A non-profit organization

The Livestock Conservancy
Protecting endangered livestock and poultry since 1977

2015-2016 Annual Report
Thanks to the support of our dedicated members, The Livestock Conservancy continues to ensure that over 150 historic breeds of livestock and poultry are around for future generations.

Our Mission

is to protect endangered livestock and poultry breeds from extinction.

Cover photo: With over 21,000 breeding birds across the country, Wyandotte chickens have successfully graduated from the Conservation Priority List and are no longer endangered.
Dear Livestock Conservancy Supporter,

The first census of poultry in 1987 was my first introduction to The Livestock Conservancy, so it seems fitting to report on the most recent poultry census in this annual report. The organization has come far since that first census, thanks to the generous community of supporters like you who have helped us grow.

The early efforts to census livestock and poultry between 1985-1989 became the Conservation Priority List, which is now the go-to resource for breed stewards, breed associations, and conservation experts worldwide. In 1987, most breed stewards were families with a long history raising heritage breeds; today’s breed stewards are often a new generation of farmers, putting heritage breeds to work in ways well beyond their original jobs. Today, farmers offer heritage breed products for sale in almost every farmers market, CSA, and online marketplace. Now there are companies small and large to help consumers connect with heritage-breed and locally-grown livestock products, and chefs around the country feature flavorful heritage breed eggs, dairy products, and meats on their menus.

Like you, the Livestock Conservancy is more committed than ever to conserving rare breeds, and this year’s annual report highlights fundamental activities like the poultry census, as well as some of the ways that new stewards have been introduced to heritage livestock and poultry. You will also see that our revenues grew in 2015-2016, which sets the stage for new initiatives like preserving Caspian horses. The board of directors and staff join me in thanking you.

I am proud of the direction the organization is heading. Thanks to you, the members, enthusiasts, breeders, volunteers and donors who join us in this mission, heritage breed livestock and poultry will live on America’s ranches and farms for years to come.

Yours in conservation,

Alison Martin
Executive Director

The Livestock Conservancy
PO Box 477, 33 Hillsboro St
Pittsboro, NC 27312
919 - 542 - 5704

LivestockConservancy.org
Conservation of rare breeds:
- Protects our food system by securing genetic resources
- Ensures broad genetic diversity for the evolution of agriculture
- Preserves our heritage, history, and culture
- Maintains breeds well-suited for sustainable, grass-based farm systems
- Provides small farms a competitive edge
- Broadens the marketplace with diverse fiber and flavorful heritage foods
- Retains valuable genetic traits

Discover, Secure, Sustain

As guardians of genetic diversity, The Livestock Conservancy has helped prevent extinctions, expanded populations, educated beginning farmers, and assisted breeders in establishing new markets for their products. Livestock Conservancy programs help farmers and breed organizations maintain the long-term viability and sustainability of endangered breeds.

Uniting with Conservation Partners

Large Black and Gloucestershire Old Spots pigs were important in the United States in the 19th century, but by the latter half of the 20th century they had all but disappeared. They were resurrected by imports from Great Britain in the 1990s, and a new generation of farmers discovered the advantages of these two breeds for producing pastured pork. Genetically, however, they still descend from a very small number of individuals, and some breeders are beginning to see health and reproductive problems. In 2015, The Livestock Conservancy partnered with the United States Department of Agriculture, Rare Breeds Survival Trust of England, breed associations and numerous breeders to import new genetics from the United Kingdom. Over the next two years the partners, with additional expertise from reproductive physiologists and geneticists, will make the imported germplasm selectively available to restore some vitality to these breeds.
Teaching Our Children

Thanks to a grant from the Mary D. B. T. Semans Foundation, over 2,000 children from a broad demographic of students learned about endangered breeds by incubating and hatching heritage chicks and ducklings in their own classroom. For three years, the Heritage Chicks in the Classroom Project has partnered with 4-H to connect elementary school classrooms with farmers, and provide incubators and heritage breed hatching eggs to enhance the required curriculum topic of embryology. Students learn about biology, development and biodiversity by incubating heritage breed chicken and duck eggs in the classroom. Breeders benefit when the chicks and ducklings are returned to their farms after hatching.

This year, an educational coloring book was created; it will be expanded into an activities book in the future.
Thanks to donors Carolyn & Lowell Larson, a new initiative to preserve globally rare Caspian horses is underway.
Registering the Rarest

The Livestock Conservancy manages a number of registries for rare breeds including Hog Island and Ossabaw hogs, Marsh Tacky and Santa Cruz Island horses, and Wiltshire Horn and Santa Cruz sheep. This year has seen some great benchmarks for the breeds as their numbers continue to increase.

Marsh Tacky

A cultural treasure of South Carolina, the Marsh Tacky horse registry began in 2008 with 150 horses. A three yearlong field investigation generated renewed interest in this breed, and owners were successful in having them declared the state horse of South Carolina. Marsh Tacky horses are secure and growing.

Ossabaw Hogs

The market for Ossabaw hogs has been steadily on the rise as chefs discover the flavor and marvelous texture of their meat. Unfortunately, over time, many active breeders fell behind on keeping up with paperwork and neglected to register their litters. In an effort to ensure that these pigs are not lost to the conservation and tracking efforts for the breed, in 2015, the Livestock Conservancy launched a recovery program. The project targeted known herds of purebred animals that could be traced to previously registered foundation stock. Through this effort, their breeders and owners have reengaged and nearly 100 Ossabaws have been added into the studbook.
The Livestock Conservancy 2015-2016 Annual Report

No Longer Endangered!

Orpington & Wyandotte

Conservation of poultry genetic resources maintains genetic diversity, which serves as an insurance policy against future changes in environment, production systems, or consumer preferences.

Heritage Turkey Population 1997-2015

- 22% of breeds better off
- # of duck breeds critically endangered: 6 in 2000; 2 in 2015
- Half of all poultry breeds now have more than 1,000 breeding birds
- 21% of poultry breeds remain critically endangered

Read the Full Report at LivestockConservancy.org
Counting Our Poultry

A $5000 grant from Murray McMurray Hatchery launched the 2015 poultry census, the first since 2006. More than 4 million poultry enthusiasts were asked to participate in the census.

Special thanks to our partners of the poultry census: Murray McMurray Hatchery, American Poultry Association, Heritage Poultry Conservancy, Mother Earth News, Rare Breeds Canada, Society for the Preservation of Poultry Antiquities, and Tractor Supply Company.

Completed info received from 1500 private breeders, 48 hatcheries and 8 universities.

Taking #HeritageBreedsWeek International

Heritage Breeds Week went Global this year. During International Heritage Breeds Week in May, livestock conservation organizations from around the world joined forces to highlight the threats to genetic diversity in each of their respective countries. This puts livestock conservation into a global perspective, forming worldwide alliances through international collaboration to secure the genetics for trans-boundary breeds. Heritage breed shows and events were held across each country. Join us again in 2017!

13 international organizations participated
75,000+ visitors came to the website.
Over 200,000 people were reached on social media with posts like the ones below.
Connecting • Teaching • Sharing

National Conference

It was a delight to connect with members and partners on the west coast in Santa Rosa, California. The conference kicked off with a special networking reception on Thursday evening. In keeping with 2015’s theme, “The Age of Flavor”, Adam Danforth, Francois Vecchio, Bob Kennard’s memorable clinic on Friday enthralled visitors with their respectful and flavorful fabrication and cooking of an eight year old Shropshire ram. Friday night’s banquet featured mutton among the heritage meats, echoing the message of Keynote Speaker Bob Kennard, author of Much Ado About Mutton. A panel discussion on Saturday offered further insight into the creative utilization of whole animal carcasses, lesser cuts, and older animals with a focus on older and seemingly less desirable cuts and animals from a group of western entrepreneurs.

Other topics at the conference included:

• Poultry Selection & Processing
• Cheesemaking
• Agritourism
• and the always popular Breed Association clinic
• Business vs. Hobby Farm
• Heirloom Plants for Heritage Breeds
• Sheep and Goat Fiber Production & Marketing
• Genetic Diversity in Colonial Spanish Horses
• Goats in a Diversified Homestead
• Conservation of Choctaw Horses & Pigs
• The History of Urban Agriculture & Food Production

Thank you to all who donated food for the conference Heritage breed meals, that featured products from Bourbon Red turkeys, Santa Cruz sheep, Mulefoot hogs, Black Welsh Mountain sheep, Plymouth Rock chickens, and Large Black hogs.

Interacted with over 150,000 people at fairs and events around the country, leading workshops on keeping and caring for endangered breeds
Reached 13,721 members & subscribers
Connected with 20,000+ Facebook followers
Welcomed 1.9 million visitors on our website
Educated 271,828 people with our Heritage poultry video
Engaged more than 31,000 participants in the Heritage Chicken Giveaway, which introduces people to the need to conserve biological diversity.
The Age of Flavor Gala

After the conference, a gala at Kendall-Jackson farm benefited the Livestock Conservancy and the Sonoma County 4-H club. Organized and sponsored by board Vice-Chair Jim Reichardt, the gala included a farm to table meal using heritage breed products, Sonoma County wines, and a heritage turkey auction.

2015-2016 Featured speakers: Sheana Davis, Adam Danforth, Barry Estabrook, Bob Kennard

Conference poster session participant Mardi Storm:

“I really enjoyed the people at the convention and talked to many like-minded folks. I first got into rabbits 5 years ago and didn’t know anything about rare breed livestock until the breeder I got my stock from pointed me to your book ‘Managing Breeds for a Secure Future.’ From your website, I learned about other rare breed rabbits, and picked up a few more. As one who has a degree in Biology from UC Santa Cruz, I understand the need to preserve rare breed genetics and to keep them pure, as a safeguard of having genetic diversity.” – Mardi Storm, Trickster Hares Farm, and Director for the American Beveren Rabbit Club, and Hotot Rabbit Breeders International
Training Farmer Veterans

As America’s farmers age into retirement, a new generation of farmers is emerging in the farming landscape. This new generation of beginning farmers, including youth, women, and military veterans, are returning to the roots of farming, using practices that sustain the land and feed their communities plus the advantages of modern technology. They want to farm in a way that makes a difference, and want to raise heritage livestock and poultry that fit in with their farm goals. These beginning farmers are motivated and hungry for the information they need to turn their farm dream into a reality, or to turn the corner from hobby to profit. The Train the Next Generation program was launched in 2012 to meet this need.

From Service to Stewardship is a two day workshop where military veterans learn from experienced farmers, many of them veterans themselves. The workshop covers the basics of choosing and raising Heritage livestock and poultry, an introduction to the economics of raising heritage breeds, and farm tours to see it in action. The 2016 workshop, held in May at Lakota Ranch in Remington, Virginia, had even more opportunities for hands-on learning, thanks to dedicated members and veterans who had participated in previous workshops. The spirit of support and friendship that has grown out of these workshops is helping veterans and other beginning farmers navigate the next steps in their journey, and a new Facebook page is keeping farmer veterans connected.
Documenting Living History

Long-time Conservancy member Jess Brown invited the Conservancy to the “Open Range Reunion” in Mississippi to document the stories told by his family and community of an era being lost to living memory. The Brown family, friends, and neighbors demonstrated shearing Gulf Coast sheep, milking Pineywoods cows, driving oxen, and riding horses that were often the only means of transportation in the days commemorated on this occasion. The storytellers who recounted life on the open range were captured on video for future generations. A few yards away were the pastures that still hold the breeds of animals that have been on the Brown farm for generations.

Cattle and sheep were often a family’s financial security. As one producer commented, “When you had money, you bought animals. When you needed money, you sold animals. They were banks on four feet for the community.”

Visiting with Friends

Media partner Mother Earth News made it possible for the Livestock Conservancy to travel across the country and connect with small and hobby farmers, ranchers, homesteaders, and agri-lifers at Mother Earth Fairs in Belton, TX, Seven Springs, PA, Topeka, KS, Albany, OR, Asheville, NC, and West Bend, WI. Each fair draws 15,000-20,000 attendees, and have allowed us to connect with many new audiences.
Building Bridges

There are many recent examples of how strategic partnerships can be used to bring about change for the good. Heirloom Brandywine tomatoes are now featured in nearly every seed catalog, restaurant, and farmers market around the country. Organic vegetables are available in Walmart. Locally produced microbrews have captured 1/5 of market share. These changes came about through partnerships between small and large producers, and were driven onward by public success. The growing popularity of grassfed beef, heritage hogs and backyard poultry provides an opportunity to take some heritage breeds “mainstream”, moving them permanently off the endangered list within the next five years.

The Livestock Conservancy is building strategic partnerships with organizations such as the United States Department of Agriculture, American Poultry Association, American Pastured Poultry Producers Association, and leaders in swine and poultry breeding and genetics so that we can position ourselves to take advantage of this opportunity for heritage breeds.

Demand for heritage pork already exceeds supply. Demand for heritage turkey, beef and eggs continues to grow. Taking advantage of these market opportunities will require inspiring many more small farmers to raise rare breeds. Additionally, encouraging larger producers to incorporate rare breeds in their breeding programs can make these breeds more secure. Success demands that this must be done on a scale far greater than any program in the history of the Livestock Conservancy, while also assuring that integrity of the breeds is not changed, and that genetics are available to a broad range of different types of producers.
Members, directors and staff have presented talks at many fairs, Rotary Clubs, and local groups around the country.
Discovering

Livestock Conservancy board member John Wilkes traveled to Hawaii in 2015 to document and photograph endangered sheep and goats on three islands, and forge relationships with land managers. Sheep and goat breeds dating from the late 18th or early 19th century have adapted to the unique climate of the islands, and are integral to the food culture of the native Hawaiians. Challenges facing their survival include land development, government-mandated controls for habitat conservation, and crossbreeding.

Partners

Working together with partners allows us to achieve more

American Poultry Association
Association of Living History Farms and Agricultural Museums
Brookgreen Gardens
Central Carolina Community College
Heritage Poultry Conservancy
International Caspian Society
Maryland Sheep and Wool Youth Conservation Program
Mississippi State University
Mother Earth News
National Sporting Library and Museum
North Carolina Cooperative Extension
Oklahoma Heritage Horse Sanctuary

Virginia Technical Institute
Rare Breed Survival Trust
Rare Breeds Canada
Rare Breeds Conservation Society New Zealand
Rare Breeds Trust of Australia
Red CONBIAND
Seed Savers Exchange
Texas A&M University
United Nations Food & Agriculture Organization (FAO)
University of Cordoba (Spain)
University of Missouri
USDA National Animal Germplasm Program
Virginia Cooperative Extension Service
More than 150 breed associations, clubs and registries
Financial Reports

- Contributions - $272,084
- Foundation Grants - $228,550
- Membership - $68,490
- Sponsorship - $21,500
- Conference/Workshops - $64,222
- Merchandise Sales - $9,476
- Other Revenue - $7,703

Total Revenue $672,025

EXPENSES

- Program/Outreach - $360,635
- Management and General - $114,386
- Fundraising - $62,177

Total Expenses $537,198

Sponsors

Thank you for your support in 2015-2016!

American Guinea Hog Association
CFC Farm & Home Center
Chameleon John
Chapel Hill Farms
Chicken Waterer/BriteTap
Cornerstone Morgan Horse Club
Earthtools
eFowl
Greenup Girl
Heritage Foods, Inc.
Jackeez
Marushka Farms
Metzer Farms
Mohawk Valley Trading Co/Crooked Brook

Murray McMurray Hatchery
National CVM Conservancy
Pineywoods Cattle Raisers Association
Rancho Llano Seco
Randall Lineback Breed Association
Smithfield’s Chicken ‘N Bar-B-Q
Sonoma County Tourism
SVF Foundation
The Lippitt Club, Inc
TomKat Ranch Educational Foundation
Tractor Supply Company
Whispering Hills Farm
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$10,000 and above
Anonymous
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66 Lifetime members
Matching Campaign a Roaring Success

And you, dear friend, are the reason! To be precise, 451 of you participated by making a gift, and when we added up every single precious gift, our goal of $75,000 was left in the dust. In fact, we nearly doubled it! You, each one of you, are appreciated more than you could know.

Your gift means we can do even more to protect endangered breeds from extinction. And here’s why…

It’s hard to overestimate the difference that each gift makes toward advancing our mission. Large and small, each gift represents someone who cares whether we protect valuable livestock genetics. That caring…that investment is what causes each of us to tell our friends and neighbors about the dangerously low numbers of Redcap chickens, Beltsville Small White turkeys, Milking Devon cattle, San Clemente goats, Mulefoot pigs, American Chinchilla rabbits, Santa Cruz sheep, and Cleveland Bay horses…along with over 150 other breeds we know about…and so many more yet to be found and rescued. And to share the critical reason why you support The Livestock Conservancy.

The staff and the Board of Directors are fired up by your tangible support! Thank you from the bottom of our genetically geeky, critter-loving hearts.

Judy Wollen
Livestock Conservancy Board Member
Development Committee
“My interest in supporting the Livestock Conservancy comes from our ‘accidental farming’ venture. My husband and I purchased property a few years back and started to research what type of animals would be best to raise to help clear the land without us living on the property. During our research for the hardiest most self-sufficient animals, The Livestock Conservancy consistently popped up. This led us to multiple farm and ranch tours searching for our own heritage breed animals, and an instant sense of ‘purpose’ for our land.

My husband is military and we have received our ‘Homegrown by Heroes’ certification from the Farmer Veteran Coalition for marketing our farm products, and look forward to sharing our experiences to encourage other veterans to raise heritage breeds. To us, raising heritage breeds (as noted on your priority list) is more than just a business venture, it is a lifestyle.”

Tammy and Joe Albert
Centerville, GA

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And all of the members who staff a booth at their local fair to represent the Conservancy.
Become a Conservation Champion

With regular, ongoing support from monthly donations, we can continue to protect America’s rarest livestock and poultry breeds which are integral to our national identity and our future generations.

Give a monthly gift!

Visit LivestockConservancy.org, call (919) 542-5704, or write to The Livestock Conservancy, PO Box 477, Pittsboro, NC 27312 for more information.