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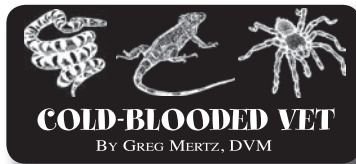
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**Driftway Animal Hospital**  
**53 New Driftway • Scituate**  
Hours: Monday - Friday 8am - 6pm  
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## Full Circle: Pigs Do Best on Farms

By Greg Mertz, DVM



My father was a pig farmer. He farmed and taught his craft to federal prison inmates during the 1950's, 60's and 70's. Most of the convicts were in jail because they had violated laws enforced by the Bureau of Tobacco, Alcohol and Firearms. In addition and among them were drug, tax evasion, murder, larceny and armed robbery convicts. But most were moon-shiners and, in the eyes of the federal government, in need of a new profession. So it was my Dad's job to make these inmates self-sufficient so that they raised their own food while in prison, and when they got out they could go back home to the hills of Appalachia rehabilitated and newly trained.

Daily, my Dad taught the biology, care and husbandry of pigs to killers, moon-shiners and tax evaders. There is now a flux in the world of oddball pets towards pot-bellied and micro-pigs. These pets become popular for a while and then fade away. We are on a swell of pig ownership. Because of this, I too, teach the biology, care and husbandry of pigs. I teach it to high school kids and undergraduate students. None of my listeners are killers.

The reason I brought this whole subject up is because I now have a way of judging myself against my Dad. The other day I castrated a three-month old piggy. It took me 45 minutes, a sterile tray of instruments, a scalpel blade, an anesthesia machine, painkillers, and two assistants.

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