

WARTHOGS INCLOSURE

OUTDOOR ENCLOSURES CASE STORY FROM AALBORG ZOO

2024

Category: Medium Enclosure

Group of: Swedish mini pigs
(*Sus scrofa domesticus*)

Animals: 2-3 warthogs
(*Phacochoerus africanus*)

Outdoor area with Biobed: approx. 75-150 m³

Total Layer thickness: 40-50 cm

Why switch to Biobed?

In spring 2024, Aalborg ZOO replaced the soil substrate with Biobed for their warthogs and Swedish mini pigs. The main reasons were to keep their wallow moist so the animals had something to bathe in, and equally important, to provide enrichment by allowing them to dig in the substrate without it becoming compacted and hard.

Structure of the Biobed layer

The substrate layer (40-50 cm) consists of very coarse Biobed material, which has a strong structure and therefore does not compact. This gives the animals ample opportunity to dig in it. The depression in the middle is approximately 50 cm deep and is filled up to the edge.

The Biobed ZOO XXL type has been used – a type specially developed for very large animals and also applied in outdoor enclosures for digging animals.

From sand/soil to Biobed

One advantage of switching from sand or soil is that sand/soil can become extremely compact over time as the animals constantly walk on it.

Because Biobed contains a high proportion of wood chips, it provides a softer and more forgiving substrate for the animals.

Biobed will also naturally attract worms and insects that the pigs can forage for and eat. Additionally, sand is a non-renewable resource and therefore not a sustainable solution.

Observations

Both warthogs and mini pigs spend a lot of time rooting in the substrate, which serves as natural enrichment.

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