

Obituary Tribute to Dot the Guinea Pig

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Dot the guinea pig enjoys the outdoors

THIS IS PART #3 IN A 3 PART SERIES:

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PART 3: Obituary Tribute to Dot the Guinea Pig

It's amazing how one, small guinea pig could make such a difference in thousands of people's lives, but, in her short life, Dot, of the HappyCavy Forever Herd, did just that.

Dot, who passed away July 30, 2014, was adopted by The Humans in July 2013. Her initial introduction to The Herd [did not go well](#). Though repeatedly introduced to the other members – Hammy, Feebee, and Buttercup – in a controlled setting, the encounters were strained, and everyone had a difficult time getting along. Perhaps it was just that Dot was a guinea pig who preferred solitude over socialization. We'll never know for sure, but The Humans decided to build her a [separate space right next to the main cage](#) where she could still see and hear and smell the others, and peace was restored.

The HappyCavy Herd is unique in that the pigs' lives, from initial wakeup to lights out, is picked up by Webcams and broadcast live over the Internet, at www.HappyCavy.com, for anyone and everyone to see. With her new, separate space, the Humans installed two new Webcams – Webcam #3 followed Dot in her main living space, and Webcam #4 tracked her up in the loft.

Tuning in to the pigs becomes addicting. Thousands of people flock to the site each day to watch The Herd eat, play, and go about their daily routines. Many of these people don't have guinea pigs of their own and so live vicariously through these four individuals. They become a comfortable part of our day, and we find ourselves “just checking in” on them throughout the day, and day after day, to be reassured that all is well.



Dot cozies up to the camera

Unfortunately, one thing the public can't do is hold and cuddle the guinea pigs, but The Humans devised the next best thing – a treat feeder. People could now pay a small fee (most of which goes to rescue organizations) to push a button and [feed treats to the girls](#), again in real time. It forged a new connection that made our experience with them all the more precious. Dot's treat bowl, however, was not weighted down, and she delighted in moving it away from the dispenser, so that the treats scattered randomly in the cage; you could almost see the smile on her face as she “outwitted” us again and again. And when The Humans added Velcro to the bottom to make the bowl stick? Well, Dot still found a way to move it around, looking innocent the entire time.

And towards the end of her life, Dot began to “purr” as Buttercup came near her cage, signaling that perhaps she was developing a happy connection towards the others after all.

Dot's illness was short and relatively painless. The Humans rushed her to the vet at the first sign of trouble, but it was still too late to save her.

But we remember Dot and the fond times we had of seeing her live the life of a pampered pig. Even though she's now passed over the Rainbow Bridge, she still has a place in all our hearts and our memories. Rest in peace, sweet girl, and know you will be missed.

More About Dot's Condition

The Humans check their pigs daily for health problems, and they first noticed Dot's health condition the [day before she passed away](#). According to the vet's examination, the most likely cause was acute lymphoma/leukemia. Dot's quickly deteriorating motor skills also supports this conclusion.

The HappyCavy vet concluded that since Dot was only three years old, she was able to hide her cancer symptoms until the lymphoma entered her blood stream, at which point she could no longer eat or move, and she quickly passed away. The necroscopy showed that her liver was discolored, she had a 2.5cm tumor in her spleen, there was a small lymph node tumor under her chin, and there was the beginning of the growth of small tumors throughout her body.

Dot's blood results also indicated a [high white blood count and large amount of "unclassified white blood cells"](#) – most likely cancer cells.

Check Your Guinea Pig for Signs of Illness

You can help keep your guinea pig healthy by taking the following steps:

- Palpate your guinea pig daily by feeling its body for unusual growths or signs of pain.
- Schedule regular, yearly check-ups for young guinea pigs (under 3 years) and six month check-ups for guinea pigs 4 and older.
- Weigh your guinea pig weekly to ensure proper weight gain
- Be on the look-out for common signs of illness, such as refusal to eat, refusal to drink water, cloudy or bloody urine, labored breathing, and [other common signs](#).

And if you have any questions, consult your veterinarian for advice.