



Foot Spur Management

Foot spurs are relatively common and can affect guineas of any age, gender and breed. They often look like a dried poop, an extra claw (yes, some curl all the way around the side of the foot!), or some kind of delightful dried snot stuck to the side or bottom of their foot pad - always on the front feet. Look closely and you'll see the junction where the foot spur attaches to the pad of the foot.



The presence of spurs is not an indicator of the quality of care of the piggy, nor of the overall health of the animal: they are simply flaps of dead skin that some pigs get, and others don't. They are harmless in and of themselves, but that doesn't mean you should leave them.

Most important point: DO NOT PULL THEM OFF!

There is a chance, as foot spurs grow in length and thickness, that they will snag on something or the piggy might become a little irritated by it and try to nibble it off themselves. Obviously you want to avoid both of these scenarios as they will result in pain, an open wound, susceptibility to infection, and profuse bleeding - all also very good reasons why you must not try to pull the spur off the foot.

Taking the preventative step of trimming the foot spurs to a shorter length, and if at all possible down to just 1mm - just above the point where it attaches to the foot pad - is usually quick and simple. And since the spur is simply a clump of dead skin cells, there are no nerves - so as long as you don't get too close and end up nicking the pad, it is utterly painless. I usually use human nail clippers to do the job. Some spurs I've come across have been too long to clip off in one, so I simply take the length down bit by bit until it's as short as I am prepared to take it.

Spurs will regrow, but if you check in with them each time you clip their nails (every 1-2 months at least) you'll be able to ensure they are kept short and trouble-free.

Last updated: July 2019