

The curious habits of hogs

Have you ever wondered what makes your hog do what it does especially when they're in an unfamiliar situation? They're using their senses that have been developed naturally over centuries for them to survive. Understanding how and why they act as they do will make our lives *and theirs* much more pleasant.

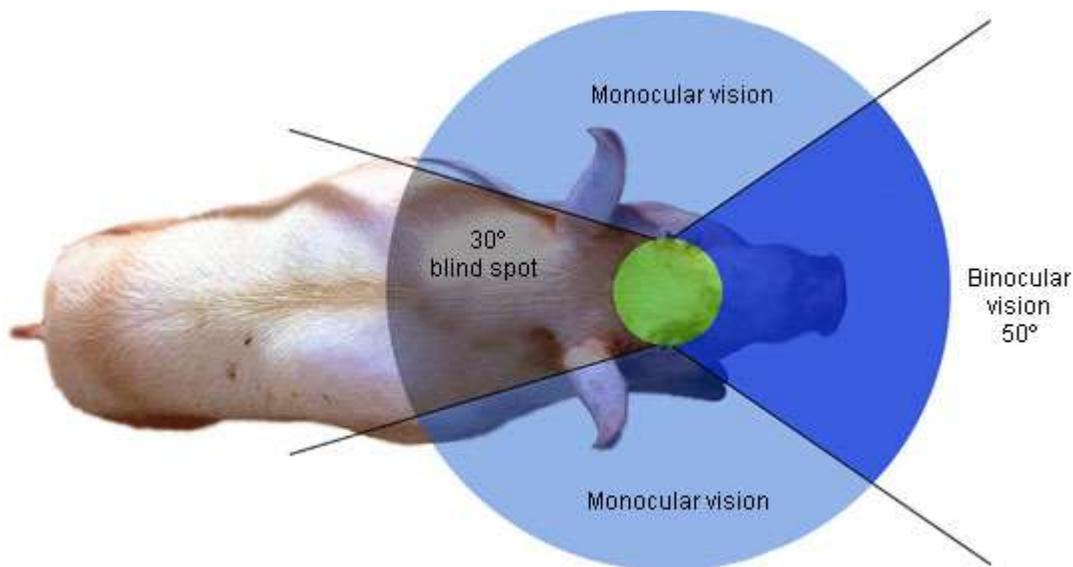
Hogs use their senses of hearing, smelling and seeing just like we do but nature has equipped them differently with their very own special superpowers. Humans usually **SEE** first, or we turn to **SEE** then react. Next our other senses kick in such as hearing and smelling. Hogs use their senses of **HEARING** and **SMELLING** first. This is a developed protection mechanism from predators or danger in the wilderness with thick forests, hills and ravines where a predator or danger may not be easily visible but can be heard or smelled. With humans- hearing and smelling compliment our eye site. With hogs their eye site compliments their hearing and smelling.

Hogs eye site is also very different from ours. We see what's in front of us and turn our heads to see around. That's called Binocular vision and allows us to also see 3D or depth. Hogs see much like this but they also have a superpower called Monocular vision that allows them to see to the sides simultaneously without turning their heads and each eye acts independent of the other in this vision. They can see what's on the left side and right side at the same time and process what they see. The hogs field of vision is actually all around with the exception of what's directly behind it.

Now you know a hog's priority or natural instinct is to first **HEAR** and **SMELL**. This is why they stop often when you're trying to move or load them or have them do something they're not used to. They need to sniff and listen for safety. If you usually speak to them in a normal tone but a louder voice or more noise and activity when you need them to do something, they go on alert. Their ears are telling them something's different. If they're going to a place or in a situation they've never been before, their hyper senses are telling them to be more alert. Where ever they're at, they first have to check it out for safety and they do that by first **hearing, smelling** and then **seeing**. They're Monocular vision (side vision) doesn't allow them to see depth. No 3D. They can't judge how close or far away something is. But they can still see that something is different. This is why when loading or moving hogs it's always best to remain calm, use normal voices and don't rush. Patience is your best friend at these times. Remember they're only doing what comes natural to them but they're in an unfamiliar situation and on alert. Because of the superpower Monocular vision, it's also recommended to keep their path as level as possible and with no shadows or obstacles in their way. They have no depth perception with this vision and will naturally stop to listen and smell for safety. Loading ramps are a good example. They don't like them because it's change. They need to smell and listen first, but also the side vision throws them off because of the change in height and their lack of depth perception. This is why experts will tell you to not give the hogs a choice, but allow plenty of time and patience.

Make your loading chute narrow enough for your hogs to move through but not wide enough to turn or bolt. If you have a long chute it may be wise to build doorways along the way so they can be closed once the hog passes. Many people will even either build their chute with enclosed sides or drape

coverings over the sides so the hog cannot see anything except what's directly in front of it. Then they allow the hog(s) their own time to make their way thru the chute and onto the ramp, smelling and listening along the way. Keep voices and noise to a minimum. It's much less stress on them and you. If you don't have a chute, it's recommended that you bring your vehicle and ramp to the hogs. Allow them a few days to become familiar with it. No matter what, your goal for handling hogs that will be in unfamiliar situations should be as hands free and stress free as possible. Prepare in advance and allow time for the hog to do what comes natural to it. That doesn't mean you should stop the rub downs and belly rubs though. They'll love you for it.



A hogs hearing, sense of smell, and eye site are more advanced and sensitive than humans out of necessity for survival. They rely on them for threatening or uncomfortable situations and their reactions are instinctual. Understand how and why and your life with them will be much easier and enjoyable.