Pigs were first domesticated from wild pigs (boar) in Europe and Eastern Asia around ten thousand years ago. Many breeds have been developed from these wild ancestors, although the majority of pigs on farms in Ireland today are from a few selected breeds and crossbreeds.

Pigs are considered by many to be equal in intelligence to dogs. They naturally live in social groups near woodland. They use their highly sensitive snouts to search out a wide variety of foods.