



*Conserving rare breeds since 1977*

## Shave ‘Em to Save ‘Em

**It’s a catchy phrase, but what exactly is it?**

Shave ‘Em to Save ‘Em (sometimes called SE2SE) is a program to promote 19 breeds of sheep on the Livestock Conservancy’s list of endangered livestock (the Conservation Priority List or CPL). *Fiber providers* register with the Livestock Conservancy and provide a list of the breed(s) they have and the product(s) – like fleeces, fiber, yarn, etc. – that they offer for sale, and request stickers that are used to provide proof that the product they sell came from a participant in the program. *Fiber artists* who want to be a part of the program register with The Livestock Conservancy as well. When they do, they receive a “Passport” that includes a page of information for each breed on which they can put the sticker that they receive from the fiber provider when they purchase a product from them. As they work their way through the breeds and complete projects with five, ten, and fifteen breeds, they can choose an item from the fiber artists catalog online. Feedback from shepherds and fiber artists alike has been very positive.

### **So, how does this project benefit shepherds?**

First and foremost, it means grassroots support. Both the concept and the name Shave ‘Em to Save ‘Em were conceived and championed by shepherds of heritage breed sheep. They understand the daily financial challenges of their farms and

ranches. And while devoted to their breed, they also recognize profitability matters.

Shepherds have reported increased sales over previous years. “I have rarely sold raw fleeces in the past, primarily due to time and coordinating getting to festivals. Within a month of shearing I have sold eight of my nine raw fleeces I decided

to offer this year,” said Linnzi Furman.

Charis Bennett Walker has a small farm in an economically depressed market within Appalachia. Her Ohio location makes marketing fiber particularly challenging, but SE2SE is changing her outlook. “This program has allowed me to sell all of my roving, yarn, and fleeces within two weeks,” explains Walker. “This program has been a game-changer for my flock, too. When I started three years ago, I was concerned about how I would sell my fiber, considering I wanted to raise at least 20 brood ewes to make a difference in conservation efforts to preserve Tunis sheep (a unique U.S. breed on our TLC Watch List). That’s quite a bit of fiber! With the advent of this program, I think it is possible to increase my flock size, given the strong demand for my fiber. This program has exceeded my expectations and allows me to promote the breed more effectively. The backing and active promotion of a national organization lends credibility and increased visibility to my efforts.”

One shepherd sharing her information with us anonymously in late March said, “I have been on Etsy for five years. Half of my total, all-time profits have been made since *December*. I can get 40 sales a month now. One post on SE2SE on FB on a Thursday normally

has gotten me 20-22 sales by Monday morning. I used to go four months to get 20 sales in a good season.”

Several shepherds who had never sold wool before said they’ve been able to sell all of their wool through the SE2SE

*continued on page 4*



**Melissa Lear Fisher**

April 13

You know those “new to this” fiber artists popping up and joining here? Well I am one of them! Thank you for having me here!

Starting my afternoon off right by diving into picking through and cleaning my very first fleece: a gorgeous Jacob lamb!! Any and all tips are welcome – I am the type who researches things and then just wings it!

Thanks [GypsyMountainFarm](#) for this beauty!!

**Melissa Fisher, a new Shave ‘Em to Save ‘Em fiber artist, shared some photos documenting her work cleaning and washing a Jacob sheep fleece from Gypsy Mountain Farm for the first time. Photo by Melissa Fisher.**

# Youth Scholarships and DNA Study for American Cream Draft Horses

This summer, The Livestock Conservancy will launch a project to support conservation of American Cream Draft horses and to promote the breed to young owners.

The American Cream Draft breed originated in Iowa in the early 1900s and has always been rare. Unfortunately, just as the breed was becoming established, the market for draft horses collapsed. Mechanization of agriculture meant that the majority of workhorses went to slaughter. The breeding of draft animals nearly ceased. A few people held onto their Creams and thus maintained a slender genetic base, which was the foundation for the breed's survival. Today the breed is still listed as critically endangered, and The Livestock

Conservancy hopes to grow its population through initiatives like these.

Breeds that have a small population size, like the American Cream Draft, tend to lose important genetic variation due to random chance or to inbreeding. The Livestock Conservancy, the American Cream Draft Association, and Dr. Gus Cothran of Texas A&M will partner to create a DNA snapshot of the breed's current genetic health. Animals will be chosen for sampling based on a recent herdbook analysis. This work will help direct conservation breeding decisions to ensure the future of the breed.

The future of the American Cream Draft horse also depends on the recruitment of new young owners and breeders. The Livestock Conservancy will offer youth scholarships for participation in equine events to recruit young people who may be interested in owning and working with this breed. Project proposals are due to the American Cream Draft Horse Association in September 2019. ❖



**The American Cream Draft is the only draft horse breed developed in the United States. Photo by Karen Smith.**

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## The Livestock Conservancy News PO Box 477

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The Livestock Conservancy News (ISSN 1064-1599) is published quarterly by The Livestock Conservancy. © The Livestock Conservancy 2019.



The Livestock Conservancy is a nonprofit tax-exempt corporation established to conserve and promote endangered breeds of livestock and poultry. The Conservancy

is a membership organization that engages in research, education, and communication to promote these purposes.

Basic annual membership is \$45 and includes the quarterly *Livestock Conservancy News* and the annual *Breeders Directory*. We also accept unsolicited donations. All contributions are tax-deductible to the extent provided by law. Please send changes of address to the Conservancy.

The Conservancy welcomes articles, photographs, letters, and classified advertising for possible publication. Publication of articles or

advertisements is not necessarily an endorsement by the Conservancy. Articles from this newsletter may not be reprinted without permission.

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Maryland: A copy of the current financial statement of The Livestock Conservancy is available by writing PO Box 477, Pittsboro, NC 27312. Documents and information submitted under the Maryland Solicitations Act are also available, for the cost of postage and copies, from the Maryland Secretary of State, State House, Annapolis MD 21401, (410) 974-5534.

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Program as required by law and information may be obtained by calling 800-332-4483 or 360-725-0378.

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### Livestock Conservancy Staff

Alison Martin, PhD, Executive Director  
Jeannette Beranger, Senior Program Manager  
Michele Brane, Donor Information and Research Manager  
Charlene Couch, PhD, Program Coordinator  
Karna Elliott, Development Director  
Cindra Kerscher, Administrative Assistant  
Deborah Niemann, Program Research Associate  
Angelique Thompson, Operations Director  
Ryan Walker, Marketing and Communications Manager

### Advisors

D. Phillip Sponenberg, DVM, PhD, Technical Advisor

# FROM THE DIRECTOR



## A Season of Growth

By Alison Martin, Executive Director

*“Security is mostly a superstition. It does not exist in nature. Life is either a daring adventure or nothing.”*

— Helen Keller

Planning ahead can be exciting. Workshops in the West. Marketing toolkits for heritage breeds. Website improvements. Helping children fall in love with horses. Working shoulder-to-shoulder with breed associations. Microgrants for small farms.

Now, several important pieces are in place to make these happen, and more. In May, the Livestock Conservancy welcomed our first full-time fundraiser in the organization’s 42-year history.

Why? Because only *people* can save heritage breeds.

*People* study breed characteristics and investigate populations for the annual Conservation Priority List. *People* provide training about genetic diversity, breed attributes, and the role of livestock in sustainable agriculture. And millions of people visit our website each year to find this information. *People* support a network of breeders, breed associations, and farmers, share technical, marketing, and promotional expertise, and connect people to each other. These people multiply our

efforts to save heritage breeds. *People* also assist gene banks in identifying important genetic materials that should be collected from endangered breeds. It takes *people* to rescue rare animal genetics from threatened populations.

Karena Elliott, our new Development Director, is just such a person. She has a long history of supporting agriculture. She’s raised millions of dollars for colleges of agriculture. She is a freelance writer, telling the stories of American farming and ranching in the press. You can read some of her work at [www.KarenaElliott.com](http://www.KarenaElliott.com). Raised on a cow/calf farm in western Kentucky, Karena studied animal sciences and education at the University of Kentucky. She’s worked with horses, swine, poultry, and rabbits, and she even met her husband, a dairy animal nutritionist, in a sheep science class.

As Development Director, Karena will help The Livestock Conservancy expand our mission to save Heritage Breeds. A new three-year strategic plan has just been completed, and Karena will help us turn plans into action, and make these dreams come true. She will take the stories of Bourbon Red turkeys, of Texas Longhorn cattle, of Mulefoot pigs and Hog Island sheep, she will take *your* stories, and tell these where they can do the most good – to partners, foundations, corporations, and individual donors. Karena will inspire people with what *you* already know, in your head and in your heart, about the amazing resiliency and beauty of heritage livestock and poultry. She will help people, maybe even you, fulfill their desire to make a dif-



**Karena Elliott joined Conservancy staff at the Maryland Sheep and Wool Festival to meet members and Shave ‘Em to Save ‘Em participants. Photo by Jeannette Beranger.**

ference – and that difference is saving rare livestock and poultry.

It seems fitting to announce this change during the growing season. By the time you get this newsletter, piglets and lambs will be weaned and this year’s chicks and turkeys will be into the leggy “teenage” stage. Change revitalizes us and, just as we are eager to see how this year’s calves will fill out, our new team member brings new spirit, energy and ideals to tackle the challenges of conservation. Please make her welcome. ❖



**Karena Elliott visited with Conservancy ambassador Isabella Rossellini and her chickens. Photo by Jeannette Beranger**

# Shave 'Em to Save 'Em

*Continued from page 1*

group on either Ravelry or Facebook. Fiber providers are also listed in the online breeders directory, which many fiber artists use to find wool when searching for specific breeds.

The Livestock Conservancy is working to make sure these accomplishments and the growth in sales can be built upon for the future. "I've had 50 Etsy sales just for Shave 'Em to Save 'Em," explains Garrett Ramsay of Winslow, Illinois. "In addition, many of those people are repeat customers who have come back for more product, raw fiber or breeding stock! It's had a huge effect. Forty fleeces are reserved, and I haven't shorn the sheep yet! Truly incredible program."

Shave 'Em to Save 'Em means promoting the value of this often overlooked component of sheep production. It rewards the shepherds raising heritage breeds with new market share and financial incentives for making fleece production a greater priority in their operation.

The demand for rare breed wool has never been greater, and the Conservancy encourages shepherds to sign up as fiber



**Melissa's finished yarn made from the Jacob fleece in the photo on page 1. Photo by Melissa Fisher.**

providers, especially those who sell yarn, and those with the rarest breeds. Even shepherds with hair sheep have been selling fiber to the most creative fiber artists.

## **And what about fiber artists?**

Shave 'Em to Save 'Em officially launched in February 2019, and the response has been overwhelming. Three hundred fiber artists signed up within the first two weeks, and enrollment climbed to more than 1000 by May with more continuing to sign up daily. Fiber artists

are incentivized to use wool from sheep on the Conservation Priority List, and after they complete projects with five, ten, and fifteen breeds, they can choose an item from the fiber artists catalog online.

Many fiber artists have told us that they were unaware of the plight of rare breeds of sheep, and they are happy that their fiber hobby or business can be used for good. "I love that I am doing my part to bring awareness and hopefully encourage shepherds to increase flocks to bring numbers up," said spinner and weaver Lori Pleiness.

Many are reporting that they have discovered new favorite wools. Rebecca Kleinschmidt,

who has been knitting and crocheting for 40 years but just started spinning, comments, "Although I like most of them, Tunis and Cotswold are my favorites so far. They are easy to spin for a newbie like myself." Rebecca has already completed projects using ten different breeds.

Ginger Briggs, who has completed projects with five breeds, says her favorite is "Gulf Coast Native because it was the first wool I used and it was from Louisiana. I have also fallen in love with Leicester Longwool and Jacob."

The SE2SE Facebook group has more than 3,000 members, and more than 800 people are active in the Ravelry group. Shepherds post updates on their flocks and news about fleece availability. Fiber artists share photos of items made with wool from rare and endangered sheep.

The Livestock Conservancy believes giving heritage breed animals a job is one of the key steps to saving them. Making these animals both fun to own and economically profitable are equally important. Sometimes the best ideas are the most simple. Shave 'Em to Save 'Em. ❖

*Visit [RareWool.org](http://RareWool.org) to learn more.*



**Connie Lipham and Scott Matthews took a Leicester Longwool lamb and a spinning wheel to Career Day at their local elementary school. The lamb originally came from Joy Cobb. Photo by Gabriella Nanci.**

## **Welcome to Our Newest Life Members!**

The Livestock Conservancy would like to give a special thanks to the following individuals who recently chose to support the Conservancy and its conservation programs by becoming life members. For more information on becoming a life member, please contact Karena Elliott at (806) 570-0874 or [kelliott@LivestockConservancy.org](mailto:kelliott@LivestockConservancy.org).

**Debbie Adams**  
Wimberly, TX

**Leticia A. Alamia**  
Linn, TX

**Mike Hansen & Sue Meyer**  
Coleridge, NC

**Matt Hemmer**  
Lindsborg, KS



## COME JOIN US!

Santa Rosa, CA

October 25 - 26, 2019

*Fiber artists need good raw materials.  
Those materials come from sound sheep.  
Sound sheep come from viable, strong  
breeds.*

### *Events, Clinics & Tours include:*

- *Fiber Design Workshop & Distillery Tour*
- *Targeted Grazing*
- *Holistic Management*
- *Conservation Breeding*
- *Fiber Production & Natural Wool Dying*
- *Marketing Wool & Sheep*
- *Recreating a National Fiber System*

# Heritage Livestock Conference

## *All Things Sheep!*

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## SCHEDULE - AT - A - GLANCE

### Friday, October 25 - Clinics & Tours

9:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.	Targeted Grazing Clinic Three Sheeps Fiber Design Workshop & Distillery Tour
1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Natural Wool Dyeing Clinic
1:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.	Three Sheeps Fiber Design Workshop & Distillery Tour <i>(this is a repeat of the morning tour)</i>
6:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.	Reception & Silent Auction

### Saturday, October 26 - Conference

8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.	The Biological Challenges of Farming with Rare Breeds
9:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.	Beyond Fiber, Getting the Most Out of Your Animals
11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	Recreating a National Fiber System
12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.	Lunch <i>(included)</i>
1:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.	Breakout Sessions (2 concurrent)
2:45 p.m. - 3:45 p.m.	Breakout Sessions (2 concurrent)
4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Breakout Sessions (2 concurrent)

*Schedule is subject to change. Please check website for updates.*

**Don't miss this opportunity to network with fellow fiber providers and fiber artists!**

## FRIDAY PRE-CONFERENCE CLINICS & TOURS

### Targeted Grazing – An Ecological Tool to Manage Range and Pasture Lands (\$69)

Grazing is a cost-effective vegetation management alternative where other options are ineffective, and targeted grazing can be more cost effective on landscapes that are too steep, rocky or remote for conventional vegetation management (mowing or chemical treatment), or in the urban-wildland interface where burning is not an option. Targeted grazing, a concept that has been around for decades and is sometimes called prescribed grazing and managed herbivory, is the application of a specific kind of livestock at a determined season, duration, and intensity to accomplish defined vegetation or landscape goals. Learn how to implement a grazing program on your own to manage lands, or, if you decide not to own animals, how to use this knowledge when hiring a targeted grazer. Location: on farm, TBD

### Natural Wool Dyeing Clinic (\$119\*)

Looking for an alternative to synthetic dyes? Learn how to use natural materials. A mordant, or dye fixative, is a substance that is used for dyeing fabrics or intensifying stains. Mordanting will be covered and dyeing with raw dyestuffs and extracts. Learn about other materials and techniques to further enhance your colors. Fiber selection and prep as well as how to maximize your efforts for deep rich colors will be covered. Cotati Room, 216 East School Street, Cotati, CA 94931  
*\*Includes materials fee; each student will receive 6 one-ounce skeins of Cormo wool yarn and handouts.*

### Three Sheeps to the Wind Tour: JG Switzer Fiber Design Workshop and Spirit Works Distillery (\$69)

*Note: This combo tour will run twice, once in the morning and once in the afternoon.*

Tour JG Switzer fiber design workshop, founded by Jessica Switzer Green in 2018. Jessica wanted to bring a sense of art and fashion to a timeless standby – heirloom blankets and throws. The design workshop sources wool from small mills and fiber farms and tailors each piece with care, following designs inspired by older European prints. A self-described “wool nerd,” Jessica is devoted to cultivating artisan pieces featuring heritage breed wool. Location: 6790 McKinley Street, Suite 160, Sebastopol, CA 95472

Then, walk next door to visit Spirit Works Distillery. Learn about their “grain to glass” philosophy where each batch begins with grain milled, mashed, fermented, distilled, and bottled entirely on-site. This hands-on approach allows for control over each aspect of the production process and creates a premium product whose quality has been strictly monitored each step of the way “Batch by Batch, from Grain to Glass.” Location: Spirit Works Distillery, 6790 McKinley Street #100, Sebastopol, CA 95472. Make sure to leave time to explore the Barlow Historical District before or after the tour for lunch and shopping.

*Extra charge for all pre-conference clinics and tours*

## SATURDAY CONFERENCE (\$175)

### Session 1: The Biological Challenges of Farming with Rare Breeds

Hear our panel of experts discuss the major obstacles facing breeds in the biological realm: managing diversity in small populations, popular sire syndrome, importing new genetics from other countries, and conservation breeding strategies that go beyond individual farm needs to support the breed population as a whole.

*Speakers: Brian Larson, Lincoln Longwool breeder, John Wilkes, Clun Forest and Kerry Hill sheep breeder, Matt Rolleston, veterinarian specializing in sheep AI, and Phil Sponenberg, Livestock Conservancy Technical Advisor*

### Session 2: Beyond Fiber, Getting the Most Out of Your Animals

Speakers will talk about value-added marketing of sheep products beyond lamb including hides, mutton, hogget, and services like holistic grazing.

*Speakers: Zefren Anderson, Weaver, Lisa Leonard, Navajo Churro meat provider, Rian Rinn, Sonoma County Meat, Butcher and Processor, Oogie Maguire, Shepherd of Black Welsh Mountain sheep, and Brittany Cole Bush, Shepherd, Holistic Hides*

### Session 3: Recreating a National Fiber System

The once thriving national fiber system has all but collapsed; processors and mills have closed. With a resurgence of interest in animal fiber, how do we go about recreating this system for a new generation of fiber artists? Our panel will discuss how to create a new system and provide a market to support it.

*Speakers: Toia Rivera-Strohm & Brad Strohm, Von Strohm Fiber Processing Mill, Marie Minnich, Marushka Farm, Shepherd & Fiber Artist, Emily Chamelin, Internationally-recognized Professional Shearer, Marie Hoff, Mobile Grazing Project, Rebecca Burgess, Director of Fibershed, and Stephanie Wilkes, Shearer, Leader of Fibershed Cooperative*

Attendees at all panel discussions will be able to ask questions and provide feedback in this give-and-take format that is designed to engage both speakers and listeners.

### Saturday Afternoon Breakouts:

**Marketing Your Wool and Sheep Products in the 21st Century**, *Deborah Neimann, author*

**Keeping an Eye On the Long Game – Balancing Improvement and Biodiversity**, *Oogie McGuire, Black Welsh Mountain Shepherd*

**Fiber Production: What Artists Want & What Breeders Need**, *Toia Rivera-Strohm and Brad Strohm, Von Strohm Fiber Processing Mill*

**Counting Sheep - Finding Rare Bloodlines and Hidden Pockets of Diversity**, *Deborah Hunter, Karakul Shepherds Alliance*

**The Secret Lives of Livestock Guardian Dogs**, *Dan Macon, Livestock and Natural Resources Advisor*

**Making the Leap to Longwools**, *Brian Larson, breeder of Lincoln Longwool sheep*



### Calling all “Fiberistas”

Bring your knitting, crocheting, weaving, spinning, etc., and visit with other fiber artists during the conference. Work on your projects and learn tips and techniques from one another. Space will be available.

### Silent Auction

Support rare breed conservation by donating an item to the silent auction. If you'd like to donate, please email Angelique at [athompson@LivestockConservancy.org](mailto:athompson@LivestockConservancy.org) or bring your item with you to Friday night's reception.

**Register Now! - [www.LivestockConference.org](http://www.LivestockConference.org)**

## GET CREATIVE IN

### The #1 Wine Destination in the U.S!

It's not your everyday conference location for a reason. A hub for creative thinkers, it's the perfect place to connect with other rare breed enthusiasts and attend exciting talks devoted to ALL THINGS SHEEP! Check out our top picks :

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- Dip a toe in the Pacific Ocean
- Eat gourmet local cuisine
- Experience history
- Discover a vibrant arts scene



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\$159 per night plus tax

Reservations: 707-545-8530

or visit [livestockconservancy.org](http://livestockconservancy.org)

Reference *The Livestock Conservancy Heritage Livestock Conference*

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# Microgrant Applications Open This Month

We are excited to announce the opening of our second year of The Livestock Conservancy's microgrant program. Through the generous contributions of grantors and private individuals we have secured funding that will be used to enhance the competitiveness and stability of heritage breed livestock and poultry farms. To help achieve these goals, The Livestock Conservancy will offer competitive small grants to heritage breed enterprises. Funds may be used for improvements for farm animals and infrastructure; improved production efficiency; wool milling; processing; milk, meat and egg production and sales; farmer education; agri-tourism; and promotions and marketing.

## Who should apply?

Applicants can apply within only one of the three areas of focus of the microgrant program:

- National grants program open to all residents and organizations residing or based in the United States.
- The Northeast program focused on the region of the U.S. as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, which includes the states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont. Applicants must be residents or organizations of one of these states and actively working with heritage breeds.
- Youth grants program open to all youth residents of the United States between the ages of 8-18 years old.

## Applicants must:

1. Work with livestock, poultry, or products on The Livestock Conservancy's Conservation Priority List.
2. Complete the application, which must include a detailed plan for the use of the grant funds, a clear timeline for achieving proposed goals, how the project will impact the breed and other producers, and how you will evaluate success.



**Ashley Pierce used a 2018 microgrant to expand infrastructure of her Silver Fox rabbitry and acquire new breeding stock to diversify genetics in her operation.**

3. Include two letters of recommendation from a professional relationship or educator; if applicant is under the age of 18, a letter of support from a parent or guardian is additionally required. These can be attached within the online application as a PDF or JPEG file. Letters may not be requested of or provided by current staff or board members of The Livestock Conservancy.
4. If chosen as a grant recipient, submit a written report on the use and impact of the microgrant funds within one year of acceptance of the award.

Special consideration will be given to farmers who are active members of their breed associations, and/or will represent The Livestock Conservancy at local events and bring heritage animals for display during the year following receipt of the grant.

## How can the grant be spent?

Suitable expenditures of grant funds include the purchase, production and marketing of heritage breed animals and their products, and agri-tourism using heritage breeds. Examples of expenditures include, but are not limited to, purchase of livestock or poultry, producer training programs, fences, facilities, supplies, and specialized equipment, or product marketing. Funds must be used as stated in the applicant's proposal. Funds may not be used for wages or compensation for individuals. Use of funds inconsistent with the proposal will result in forfeiture of award and repayment of funds. Receipts for purchases will be required for reimbursement, or grantees may request purchase to be made directly by the Livestock Conser-

vancy. Farmers have one year to use their funds.

## How much is awarded?

The amount of award can be from \$500 to \$2,000.

## When are applications due?

Applications may be submitted after August 15, 2019 and must be received online or at The Livestock Conservancy's office no later than October 15th, 2019. Winners will be announced by February 1, 2020.

## Where should applications be submitted?

Electronic applications may be submitted at <https://TLCmicrogrants.grantplatform.com>.

If you have questions, or do not have online access and wish to request a paper copy of the application, contact:

The Livestock Conservancy  
Attn: Microgrants  
PO Box 477  
Pittsboro, NC 27312  
[info@livestockconservancy.org](mailto:info@livestockconservancy.org)  
919-542-5704

Paper applications should be submitted to the mailing address above.

Current employees and Directors of The Livestock Conservancy and their spouses, are not eligible for the program. Qualified applicants will be considered without regard to age, race, color, religion, national origin, disability, veteran status, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation or gender identity.

Apply now at <https://TLCmicrogrants.grantplatform.com>.



**Jim Schultz used his microgrant to better protect his Buckeye and Black Australorp chickens and Standard Bronze turkeys from predators. Photo courtesy of Jim Schultz.**

# Sheep is Life: Navajo-Churro Sheep

By Don Bixby. Photos by Cindy Dvergsten.

When the *Conservation Priority List* is published each year the changes in categories can be both heartening and disappointing. What is it that makes a difference in a breed's status? The answer or answers are probably different for each breed, but almost always, progress is the result of a collaboration of individuals or groups working together to advance the interests and usefulness of a breed. Such a collaboration has been critical to the conservation progress made for the Navajo-Churro sheep.

In 1977, the Navajo Sheep Project was founded by Dr. Lyle McNeal of Utah State University when only a few hundred sheep still survived. That same year, the American Minor Breeds Conservancy (now The Livestock Conservancy) was founded by a group of New Englanders interested in promoting disappearing historic breeds. From the earliest days the *Conservation Priority List* included the Navajo-Churro breed. In the mid-1980s, the Conservancy worked with breeders to organize and support a breeder's association and registry for this historic American breed of Spanish ancestry. In 1997 another organization came into being to support conservation of Navajo-Churro sheep, Navajo Lifeway or Diné be'íiná with a celebration focused on the role of the Navajo-Churro in the life and culture of the Navajo people, called *Sheep Is Life*.

As Executive Director of the Conservancy, I was pleased to collaborate in 1998, with Diné be'íiná and the Navajo-Churro Sheep Association to develop a joint conference at San Juan College in Farmington, New Mexico. The Conservancy portion of the conference focused on the 400-year history of the Navajo-Churro sheep, along with the suite of livestock and poultry which the Spanish introduced into the region. These included Spanish goats, Spanish black turkeys, Spanish black chickens, corriente and longhorn cattle, burros, and Spanish horse breeds. These introductions began in 1540, and



Drake Mace, Connie Taylor and Venancio Aragon at Sheep is Life.

especially in 1590 with the Juan de Onate entrada into the present-day Southwestern United States.

*Sheep Is Life* is now a celebration event organized and hosted by Navajo Lifeway or Diné be'íiná meaning the way that the Navajo people live. The organization, headed by Aretta Begay, promotes a sustainable livelihood through the Navajo way of life. Traditionally, this has been sheep, wool, and weaving and whatever comes from that. To that end Diné be'íiná promotes *Sheep Is Life* as a celebration of traditional Navajo shepherding and weaving culture.

Though we haven't attended all 23 celebrations of Sheep Is Life, my wife Pat and I look forward to the celebration every June, particularly since we have moved to New Mexico. This year we were traveling to the campus of Dine' College in Shiprock, New Mexico. Once again, we

were happy to be travelling with our colleague, David Ritchie of Green Mountain Spinnery in Putney, Vermont. On the way through Gallup, we stopped to visit Mary Walker in her shop, Weaving in Beauty. A well-respected restorer of Navajo rugs, she opened the shop a couple of years ago to supply looms, weaving tools, yarn and other supplies. The eye-catching colors of the yarn displays are the product of natural dyes such as sage, indigo, Mormon tea, cochineal, canaigre or wild rhubarb and wild carrot, as well as aniline-dyed yarn. The shop is also the site for numerous fiber arts classes.

Arriving at the campus in Shiprock for the June 13-15 event, we met up with Phil Sonnenberg and his wife Torsten, friends and colleagues for decades. We also found vendors' tents and fiber artists set up in the shaded commons area. Zefren Anderson knelt on a fleece to show how skirting of a fleece begins the preparation for spinning and weaving. Other demonstrations covered a wide range of fiber arts including weavers Kevin Aspaas and Elisio Curley at upright looms. In other locations Ilene Naegle, Gloria Begay, and Maggie Short-hair demonstrated drop and lap spindle spinning, carding, felting, weaving, knitting, and dyeing.

A highlight of the day was the energy of 35 third-grade students from Bread Springs Day School visiting the event with their box lunches. They have been study-





**A display of dyed yarns and a loom at Sheep is Life.**

ing the connection between Navajo people and the sheep. The chance to see the sheep, feel the wool and see the products must have really enriched their classroom experience.

A Navajo Cooking and Cuisine workshop and demonstration continued all day under the direction of Ron Garnanez. Each day began with a field butchery instruction and the processing of the carcass for an array of preparations including traditional blood sausage available for tasting. At the end of the day, dinner was served on the grounds with lamb stew, fry bread, and blue corn mush. (One of the challenges for the Miss Navajo contest is butchering a sheep, along with demonstration of knowl-

edge of the language and lifeways.)

The wool show was extensive and lasted nearly the whole day on Friday. A panel of five judges included Connie Taylor, Drake Mace, Venancio Aragon, Jay Begay, and Nikyle Wes. Though each of the judges was looking at the fleeces from a personal weaving perspective, it was a thrill to see them come to compromise decisions about placement. A modified card grading evaluation was used in which each fleece was given a score and designated as blue, red, or yellow. This kind of scoring helps producers learn more about selecting breeding stock for fleece quality, and how to process and prepare fleeces for judging.

There was also good participation in the sheep show with 40-50 Navajo-Churro sheep entered in all the classes. Unfortunately, not many Navajo shepherds entered sheep since they

## Resources

### Navajo-Churro Sheep Association

P.O. Box 190840

Boise, ID 83719-0840

spindanceacres@gmail.com

[www.navajo-churrosheep.com/association.html](http://www.navajo-churrosheep.com/association.html)

The Navajo-Churro Sheep Association (N-CSA) was formed to preserve and promote this truly All-American breed. The N-CSA currently has over 160 member and over 5,090 registered animals.

To ask questions from Navajo-Churro sheep breeders and just to gather information about these hardy sheep, check out the CHURRO CHAT web site. It's free and you don't need to be a N-CSA member to join in!

The N-CSA publishes:

1. *The Catch Pen Newsletter*, quarterly
2. Annual Flock book of Registrations and Transfers
3. A great N-CSA brochure available at the website
4. *A Guide to the Selection of Navajo-Churro Sheep*, 22 pages, available at the website. /association.html

### Additional Resources:

Green Mountain Spinnery

<https://www.spinnery.com/>

Weaving in Beauty

<https://weavinginbeauty.com/>

Navajo Lifeway

<https://navajolifeway.org/navajo-culture>

were occupied with the organization of the event. Nevertheless, there were many excellent sheep, which gave judges Dr. Lyle McNeal and Tara Roche the opportunity to educate both the exhibitors and the

*continued on next page*



**Left: Ron Garnanez preparing a sheep for dinner. Above: Comp Wool Show**

# Navajo-Churro Sheep

*Continued from previous page*

spectators.

Several workshops were offered earlier in the week on dying, spinning, weaving, felting and jewelry design. Most of these classes were taught by young (20s-30s) artists who are mastering traditional Navajo skills and art forms. In addition to resurrecting historic designs and techniques from museum collections and old painting, they are also experimenting with their own innovations.

The Navajo Churro Breeders Association held its annual members meeting in conjunction with Sheep Is Life. (See sidebar for more information about the

Navajo-Churro Sheep Association). This is a particularly useful collaboration since it brings breeders of Navajo-Churro sheep from all over the country and gives them a chance to see the culture and environment in which the breed has developed over the past four centuries.

Sheep Is Life is a learning experience not available anywhere else. If you are interested in Navajo culture and traditional arts, sustainable living, range management, and anything related to sheep and wool, put this event on your calendar for the weekend of June 13th, 2020.

The efforts by a wide range of individuals and organizations over the past several decades are beginning to look like a conservation success. A concerted effort to return these sheep to the stewards of the breed for four centuries is bearing fruit as the number of Native American flocks is increasing along with renewed involve-

ment in the fiber arts culturally connected to the sheep. At the same time the number of non-Native breeders of this historic breed is increasing, with over 160 registered breeders, and a total of registered sheep well over 6,000. ❖

*Don Bixby DVM was executive director of the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy (now The Livestock Conservancy) from 1988-2004. He now lives in Albuquerque, NM and is involved in sustainable agriculture with Southwest Grass-fed Livestock Alliance, The Oveja Project, and Navajo-Churro sheep. He can be reached at Donbixby2438@gmail.com.*

## Donating to the Cause: Murray McMurray Hatchery

International Heritage Breeds Week was created as an opportunity to raise awareness about rare breeds. Over the years, many breeders and stakeholders have developed a variety of ways to support genetic diversity in livestock and the Conservancy's efforts.

This year, as part of their dedication to the conservation of Heritage breeds, Murray McMurray Hatchery donated 10% of the proceeds from sales on all Heritage breed day-old chicks during International Heritage Breeds Week to The Livestock Conservancy.

McMurray highlighted their donation in a media release:

*"We appreciate the overwhelming response to those who purchased and participated in preserving our Heritage Breeds, specifically this past week. Because of your generosity, we are thrilled to announce our donation of \$5,141 to The Livestock Conservancy. This donation will help further the work the Conservancy does to track vulnerable livestock and poultry populations, increase awareness of rare breeds, and share with people how the breeds can fit into their particular farm, homestead, or backyard," says McMurray Hatchery Vice President, Thomas Watkins.*

*"We are grateful for this donation from our long-time friends at Murray McMurray Hatchery, and would like to thank*



*everyone at McMurray Hatchery and the customers who purchased chicks during International Heritage Breeds Week. Nearly half of the breeds on The Livestock Conservancy's priority list are poultry and waterfowl, which makes Murray McMurray an important partner in our conservation efforts. These funds, along with new heritage breed flocks being established from the birds McMurray sells, will help The Livestock Conservancy carry out our mission to protect endangered breeds from extinction," says Livestock Conservancy Executive Director, Dr. Alison Martin.*

Next year's International Heritage Breeds Week is **May 17-23, 2020**. Save the date! If you would like to participate or support The Livestock Conservancy in a similar way, contact us at [info@LivestockConservancy.org](mailto:info@LivestockConservancy.org) or call 919-542-5704. ❖

*For over a century, McMurray Hatchery has remained dedicated to conserving rare and exotic poultry breeds. Today they carry over 120 breeds of chickens, ducks, geese, turkeys, guineas, peafowl, pheasants, and other rare and exotic birds. Murray McMurray Hatchery can be reached at 800-456-3280, or [www.mcmurrayhatchery.com](http://www.mcmurrayhatchery.com).*



**White Crested Black Polish are one of the many chicken breeds that Murray McMurray Hatchery offers for sale.**

# Cooking a Heritage Turkey

By Frank Reese, Good Shepherd Turkey Ranch, Inc.

I will try to write what my great-grandmother had in her old cookbook from 1910, which is very much how I remember her cooking a heritage turkey when I was a very little boy.

When you have killed and bled the turkey you must remove the head, shanks, crop, windpipe, gullet, all entrails, lungs, reproductive organs, and oil gland. Remove all pin feathers and hair feathers. Wash turkey with or without giblets (removing the kidneys is optional).

Young turkeys of any size may be roasted with or without stuffing. If stuffed, stuff the turkey just before it is roasted. (Note that stuffing prepared in advance must be kept cool.) Allow 3/4 to 1 cup stuffing per pound of turkey.

Rub cavity of bird with 1/2 to 1 teaspoon of salt and sprinkle salt on the outside as well.

Stuff cavities lightly.

Tie drumsticks and tail securely.

Fasten the neck skin to the back with a skewer. Shape wings under the breast of the bird and tip onto back.

Brush the skin with melted fat and



sprinkle poultry seasoning or sage over the surface.

Place the trussed bird on a rack at least 1/2 inch high in a shallow open pan.

Lay a thin, fat-moistened cloth (large enough to drape down the sides) over the top of the turkey.

If desired, cut the string holding the legs when the bird has been roasted for one and a half hours. (Cutting the string makes it easy to test for doneness.)

Slow cook at a temperature of 250 degrees to 300 degrees F.

If the cloth dries during cooking, moisten it with fat from the bottom of the pan.

Test for doneness by pressing fleshy

part of drumstick with your fingers, protecting them with cloth or paper. If the meat feels soft, the turkey is done. Or, move the drumstick up and down; if the leg joint gives readily, or breaks, the turkey is done. Check tenderness of meat under the wing in the shoulder muscle by inserting a fork.

Remove the turkey from the oven and keep it on warm platter until ready to serve.

My mother would do this much the same way but would cover the turkey with foil and baste it about every hour. 30 mins before turkey was done she would take the foil off and so the bird would brown. ❖

## A Resource for your Veterinarian

Member Tim Safranski shared a great tip for farms that don't have a livestock vet who knows their species well. He recommends farmers pay for a gift membership each year for their livestock vet to the veterinarian association for their species. The veterinarian will get the association's magazine and gain access to online resources and a network of specialty veterinarians. It can cost a couple hundred dollars per year but, if there isn't anyone else in the area who knows the species, it could be great insurance.

Some possible examples include:

- American Association of Swine Veterinarians
- American Association of Small Ruminant Practitioners
- American Association of Equine Practitioners
- American Association of Bovine Practitioners
- American Association of Avian Pathologists
- Association of Avian Veterinarians
- Association of Exotic Mammal Veterinarians (rabbits)



Tim Safranski at the swine artificial insemination clinic during the Heritage Breeds Conference. Photo by Jeannette Beranger

The following article, written by Lauren Nicholas, is provided in its original format courtesy of the American Rabbit Breeders Association.

# Falling in Love *With* Beveren

*I love rabbits, all breeds, all mixes really. But I had never thought much about Beveren rabbits. I had never seen one in person, and the photos online are, for the most part, unflattering. They flew under my radar completely for 15 years - until the last 6 months when I was making my "ARBA Rabbit Breeds" artwork. I shared a sketch in a facebook group, and was left a comment on the Beveren.*

***"Beveren ears are supposed to be carried in a V shape!"***

I was hoping to get through this without offending someone. In 10 years of working with farmers, animal breeders and pet owners, I know how important those little details are, and I try to be consciously proactive when creating artwork like this. I fixed it. I learned something about Beveren, but didn't think that much of it.

A few months later, I was searching for a meat rabbit breed for our "mini homestead". I posted again in the group, searching for a breed that would meet the following criteria.

- A rabbit that grows fast with a good feed-to-meat ratio
- Ideally a "heritage" or Livestock Conservancy listed rabbit breed that could use another breeder
- Ideally a multi-purpose breed where rabbit pelts are useable
- Generally healthy, good mothers and good personalities as a breed
- Good foragers, scrap eaters and able to be pastured
- Fun colors are a plus

Same lady posts again. "Sent a PM for Beveren". Seriously dedicated advocate for her breed. She believed that Beveren would meet all my needs, and offered to get me started with a pair or trio at no cost, as the breed was desperately in need of people who would use them as meat rabbits.\* [If you're wondering "in what world does eating animals of rare breeds help them become less endangered" stay tuned for an upcoming blogpost.

So that all sounded great, but she was across the country, and the idea of Beveren seemed a world away. But the seed had been planted and I started to do more research. I began to really adore these big beautiful white, blue and black rabbits with such a place in history.

FAST FORWARD TO NOW - living communally with 5 people, plus an occasional toddler (#america2017) and we're trying to grow and raise as much as our food as possible. Dwarf rabbit tacos are perfect for two, but it becomes more of a garnish when you're feeding a party. So, we take the toddler to a rabbit show to pick up a Harlequin rabbit, another rare (but not quite as rare) breed to cross to Jersey Woolies to make mid-sized meat rabbits. Just something to get started. Nothing can ever be mid-sized anymore without this playing in my head.

We found Mardi of Trickster Hares (conveniently, she also raises Beverens) and pay for the Harlequin. She's cute, a little flighty but I'm happy. The toddler immediately has a visceral reaction to this rabbit, something along the lines of pure hatred. He doesn't like that bunny! He hates that bunny! Does NOT want that bunny!

Ooookay. Fine. To be fair, he's a kid so he hates a lot of things, and he was melting over Dwarf Hotots, so clearly we have some difference in taste and that's okay.

I was ready to hold my ground, with the Beveren. Reading about them was one thing, but seeing them in person was another. I figured it wasn't the right time, already having 2 breeds and limited space, but I just had to see. They were perfect. I had never felt such fur on a rabbit. They melted in your arms. Their personalities, even at the busy show, were curious and loving.

I'll spare you the 3 - 4 hours of us going back and forth on the Beveren, and what it would mean for our tiny rabbitry and homestead - you already know what happened. We brought home a breeding pair: Trickster Hare's Kalon" and Trickster Hare's Sweetie Pie. Over the course of the next 3 days, I knew my decision was a good one. Head over heels. Can't stop staring at them. Can't stop petting their sweet magical heads. Everybody here is in love with them.

*continued*

Lauren Elizabeth started freelancing a decade ago, creating illustrated logos for the rabbit community (including the beloved West Coast Classic logo). Since then, she has worked professionally as an animal photographer, graphic designer and illustrator. In 2016, Lauren found renewed passion for her love of farming (and rabbits) and began offering her illustrated logos again through Conkberry - along with portraits, apparel and original artwork. She loves connecting with people who love animals, especially breeders, farmers, and homesteaders. FACEBOOK: [www.facebook.com/conkberry](http://www.facebook.com/conkberry), INSTAGRAM: [www.instagram.com/conkberry](http://www.instagram.com/conkberry)

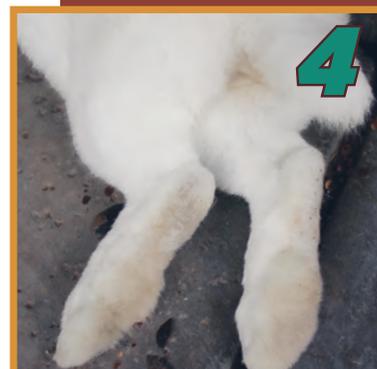


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*The classic mandolin-shaped profiles that are a piece of living history. This “style” of rabbit was in vogue in the late 1800s through early 1900s when the breed was at its most popular.*



## SO, HERE'S HOW YOU FALL IN LOVE WITH BEVEREN.



1. Those bright blue wise rabbit eyes that seem almost human.
2. The extra long, dense rolling fur that you won't want to stop petting (it also comes in black and light lavender blue)
3. Those fabulous v-shaped ears that quickly become familiar, since their curious little faces are always into something
4. The giant wild hare feet that propel them into adventureland - ridiculous twisty hops, up on the couch like a dog, let them roam and they will entertain you forever
5. This view, since they're always falling out of their cages to say hello
6. This other view - the aftermath of their huge appetites for greens and fresh food (in this case, the offender was sweet potatoes)
7. The elegant, feminine does
8. The bold, roman-nosed bucks (also, adorably chubby cheeks)
9. How they follow you everywhere and nudge your ankles

“

*We brought home a breeding pair, and over the course of the next 3 days, I knew my decision was a good one. Head over heels. Can't stop staring at them. Can't stop petting their sweet magical heads.*

*Everybody here is in love with Beveren.*





“

*Beveren carry most of their meat in the hindquarters, & their long shape provides a good-sized pelt, two aspects that make them an excellent “dual-purpose” breed*



10. The classic mandolin-shaped profiles that are a piece of living history. This “style” of rabbit was in vogue in the late 1800s through early 1900s when the breed was at its most popular.

The silhouette is both beautiful and functional - rabbits carry most of their meat in the hindquarters, and their long shape provides a good-sized pelt, two aspects that make Beveren an excellent “dual-purpose” breed (in contrast to the compact “commercial” style rabbits of today where fur is generally a by-product).

It’s amazing to me that these genetics have been passed on for so many years, despite the trends both in rabbit shows and within our culture as we moved away from raising our own food - a threat to the existence of all animals carefully bred to thrive on small farms, rather than industrialized ones. I am grateful these special rabbits have survived as we circle back again towards being a more self-sufficient society, as we return to understanding of the true cost and value of the food we eat every day - be it a plant or an animal. These precious genetics were important to our survival in the past, and they are becoming important again now.

Cheers to the the rise of the stylish, the curious, the ever-hungry and almighty Beveren.

PS The toddler loves them, and they have been, by far, the most kid-friendly rabbits I’ve ever known.

\*A big thank you to Jamie at JCL Rabbitry for shouting “Beveren” from the rooftops and getting them in front of people - it takes effort to reach out to people in that way, knowing that it may not lead to immediate change. But for every effort, they are that much less forgotten, and it makes a difference.

And another big thank you to Mardi at Trickster Hares for the same effort - and for kindly listening to our hours of questions about each and every one of your heritage breeds. And most importantly, for the years of hard work and love behind these beautiful magical bunnies.



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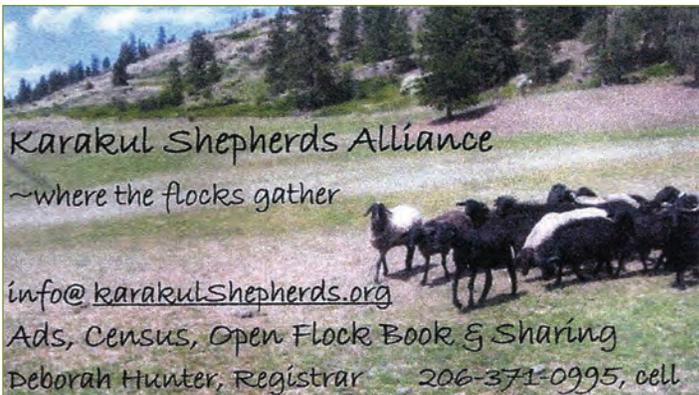
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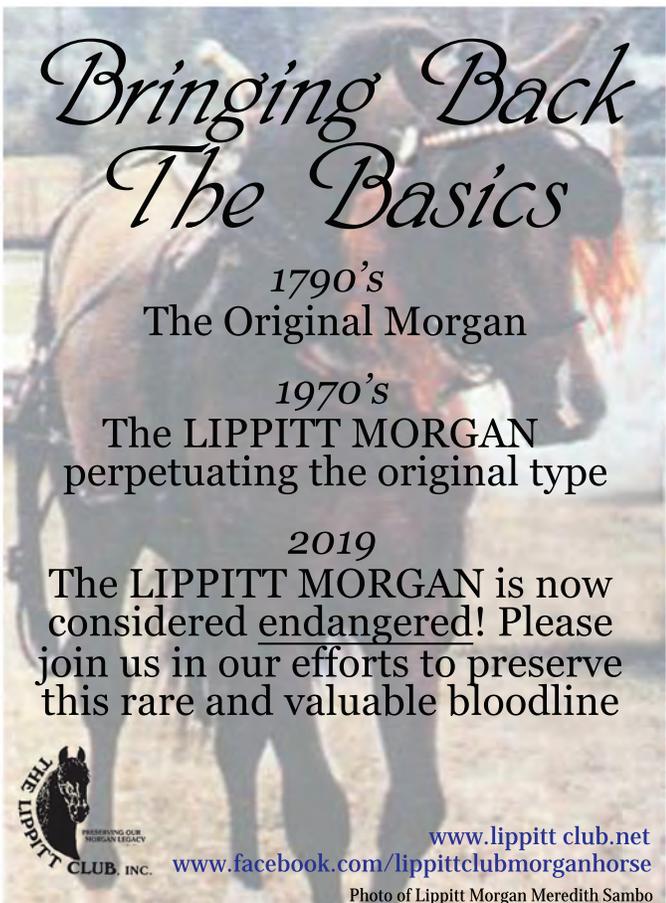


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## CALENDAR

★★ denotes Livestock Conservancy event  
★ denotes Conservancy participation  
*See the Conservancy website for a more extensive list of events. The Livestock Conservancy encourages event organizers to submit events related to conservation, farming, sustainability, rare breeds, and more to the Conservancy's Calendar. Send your submission to [rwalker@livestock-conservancy.org](mailto:rwalker@livestock-conservancy.org) or mail to PO Box 477, Pittsboro, NC 27312.*

### September

**September 5-7 – The 2019 Rocky Mountain Horse Association International Grand Championship Horse Show** will be held at the Kentucky Horse Park. For more information visit [www.rmhorse.com](http://www.rmhorse.com) or email [executivedirector@rmhorse.com](mailto:executivedirector@rmhorse.com).

**September 19-22 – The Spanish Barb Horse Association Annual Meeting** will be held in Faywood, NM. Visit [www.spanishbarb.com](http://www.spanishbarb.com) or email [info@SpanishBarb.com](mailto:info@SpanishBarb.com) for more information.

**September 27-29 – Second Annual Mid-Atlantic Regional American Milking Devon Show & Card-Grading** at the Virginia State Fair, Doswell, VA. Contact Richard Larson, [oldgjerpenfarm@yahoo.com](mailto:oldgjerpenfarm@yahoo.com) for more information.

**September 28-29 – The Oregon Flock & Fiber Festival** will be held in Canby, OR. The festival includes workshops, demonstrations, livestock shows, seminars, and kids' activities. Visit [\[festival.com\]\(http://festival.com\) for more information.](http://www.flockandfiber-</a></p></div><div data-bbox=)

### October

**October 5-6 – The Vermont Sheep & Wool Festival** will be held in Tunbridge, VT. The event celebrates small farms and natural fiber with over 70 vendors offering fiber animals, fleece and yarn, hand-spinning and fiber crafting equipment and supplies, handcrafted wool items, and local meat and cheese. It includes contests, fiber arts classes and demonstrations, shepherd workshops, herding and shearing demos, fleece sale, and more. For more information, visit [www.vtsheepandwoolfest.com](http://www.vtsheepandwoolfest.com).

**October 6-7 – The Carolina Meat Conference: The Future of Local Meats** will be held in Charlotte, NC. Visit <https://carolinameatconference.com> or call 252-651-1276 for more information.

★ **October 19-20 – Rhinebeck Sheep & Wool Festival**, Rhinebeck, NY. See <https://sheepandwool.com> for more information.

★★ **October 24-27 – The Heritage Livestock Conference** will be held in Santa Rosa, CA. See pages 5-8 of this

★ **The Mother Earth News Fair** is being held at two more locations around the country this fall. This family-oriented sustainable lifestyle event features dozens of practical, hands-on demonstrations and workshops on everything from beekeeping to using solar electricity. Visit [www.motherearthnewsfair.com](http://www.motherearthnewsfair.com) for more information.

**September 13-15** – Seven Springs, PA  
**October 19-20** – Topeka, KS

## The Livestock Conservancy Microgrant Program

Applications open:  
August 15, 2019

Deadline:  
October 15th, 2019

Winners announced:  
by February 1, 2020

See page 9 for more information.

newsletter. Visit [livestockconference.org](http://livestockconference.org) for more information.

### December

**December 13 – National Day of the Horse** takes place across the country. The goal is to encourage the people of the United States to be mindful of the contribution of horses to the economy, history, and character of the United States. Visit [www.nationaldayofthehorse.com](http://www.nationaldayofthehorse.com) for more information.

★★ **December 31 – DEADLINE to update information** and submit ads for the Livestock Conservancy's 2020 Breeders and Products Directory. If needed, log in to update your information at [Livestock-Conservancy.org](http://Livestock-Conservancy.org). Email the Conservancy or call 919-542-5704 for more information about advertising in the directory.