

Benefits of Raising KuneKune Pigs

By Kathy Petersen, President of the American KuneKune Pig Society

If you have been following the last few articles, you are getting more familiar with the breed of KuneKune Pigs. For this article, I would like to discuss the many benefits of raising KuneKune Pigs on your farm. Then you will hear from some KuneKune Breeders across the country and what they say about raising KuneKune Pigs on their farms and the many uses they have for this delightful breed.

- They are easy, docile and friendly animals making them easy to handle
- They are a cost effective breed to raise due to their ability to primarily graze.
- They do not destroy your pastures and root like other pigs
- They do not destroy fencing
- Farming livestock offers tax advantages
- If you are farming for pork production you are able to know where your food is coming from and how they are raised
- Raising livestock is a great learning experience for children
- Enjoyment of making a difference in preserving a heritage breed
- They save you time on cutting the grass
- They provide manure that is beneficial to gardeners.
- They clean up gardens for you
- They clean up orchards for you.

From the state of Oregon: "Although KuneKunes are known for their excellent quality pork, I do not harvest my pigs nor have I sold them for butcher. Instead, I have focused on the KuneKune breed for their wonderful qualities as companion animals. Due to the way the breed developed in the villages of the Maori, they are extremely human identified. They are easy to manage, and given adequate space, have a low impact on their environment. Their calm and affectionate nature makes them wonderful, intelligent pets. They bring a unique joy to the farm and all who

meet them fall in love. I can't imagine the place without them." ...Brad Branam, XTC KuneKunes

From the state of Virginia: "Here, on our farm, Kunes serve many purposes. But, one of their most important purposes is their role in our land management program. For us, and many that are familiar with this wonderful breed, it is an easy, inexpensive program that can be utilized year round. One very important piece of the program is fertilizing. We simply clean up the manure twice a week and compost it. The frequency of clean up will depend on the size of your pasture and herd. The more you have, the more often you will want to compost. When we are ready to start our garden or re-grow our pasture, we spread it as needed. Another wonderful quality is that Kunes keep pests away, especially snakes. So, whether you have an infestation in the country or just enough to worry you in the city, no job is too big or too small for Kunes! The third main component in our land management program is land clearing. If you have a wooded area that needs to be cleaned out, let them loose, they are great at clearing out underbrush. Most importantly, at the end of a harvest, let them out into your garden or crop. They will eat on whatever you have. This will save you labor and expenses all while feeding your beloved Kunes a delicious, organic meal!" ...

From the state of Mississippi: "My KuneKunes are beneficial to my farm in many ways. Not only are they efficient grazing animals, but they also serve as my own personal therapist. I work in a retail setting 40 hours per week so I am somewhat stressed by the end of my workday. After a long day at work, I can come home and sit in the barnyard with the pigs and they immediately put a smile on my face. My spirits are lifted by their amazing personalities, and I refueled for another day. My KuneKunes truly offer me an extraordinary amount of stress relief. I cannot imagine my life without these awesome little pigs."...

From the state of California: "KuneKunes for sustainable pork production- In a time when an increasing number of consumers are looking for responsible and sustainable options to supply meat for their families, KuneKunes stand out as an excellent option for pasture and small acreage pork production. The KuneKunes placid nature, tendency to graze, reasonable litter size, and ability to marble on low quality forage, make it an attractive breed for hobby farms, mowing orchards and

vineyards, as well as, inclusion within Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) systems. Farmers in regions where pasture is not lush throughout the year will find KuneKunes easily supplemented on surplus food stuffs, such as, nut mass, spent brewer's grain, cider mash, and bruised/unmarketable vegetables and produce." ..

From the state of South Carolina: "KuneKunes are an indispensable part of our farm's homesteading and self-sufficiency operations. As grazers, they are extremely economical to raise for showing, piglet sales and pork production. Additionally, they keep our orchard cleared of fallen fruit, recycle the waste from our gardens and kitchen; and because they are grass-fed, produce extremely high quality compost that we use to enrich the soil throughout the farm. It's a big bonus that they are friendly, easy to manage and just plain cute!"...

From the state of Illinois: "Kunekunes have an almost human personality. You just can't help fall for them. They become part of your family."

From the state of North Carolina: When considering a pig as pet one should consider a Kune as they are easy to train, require little care, they love to graze, and they thrive in a family setting and love children! I first began my love of pigs after watching Arnold on Green Acres as a child. I was in love with pigs and both their appearance and nature. However as I entered my retirement years I decided a pig was something I could not add to my small farm because of their large size, rooting problems and the inability to move such a large animal easily. Then I discovered the Kune, and my life has been enriched ever since. . Kunes are known for their laid back and very docile temperament. They react calmly to most all situations and because of their nature they are very valuable as a loyal companion. If you raise chickens, goats or any other small livestock, Kunes will be a welcome companion. Kunes are quite sociable and often times very entertaining."...

From the state of New Hampshire: "Why raise KuneKune pigs you ask? Because they graze. KuneKune pigs are known to fatten on grass with very little if any desire to root. The nutrients they get from the grass are healthier for them and for us if utilized as finished pork. You can save at least a quarter of your average feed cost by allowing them to graze on the free grass that grows in your established pasture. Grazing pigs are much less work for you, minimizing the need

to shovel and move their waste. Allowing your pigs to graze will naturally fertilize and improves the quality of your pasture."...

From the state of Washington: "We selected purebred Kunekunes for our farm because they are extremely friendly, do not root or challenge fences, and because their meat is exquisite due to its higher fat content than commercial breeds. They will eat anything from our orchard and garden except onions and garlic. With a breeding pair, a family can keep themselves in pork year round. They are the easiest and most rewarding animals we have ever owned."...

From the state of Arizona: "KuneKune pigs are the perfect homestead hog. Having 1 boar and 2 sows will supply the homestead with meat, lard for making soap and for cooking and an excess of pork to use for barter or for income. KuneKune pigs only weigh 150 pounds at butcher weight so a family can easily handle butchering and consume that amount of meat in a reasonable time. The pigs will fatten on pasture and extra vegetables from the garden and any other leftovers other than meat or sweets. KuneKune pigs are friendly with people so there are no worries having your children around them. Even when they have piglets the sows are not aggressive. They farrow easily and produce plenty of milk for the piglets. With their upturned snouts they are not hard on pasture. They are tidy little pigs. They will choose one area of their pasture to use as a bathroom making it easier to clean up after them. They do not eliminate in their pig houses or in the area where they are fed. KuneKune pigs are super friendly, easy to raise and they will teach you and your children so much!"

From the state of New York: "The kunekune pig's manageable size, ability to fatten primarily on pasture, extremely docile nature and excellent health make them an ideal pig for our farm. Our busy schedules with children, other business', volunteer time and the farm require livestock that are easy to do chores around, require minimal healthcare intervention and they are able to coexist in our pastures and barns. Our chickens, pigs and alpaca live together in unison, grazing together in the fields and sharing stalls in the barn. The kunekune pigs not only are easy to care for, but make every day chores a delight. Their sweet individual personalities has made them endearing and they bring a smile to all who meet them, whether a child or an adult. The kunekune is a perfect fit for those who want to raise livestock but have busy lives outside the farm.

Well, you have heard it firsthand how farmers all over the country are raising and using KuneKune Pigs in their farm. We hope that you enjoyed this article and we look forward to sharing more with you in the next edition of the American Livestock Magazine.

Property of Virginia KuneKune