hearing my voice, the intensity and enthusiasm increasing with my approach.

Sure, he's larger and less agile than your beloved pet but his need for our protection, kindness and understanding is no different.

Our society is also greatly troubled by discrimination and bullying. So how can it be that animals just like Bruce and Edgar have fallen through our Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act and also our thoughts?

Saving animals such as Bruce may just awaken the greatness of our humanity. We can lead happy and healthy lives without harming those we share this planet with.

**Pam Ahern runs Edgar's Mission Farm Sanctuary, which will be open for 2008 World Animal Day this Sunday**

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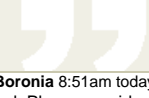
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We have been conditioned to harden our hearts against animals, especially those called "livestock", from an early age. One of these animals are pigs! They are probably more intelligent than dogs, and they enjoy socialising and stimulating environments. Piglets are dispatched at 6 months, hardly grown-up, and die before even going outside, except to be slaughtered. We reap what we sow - cruelty and inhumanity to animals has the end result that effects the health of those who eat it and level of society's compassion towards animals and each other. The cruelest implements of torture are our knives and forks!



Posted by: **Vivienne of Heidelberg Vic** 12:47pm today

I would imagine that Bruce will be the favourite name for newborns in Iran,Afghanistan & Saudi Arabia. To Caroline, not much chance of him ending up on the table, unless as sausages. An entire boar makes a pretty tough bit of pork.



Posted by: **Pen Shunner of Boronia** 8:51am today

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