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Pigs Receive Extra TLC at Gould Family Farm

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By Kay Shipman

Female hogs greet visitors with curious sniffs and low grunts on the [Gould family farm](#) near Elburn in Kane County. The animals' calm behavior illustrates how content they are.



“We treat each sow (female hog) as an individual and give them all TLC so they are the most pampered pigs you can imagine,” says Eldon Gould, who farms with his wife, Sandy, and son and daughter-in-law, Chris and Dana. His daughter, Lynda, works as a veterinarian.

“We have every incentive to take care of them as well as we can. That’s when they produce the best,” Chris says.

The Gould family farm, located about 50 miles west of Chicago’s Loop, specializes in hog breeding

and giving birth. They care for about 750 hogs in their sow center, and grow corn and soybeans on 2,700 acres. Raising piglets is the family's specialty.

The Goulds and their animals frequently host visitors for tours. Recent visitors included the field moms who participate in the [Illinois Farm Families program](#).

The Goulds give attention to each detail of their animals' care.

Sows eat feed with nutrients suited specifically for their sex and size throughout their life, Eldon notes. The family monitors each sow's pregnancy and collects information about the births. Sows stay in stalls that keep their newborns from being stepped or laid on accidentally by their much larger mothers.



"I was surprised by the TLC and how they treat each animal as an individual even though there were so many," says Pilar Clark, a field mom from Lisle.

Sows stay in individual stalls that prevent injury by other, more aggressive, females. The stalls also stop dominant animals from eating more than their share of feed and leaving little for the meeker pigs, Eldon explains.

"From what we saw, the sows are comfortable," says Farrah Brown, a field mom from Elk Grove Village.

“It makes the best sense for you guys to take care of your animals the best you can,” Jenn Weis, a field mom from Big Rock, told the Goulds during the tour.

“It’s in our best interest to treat them well,” Chris says.