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Conserving rare breeds since 1977

THE LIVESTOCK CONSERVANCY™ NEWS

A “Silver Lining” for Your Rabbitry

By Jeannette Beranger

The Silver rabbit is one of the most ancient breeds of domestic rabbit. Its true origin will never be known but it is likely that a rabbit with silver hairs appeared as a black sport (mutant) of the European wild rabbit hundreds of years ago. Over the years these rabbits have been known by many names: Millers, Silver Sprigs, Lincoln Silver, Lincolnshire Silver-Grey, and Riche (French for valuable). Historians say that the Silver rabbit was first found in large numbers in Siam, and that sailors brought them to Portugal, where the breed spread to England and Europe. An early reference to the breed states that Sir Walter Raleigh introduced Silver rabbits to the Nappa warren at Askrigg in North Yorkshire. From there, they spread to a number of other warrens throughout England. Silvers were certainly well represented in England by 1631. In 1778 when a fleet of ships left England to colonize Australia, there were among the livestock five rabbits that likely were Silvers. It took only half a century before Silver rabbits were found in abundance in both Australia and New Zealand. Large numbers of skins were imported into China for the use of elite Mandarins, and the fur was also highly prized by royalty in Russia. It is not known exactly when the Silver arrived in the United States. They were certainly in America at the time of the great Belgian Hare boom during the late 1890s when rabbit keeping became all the rage across the country. Silvers enjoyed popularity into the 20th century, but because of their diminutive size, were not able to compete with larger commercial rabbit breeds for meat and fur



Silver rabbits come in three varieties. Left: brown variety; right: fawn variety. Photos by Jeannette Beranger.

production. Today the Silver is categorized as “Threatened” on The Livestock Conservancy’s *Conservation Priority List*.

There are three Silver varieties: Black, Brown, and Fawn. These were recognized into the first book of standards for rabbits in America. The Black variety was originally named Grey. Each color variety sports the “silvering” from white hairs that are evenly distributed throughout the body, even on the nose, feet, and tail. White spots anywhere on the body are considered a fault.

In 1925 the National Silver Rabbit Club was formed in the United States. It is still in existence today with a small but dedicated following. Members have been working hard to promote the breed, and their work has resulted in renewed interest in the breed among rabbit fanciers across the country. It is estimated that there are less than 1,000 breeding animals in the

United States, but, thankfully, that number seems to be on the rise.

Club member and Silver rabbit breeder Jann Hall of Windsor, CA has been raising these rabbits for more than a decade. When asked why she chose this breed she comments, “The adult weight of four to seven pounds makes it very easy for me to handle the animals, and with their sweet personality, these rabbits are a breeze to manage.” She adds that she loves the beauty of the distinctive “silvering” of their fur and wanted to work to help move endangered breeds off of the endangered list. Jann notes that because of the breed’s fine bones, they actually have good meat-to-bone ratio for a small rabbit, and one rabbit can make a nice meal for two.

By all accounts, Silvers are easy keepers and good mothers. The does produce lots of milk that supports average litter sizes of about six to eight kits. Some does

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Offering Emergency Livestock Accommodations

Natural disasters are a threat to rare breeds, especially if a significant portion of a breed or bloodline's population is in the path of destruction. Before Hurricane Harvey made landfall, The Livestock Conservancy put a call out to members and followers in Texas and the Gulf Coast through social media to offer temporary space where evacuees could take their displaced animals; the same was done before Irma arrived in Florida.

The Conservancy has created a category in our online classifieds called "Emergency Livestock Accommodations" where members can post offerings of stalls, pasture space, room to park a trailer, or other space or resources to help those with displaced animals. Only Conservancy members who have created a classifieds account can post an offer but anyone can browse.

If you would like to offer emergency space, log into your classifieds account just as you would to post animal or product listings. If you need to set up an account, visit LivestockConservancy.org and click the Classifieds button on the left side of the homepage, then "Register" in the

classifieds menu. Please allow up to three business days for us to finish setting your account up. Please note that the classifieds site currently requires a separate login than the main "Member Login" area of LivestockConservancy.org.

This feature can also be used for other emergencies like wildfires or tornadoes where people need to evacuate their livestock. You can post an offer that stands for up to a year at a time. Thanks to everyone who has offered space to people and animals in need. ❖

Corrections

Please note: the rate for the Sunday post-conference Card Grading Clinic was misprinted in the last newsletter. The rate should be \$35 – a great value for an all-day event!

Also note that the Navajo-Churro Field Inspection article last issue was misattributed. The article was written by Sam Cunningham of the Navajo-Churro Sheep Association.

Accepting Ads Now: 2018 Breeders & Products Directory

Place your ad in the nation's most comprehensive directory for heritage breed livestock and products!

This will be the last reminder in the newsletter before the December 31st deadline for 2018 ads. Your ad puts your name in front of potential customers in highly-targeted demographics. There are few advertising outlets more tailored for those raising heritage breeds and buying and selling their products. Advertisers also help pay for the cost of compiling and printing the directory, freeing up valuable resources for the Conservancy to use for programmatic work. Your ad will support *both* the Conservancy and your farm.

If you don't have the software or skills to design an ad, we can help! Simply provide basic information like company name, contact information, and products, with or without photos or logo. We can design an ad for you – and give you a copy for use in other publications. Contact Ryan at 919-542-5704 or rwalker@livestockconservancy.org.

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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

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FROM THE DIRECTOR



By Alison Martin

As I traveled through the Midwest and East this summer, the effects on farmers of changing weather patterns were evident. Too much rain in Wisconsin and northern Illinois, not enough in Iowa. Milder than normal temperatures were followed by heat waves. It's tough to harvest hay in these conditions, especially when one is working an off-farm job. And none of this can compare with the devastating effects of recent fires and hurricanes. Here's hoping that you are safe and your own hardy livestock are coping.

Speaking of coping, a special group of sheep is learning to cope with an entirely new climate. Member Sonja Straub had a large flock of Santa Cruz Island sheep in Oregon. She loves her sheep (see article in the Summer 2016 newsletter), but couldn't bear to watch them disappear one by one to the local cougars. Sonja came to the difficult decision to sell her sheep, but to whom? Dispersing heritage animals without taking them to the auction barn can be a challenge, especially when those animals don't fit the mold that most farms seek. Mike Kearney in Pennsylvania heard about Sonja's difficulties, and decided to step in. In the end, Mike took the entire flock. They are slowly settling into life in an entirely new countryside. The "great cross-country sheep exchange" also made it possible to get exchange rams with a Santa Cruz breeder in Iowa and brought a whole lot of diversity to Eastern breeders

of Santa Cruz sheep. Mike is looking for a few farms interested in starter flocks of Santa Cruz sheep, and is working with The Livestock Conservancy on breeding plans to take advantage of this genetic mixing.

In Iowa, a visit with Seed Savers Exchange (SSE) reinforced the parallels in conservation of plants, animals and ecosystems. Like The Livestock Conservancy, SSE educates gardeners, and promotes and evaluates varieties. Are lima beans from two different donors really the same variety? How quickly does a variety grow, how well does it reproduce, and what climate is it best suited for? Like The Livestock Conservancy, Seed Savers Exchange is collecting the stories of those who raise heirloom plants, and what those plants mean to their families. On the way to Iowa, I found out that lots of our members in the Upper Midwest are members of both organizations. I wonder if that is true across the nation? Thank you to the excellent staff and volunteers at SSE for the work that they do.

The Livestock Conservancy's program staff stays busy. Recent activities included collecting DNA from chickens for research collaborations, a visit to Luther Clevenger, president of the Gloucestershire Old Spots Pig Breeders Union in Oregon, semen collection from very rare Caspian stallions, and a visit to Watt Publishing of Illinois. Watt Publishing is celebrating its 100th anniversary of poultry publications and made public some of their impressive collection of poultry paintings (see the Summer issue of this newsletter; also www.atlasobscura.com/articles/chicken-portraits-poultry-pinups). While we can't visit everyone, when we attend events around the country, we like to meet with members who live close by. Be sure to keep tabs on the events calendar to meet our program staff face to face.

I hope that you will join us in Williamsburg, VA for our annual Heritage Livestock Conference in November. The best part of the conference is the camaraderie of breeders with a shared vision for saving rare breeds. I'm not sure whether I'm most

Annual Report Published

Our 2016/2017 Annual Report has now been published! Visit LivestockConservancy.org to view the report, or if you would like a printed copy, please contact us at 919-542-5704.

Conference Hotel Alert

We have received reports that some of our conference speakers have been contacted by a group claiming to represent The Livestock Conservancy that will help book your conference hotel room. We do not have anyone actively calling people to "help" book your room. Booking through this method will not allow you to receive the conference room rate, will not help fulfill our room block (costing the Conservancy for unbooked rooms), your reservations are not guaranteed to actually be booked, and you may incur unnecessary fees. These companies are often referred to as "Housing Pirates and Poachers."

Please be sure to make your own reservations directly with Fort Magruder Hotel and Conference Center by calling 757-220-2250 and mention that you are with The Livestock Conservancy's conference to receive the conference rate.

looking forward to getting acquainted with key Conservancy founder Libby Henson, to hearing cowboy poet Stephen Monroe once again remind us of our connection to the earth and its creatures, or to hearing from General George Washington at the Friday night banquet. Colonial Williamsburg is right next door, raising heritage breeds representative of the period, and we are grateful for and excited about their partnership in Sunday's hands-on demonstrations of evaluating breeding sheep, cattle, and horses, and learning how to choose the right mate for each animal in the herd or flock.

Please vote for new directors (see page 13), and join us for the annual member's meeting. This year's members meeting will take place December 12, at 7 pm Eastern time. You can participate by phone or internet – see instructions on page 4. Tune in for a review of 2016-2017 fiscal status, program accomplishments, and a glimpse into the coming year! ❖

Participate in the Annual Member Meeting

Date: December 12, 2017

Time 7:00 pm Eastern Standard Time

This year, you will be able to participate by telephone and/or internet. Slides will be shared online and you can listen in by phone or through your computer or mobile device's speakers. If you wish to participate in the Q&A part of the meeting and are using a desktop computer, you will need to have a working microphone enabled. You may also choose to view slides online and use your phone for audio. Note: Phone carriers may apply standard charges for call time and/or data usage.

I. Dial into the conference:

Dial-in Number (U.S.): 515-739-1456
Access Code: 202919

International Dial-in Numbers: visit www.freeconferencecall.com/wall/livestockconservancy/#international

2. Join the online meeting:

Online Meeting Link: <https://join.freeconferencecall.com/livestockconservancy>

Online Meeting ID: livestockconservancy

Note: Online meetings work on PCs, Macs, iOS and Android phones and tablets. You may download the desktop or mobile app or view slides using the Web Viewer, however VoIP and video are not supported through Web Viewer when using Internet Explorer or Safari. If you plan to download the desktop app please allow time in advance for download and installation.

Instructions:

At the scheduled date and time of the meeting, dial into the conference line. When prompted, enter the Access Code followed by the # pound (hash) key.

To join the online meeting, visit the meeting link listed above and follow the prompts to join the meeting.

For 24/7 customer service call 844-844-1322.

Mourning a Loss – Derek Emmerson

The Livestock Conservancy mourns the passing of board member Derek Emmerson. Derek joined The Livestock Conservancy's board of directors in November 2015. He was an active participant, even when unable to travel, and never missed a board meeting. Derek shared generously of his knowledge of the poultry breeding industry, and his knowledge informed the Conservancy's contributions to reports for USDA, FAO, and others.



Derek was attracted to agriculture from an early age through the legacy of his grandfather who was an agronomist and plant geneticist with the USDA. During his childhood in Arlington, Virginia, he became interested in animal genetics through hobby breeding of rabbits, birds and other small animals.

Derek received his B.S. and M.S. degrees from Virginia Tech (where he also became acquainted with Livestock Conservancy Executive Director Alison Martin), and his Ph.D. degree in Poultry Genetics from The Ohio State University. He served for four years on the faculty of Virginia Tech, and worked in the breeding sector of the poultry industry for over 20 years, most recently as VP of Research and Development for Aviagen Inc. Derek developed research and commercial strains of chickens and turkeys for mainstream, specialty, and niche markets.

Derek lived and breathed genetics, not only in his work, but also in his hobbies. He returned to his childhood hobby of breeding Netherlands Dwarf rabbits in 2013, and started work on developing a rare color variety. He was an active member of St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Huntsville, Alabama, where he sang in the choir and played trumpet in the wind ensemble. He enjoyed landscape and vegetable gardening, maintaining a collection of "family heirloom" plants. However, friends and associates know that more than anything he loved spending time with his wife, Kathy, and their two children, Kristina and Ben. Kathy and Derek met at Ohio State and enjoyed 27 years of marriage.

Farewell to a Friend

By Donald E. Bixby, DVM

We have received word of the death of Kees Buys on June 18th at the age of 84. Kees was a longtime advocate for the Dutch Belted breed and friend to The Livestock Conservancy. He became interested in the breed in the Netherlands where he was working professionally in cattle blood typing. He liked the breed and the people that bred them. He became a board member in 1990 of the Lakenvelder Breeders Club and worked tirelessly to revive the breed in the Netherlands, while safeguarding the genetic health of the slowly recovering population.



He traveled by bicycle whenever possible to evaluate and certify all calves and breeding bulls. Kees was highly respected, with a kind and quiet way of dealing with people. Many looked forward to his visits because conversations not only were about cows; family, work and other topics were brought to the table.

In addition to his bicycle travel, Kees was a man who was at home everywhere. On his frequent visits to this country and at Rare Breeds International conferences in The Netherlands, South Africa, Brazil and Hungary, I shared many happy hours talking with him about cattle and other things. Not only was his leadership critical in promoting and conserving the global population of Dutch Belted cattle, but he also well understood the wider importance of maintaining livestock genetic diversity. He will be missed.

Remembering Our Roots: 40 Years of Dedication

By Ryan Walker

Over the past 40 years, the Conservancy and its members have taken a fledgling organization that nearly disbanded within the first few years and turned it into the preeminent livestock conservation organization in the United States, as well as a global thought-leader in preventing extinction of our rare breeds of farm animals. While much has been accomplished since our founding, we still have a great deal of work to do for many breeds. Within the scope of modern agriculture, perhaps more than ever is it crucial that we keep diverse genetics alive on American farms and ranches. In some ways we're a much different organization than we were at our founding. It's also a much different world and we're a much different country than we were just 40 years ago. But we're proud to have never strayed from our mission, which can be seen in the following inaugural article published in the very first newsletter back in 1977. In fact, it's quite impressive to read the founders' forward-thinking assessment of what our organization could become.

In order to accurately interpret the following article, it is worth noting some things first. Most obvious is that our name has evolved from the American Minor Breeds Conservancy (AMBC). The term "minor" often denotes rarity, but in 1993, we changed "Minor" in the name to "Livestock" because it was feared that Minor could be viewed negatively, implying that the breeds were not as important as those more common. Twenty years later in 2013, we again changed our name, shortening the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy (ALBC) to simply "The Livestock Conservancy." The latest change was purely one of utility, to make it easier for members of the public and the media to use and remember, particularly those new to our work. We have settled in to our new name which has worked out very well, and we anticipate it will serve us for many



An 1834 oil painting on canvas by Quaker artist Edward Hicks depicting various collections of animals with the same title as the first newsletter, "Peaceable Kingdom".

years to come!

The name of the newsletter has also changed. In the early years, it was called *Peaceable Kingdom*, a term long used in reference to various types of menageries with Biblical origins. Perhaps the most famous use of the term refers to a series of 62 paintings by Quaker artist Edward Hicks in the 1820s-40s depicting various collections of animals, as can be seen in the photo above.

Another semantic note worth mentioning is the use of the term "preservation" and its variants when discussing our work compared to the use of the term "conservation." To many people, these terms could be used interchangeably without notice, but there are in fact, significant differences. Preservation, according to Merriam-Webster, refers to "keep[ing] safe from injury, harm, or destruction" or to "keep alive, intact, or free from decay." Conservation, on the other hand, refers to "a careful preservation and protection of something; especially: planned management of a natural resource to prevent exploitation, destruction, or neglect" or "the preservation of a physical quantity during transformations or reactions." While these may seem extremely similar, preservation refers to protecting individual, tangible items (like animals) and conservation is

a bigger-picture approach, protecting an entire system (the genetics of entire breed populations). For this reason, we now prefer the use of the term *conservation* when referring to our work. We don't have to save every animal, but we need to make sure that the system as a whole survives – often by "eating them to save them."

An additional note involves the non-standardized names of some breeds mentioned. A good way to think about this is that early on, all breeds were essentially in what we now call the "Study" category. Many breeds have gone by different names, or variants of their names throughout history, so it should not come as a surprise that there are variants mentioned. Other breeds turned out not to fit criteria for inclusion on our list for various reasons. Also, we should note that our original work did not include poultry because there were already groups such as the Society for the Preservation of Poultry Antiquities and the American Poultry Association, but after the 1987 AMBC Poultry Census, it was determined that the combined efforts of these organizations with the Conservancy would be beneficial to poultry conservation and birds were added to our mission. The last species to be added were rabbits, in 2005.

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Remembering Our Roots

Continued from previous page

Lastly, the gene bank mentioned was established in 1987 and is now housed under the USDA's National Animal Germplasm Program but still owned by the Conservancy.

Peaceable Kingdom

Summer 1977, Vol. I No. 1

Editors: Krietina Bielenberg, James Nolfi, and Wilfrid Hamlin

By Kristina Bielenberg

In recent years there has been much public concern for the protection of our nation's wildlife. We know that many species of birds and mammals became extinct in the last century alone, and many surviving species are on the verge of extinction. These wild animals are registered in the "Red Book" of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, and many private and public organizations in the United States are making a special effort to keep at least some small populations viable.

BUT WHO IS LOOKING AFTER THE DWINDLING NUMBERS OF OUR MINORITY BREEDS OF LIVESTOCK?

The Texas Longhorn Breeders Association and the Spanish Mustang Registry, Inc., have done an admirable job of promoting the interests of their respective breeds. There is still an association of Milking Shorthorn breeders in New England and a Tamworth Swine Association in Ohio. But in general, the efforts to watchdog our endangered and minority breeds of livestock have been uneven, sporadic, or, at worst, nonexistent.

On March 16, a handful of concerned persons met at the Vermont Department of Agriculture in Montpelier to form an organization for the purpose of preserving and promoting endangered and minority breeds of livestock in North America. Incorporated under the laws of the State of Vermont, the American Minor Breeds Conservancy is a non-profit, membership organization which may engage in research, education, communication, and all other activities supportive of its



On March 16, 1977, a small group met at the historic Vermont Department of Agriculture building in Montpelier to incorporate the American Minor Breeds Conservancy.

preservationist mission.

The Conservancy hopes to halt the decline of endangered farm animals, first, by conducting a series of surveys throughout the United States, Canada, and Mexico to locate and determine the status of each breed, and secondly, by encouraging the establishment of herd or flock books. It is not the intent of the Directors to duplicate or in any way take over the operations of existing breed associations, but where the numbers of a particular breed or breed-type are so small that an association does not exist or is not likely to exist within the near future, the American Minor Breeds Conservancy will keep the registration records. The Conservancy is presently surveying the populations of New England Devon cattle and two types of Line-Backed cattle. In addition, the organization

is compiling data on Florida Native sheep, French Canadian cattle, and Razorback swine. Because there already exists a Society for the Preservation of Poultry Antiquities, AMBC has limited its search to endangered and minority breeds of cattle, sheep, goats, swine, and horses.

BUT WHY PRESERVE AND PROMOTE BREEDS OF LIVESTOCK WHICH WOULD NOT APPEAR TO MEET TODAY'S PRODUCTION STANDARDS?

First of all, it is erroneous to assume that all endangered and minority breeds have no immediate commercial value. The Dutch Belted cow, now extremely rare in its home country, the Netherlands, has proven to be an excellent dairy animal in the United

States. Good credentials can likewise be given to Tamworth swine and Shropshire sheep, two breeds which had nearly disappeared from the English landscape until the Rare Breeds Survival Trust aroused public concern for their welfare.

Secondly, the value of these animals may not be based exclusively on the production of commodities within our present comprehension. Like Noah gathering his animals before the flood, the members of the Conservancy want to preserve endangered and minority breeds as insurance against the loss of certain genes which may at some time in the future, have either commercial or cultural utility.

Faced with rising fuel, grain, and labor costs, farmers are beginning to take a look at animals which offer functional efficiency. For example, the Texas Longhorn,



AMBC Board and staff at the 1987 annual meeting in Centreville, MI.

nearly extinct in 1900, is now receiving much attention from both agricultural researchers and commercial beef producers. The “primitive” Longhorn possesses unique genetic material which makes it well adapted to the harsh environment of the American Southwest. It is already bringing new vitality and thrift to the standard beef breeds through cross-breeding programs being conducted by Dr. Stewart H. Fowler and the major Texas universities. If other endangered and minority breeds could be tested and evaluated, they might also make significant contributions to our nation’s livestock industry.

For this reason, the Directors of AMBC plan to establish a testing program. Under such a program, the various breeds and breed – types surveyed by the Conservancy would be measured in terms of their functional efficiency – efficiency of grass and forage conversion, resistance to disease and parasitism, general hardiness, prolificacy, longevity, etc. Test animals would be subjected to a number of trials determined, in part, by bio-regional variation. Devon cattle, for example, might be tested on New England hill pastures and scrubland. Data from such experiments would be useful to the geneticist, physiologist, and archeozoologist, as well as to the husbandman. In addition to the testing program, a gene bank (a viable breeding population) would be maintained and monitored to ensure the survival of the most endangered breeds.

It is easy to overemphasize the commercial utility of livestock but overlook their potential cultural value. It must be remembered that agriculture, as the word itself implies, is a form of culture – that the raising of crops and the management of livestock are cultural activities peculiar to man alone. Efforts to increase food and fiber production have led to significant changes in the way man has come to perceive the land and the things that derive their life from it.

Endangered breeds have not always been endangered, or even in the minority. Some breeds, like the Vermont Merino, made important contributions to the agricultural economy of our nation. During the 19th century, the Merino was developed into a highly specialized animal, providing its owners with enormous profits. But within the 20th century, this fine-wool breed has nearly disappeared from New England’s pastures, while the dual-purpose



Jochen Welsch leads an oxen workshop with Plimoth Plantation oxen at the 1990 annual meeting. Photo by Kathleen Suits-Smith.

and meat breeds, better suited to the present demands of the packer and consumer, are very much in demand. The Vermont Merino and other endangered breeds are living relics of the agricultural past, and it is our decision whether or not to preserve them for future generations to admire and enjoy.

The American Minor Breeds Conservancy will take an active role in promoting the formation of farm parks and assisting Living Historical Farms with the selection of appropriate livestock. In addition, the Directors will encourage both federal and state park officials to stock their sites, where possible, with “native” breeds. The National Park Service could, in good conscience, keep Navajo sheep on some of its Arizona land. Not only would these animals crop the weeds, but their presence would bring a focus to the regional landscape, contributing to the visitor’s awareness of “a sense of place.” The conservation of endangered and minority breeds is akin to the preservation of threatened species of wild animals.

BUT WHO WILL CARRY ON THE WORK OF THE CONSERVANCY?

There are many good reasons why it is important to preserve endangered and minority breeds of livestock. I have mentioned or alluded to only a few of these. Yet the task of conservation is so great that it will require the participation of many people, possessing a wide variety of interests and expertise. The American Minor Breeds Conservancy seeks both private and institutional members. Although many of AMBC’s programs are designed for the breeder of endangered and minority stock, it is possible to become an associate member without ever having set foot on a farm.

To communicate the activities and

progress of the Conservancy, the Directors have planned an extensive program of public education. Test results, breed standards, advice on herd and flock man-

agement, and information about related projects around the world will be available through the quarterly issues of this journal, *Peaceable Kingdom*. The Conservancy will offer management workshops and livestock forums. The first of these events is the Vermont Grasslands and Livestock Conference. It is also expected that AMBC will sponsor educational exhibitions at major state and regional fairs and will coordinate annual or semi-annual sales of stock for breeders. ❖

Silver Lining

Continued from page 1

can be a bit seasonal and will breed in the spring and then again in the fall each year.

The future of this breed truly has a silver lining as their popularity increases. For newcomers to the rabbit fancy or for people interested in keeping small livestock in their home, the Silver is a great choice. ❖

To learn more about the breed and how to find Silver rabbit breeders visit LivestockConservancy.org and the National Silver Rabbit Club’s site at www.silverrabbitclub.com.



The Black variety of Silver rabbit was originally named Grey. Photo by Jeanette Beranger.

Gardening For Livestock: Alternatives to Feed and Hay

By Ralph Wright

How much money do each of you spend feeding hay and feed to your sheep each winter? Living on a small farm requires what I call salvation through innovation. The only way we are going to make our farms and flocks profitable is by research, by experimentation, and by determination. God gives us the tools; it's up to us to learn how to use them.

This article is about some of the things we have done on our farm with both a spring/summer garden and a fall/winter garden, with an emphasis on the fall/winter garden. Maybe you will find something here that will help you make your farm more profitable, and your sheep a little healthier.

First, a little background information. We have always used excess vegetables from our garden to supplement the forage for our livestock. We moved from Central Florida to North Florida in 2001. Now I have a larger area to farm. We live on a sand hill in Lake City. We use poultry litter as our primary fertilizer and use no inorganic pesticides, or herbicides. I want what we feed to the livestock to be as natural as possible.

I took the time to experiment with different varieties of vegetables, and realized the full potential of a livestock garden. I changed my way of thinking. Rather than growing vegetables and feeding the excess to the livestock, I decided to grow the garden for the livestock, with my wife and I utilizing the excess for our home use.

Spring/Summer Garden

An Internet search showed no one is gardening for livestock, so I have essentially been on my own. Every year brings more experimentation, and every year I learn more. Our garden area is a little less than one acre. I have an Earthway seeder and a tractor with a tiller attachment, and I do all other work by hand.

I keep looking for vegetables that are heavy producers as well as those that



Forage radish enthusiast Kent Kammermeyer poses for an article in Wildlife Trends Journal.

require little care. In 2008 we raised Seminole pumpkins, which are about the size of a grapefruit and have the benefit of being able to be stored for a year or more. Summer squash of different varieties grew well, as did winter squash, especially acorn squash. I grew one variety of cucumber, which while not a heavy producer did produce some cucumbers that weighed as much as five pounds. On the downside, pumpkins and winter squash need to be cut up for the sheep to eat them, and that can begin to feel like work after a while.

In 2009 we experimented with watermelons, beans, squash, cucumber, amaranth, quinoa, large pumpkins, and sunflowers. Pumpkins averaged forty pounds. Beans were 18" to 37" in length, and another more productive variety of cucumber weighed in at more than five pounds each.

In 2010 we tilled and fertilized the garden, but due to a lot of things beyond our control, the garden never got weeded or watered. That should have been a disaster, right? From one quarter-acre section that was covered by 4- to 5-ft- tall weeds, we harvested more than 600 watermelons. From a 100-ft. row of Asian beans, we harvested from a quarter to half bushel of beans every day from April to September, when we finally let the sheep and cows into the garden. We ate the beans ourselves, as well as sharing them with our church. Remember, all of this was without

any weeding or watering. The sheep were "flushed" with fresh vegetables from the garden, and we had the best lambing season ever. Of the 25 Florida Cracker ewes, two smaller 2010 ewes didn't lamb. Still we ended up with 31 lambs, including nine sets of twins.

Fall/Winter Garden

Winter feeding represents the highest single annual cost to sheep producers across the United States. In the past I fed the flock of adults around a half pound of all-purpose livestock feed per day. I also had a Sweetlix Sheep Tub available to them for about 16 hours per day.

We began growing a winter garden for the first time in 2007. At first it was on a small scale. Cabbage and

kale grew exceptionally well. This gave us hope that we might find something to offset the cost of hay and feed for the sheep through the winter months.

In 2008 and 2009 we grew cabbage, kale, and mangels, sugar beets, turnips, rutabagas, carrots, and daikon radishes. The mangels, sugar beets, carrots, and turnips did poorly both years, while the daikons, which are a very large Japanese radish, did great.

In 2010 we grew mangels, sugar beets, turnips, rutabagas, and carrots, and again they did not do well at all. I checked with the seed companies and found that poultry litter has no boron, a trace element that is needed for those root crops. I researched boron, and found that if you use just a little too much it can act as an herbicide, killing everything. I decided against that. The real success story in 2010 were the daikon radishes.

I don't feed my sheep hay during the winter. They have access to it, but other than an occasional nibble by our senior ram, they ignore hay completely. I gave the sheep about 100 pounds of daikons per day, beginning in the middle of October. When the lambs were born, I increased the amount to 250 pounds per day. Although they did have access to protein tubs, I did not feed them any supplemental grain.

I am at a bit of a loss when feeding the sheep daikons. I know that I will eat as

much as I need, but if it is something I really like, I will (unfortunately) eat much more than I really need to maintain my body weight. I began thinking that the sheep might be doing the same thing. How much vegetable matter does a sheep really need each day? I have given our flock as much as 500 pounds per day, and they have cleaned it all up.

More on Daikons

I have since learned that I am not alone in my appreciation of daikon radishes. Here is some of the information I have gleaned from Internet searches.

Daikons have been used as a forage crop for sheep in South Africa since the 1950s. Universities in the United States have been doing research on them for at least ten years. Even deer hunters are now planting seed plots using Daikons. I don't know why this information has never trickled down to sheep farming. They are being grown in several countries for livestock feeding, and their use is increasing in India, Japan, China, and the Soviet Union. Most of this is as a fodder crop, although there are countries working on equipment to harvest the roots.

Daikon radishes require 45-100 days, depending upon the variety. The type I grow takes around 60 days to maturity. The small taproot can reach down as much as six feet, bringing up nutrients unavailable to other plants. They scavenge and conserve soluble nitrogen in the soil, and their roots emit chemicals that prevent most weeds from growing in their field during the winter. Thus, no weeding of the winter garden, and you have a clean garden area for planting the next spring.

The enlarged taproots show wide variation in color and form according to the variety. The Daikons I worked with can reach a length of more than 20 inches and easily weigh over five pounds. If you like to eat radishes, you will find that Daikons are mild flavored and have a crisp flesh. In fact, I know of one man in Lake City who cuts up the roots and cooks them as a replacement for French Fries. The roots, being tender, do not need to be cut up for the sheep. They can be fed whole, and the sheep have no trouble eating them. I have even fed whole roots to our chickens. They are so easy to harvest that I found I could



Radishes as a cover crop. Photo by Kent Kammermeyer.

pull 50 pounds in about four minutes with no difficulty. In little more than two hours I have harvested as much as 1,800 pounds.

Daikons are a very popular food in many countries, particularly in eastern Asia. They may be eaten raw in salads but are more often cooked and eaten as a vegetable, like a turnip.

Excess nutrients in manure-amended soil are rapidly absorbed by the daikon radishes, thus preventing leaching or runoff of nutrients into water systems. The large holes left by harvested daikons act as a drainage system of sorts; rain water runs into them, remaining in the garden rather than running off and taking much-needed nutrients with it.

The roots produce glycosinolate compounds, which are secondary metabolites. They react in a manner similar to the active chemical in the commercial fumigant Vapam. They have shown potential for control of nematodes, diseases, and weeds. The plant contains raphanin, which is antibacterial and antifungal. It inhibits the growth of *Staphylococcus aureus*, *E. coli*, streptococci, and others. The plant shows anti-tumor activity. They are also being recognized as a natural wormer for sheep. And did I mention before that both the tops and roots are at least 20% protein?

Yields of Oriental radish are reported to be six to eight tons per acre in India, five tons per acre in Hawaii and up to 24 tons per acre for radishes grown for fodder in the Republic of South Africa.

Research by Dr. Ray Weil at the University of Maryland shows dry matter

production of 5,000 lbs/acre for top growth (shoots and leaves) plus another 2,000 lbs/acre of root dry matter production. This is higher than rape, kale, and turnips! The closer you plant the seeds, the smaller the roots tend to be. Rather than broadcast the seed, I planted mine in rows twelve inches apart.

I experimented on a very limited basis with daikons as a forage crop. The sheep and cattle grazed on the tops. The sheep ate the roots down to ground level, while the cattle pulled many of the roots up and ate them. This is something I might try on a larger scale next winter.

The only downside to growing daikons: When I plant my spring/summer garden, the seeds are either slow to germinate or are not germinating. There is the possibility that the glycosinolate compounds in the roots might be inhibiting / suppressing the growth of the vegetable plants. Only time will tell.

In growing a garden for livestock, my goal was to develop cost effective alternatives to both hay and feed, improving both their profitability and their overall health. My 26 sheep only needed a half acre of daikons for their winter feeding, and the total cost of the daikons as a replacement for both hay and feed for winter (early October until the middle of March) was only \$2.74 per sheep.

To reiterate some of my main points:

1. Gardening for livestock can be both an economical and profitable alternative to farming as normal.
2. Choose high producing vegetables that require the least care.
3. For the health of both you and your livestock, grow in as natural a manner as possible.
4. Daikon radishes appear to be the best for both the sheep and the garden area.

So back to my opening question: How much money do each of you spend feeding hay and feed to your sheep each winter? ❖

Ralph Wright raises Florida Cracker cattle and sheep at Heaven Sent Acres in Lake City, FL, playing an important role in the conservation of the two breeds. He can be reached at old_cowhunter@yahoo.com.

Blue Oaks Center - Saving the Baca Chica Horse

By Marina Bigongiari. All photos courtesy of Marina Bigongiari.

In 2015, Blue Oaks Center was founded in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada mountains of California to preserve the legacy of the Baca Chica Colonial Spanish horse. Not too long ago it was thought that the Bacas were no longer a strain that would survive to share their outstanding athletic and kind character for future generations. Baca Chica Colonial Spanish horses not only have an outstanding temperament and beautiful confirmation, but they also have proven to make excellent therapy horses. As one of America's first horses, they are a very significant part of our American heritage.

We are proud to announce the arrival of four new foals in 2017, the hope for the Baca Chica Spanish Horse survival. This is extremely significant because there are only twelve breedable mares and two stallions in **existence** today.

Due to the rare heritage and current preservation status, Blue Oaks Center is fortunate that our preservation program has the help of doctors and geneticists from three universities providing guidance through DNA sampling, genetic analysis and consultation for our breeding program. We would like to give a special thanks to the following for their continued support of the Baca strain: Dr. Sponenberg (Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine), Dr. Cothran (Texas A&M) and Drs. Murray and McLean (University of



California at Davis).

Blue Oaks Center is committed to the preservation of the Baca Chica Colonial Spanish Horse in three major areas: genetics, confirmation and their therapeutic character. All horses at the Center are handled and taught using Natural Horsemanship theory and techniques.

For more information and to learn how you can support Blue Oaks Center, please visit our website: www.BlueOaksCenter.org and follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/BacaColonialSpanishHorseAlliance. ❖

Baca horse artwork painted by Leslie Anne Webb.



The Chicken Codex: Thoughtful Chicken Keeping

By Jeanine Beranger

The following article is the first installment of a *Mother Earth News* blog written by the Conservancy's Senior Program Manager Jeannette Beranger. To view the blog, search for "The Chicken Codex" in your favorite search engine.

This is the first post of what I hope is a not-so-average blog on poultry. I've named it "The Chicken Codex" with the goal of "enlightening" new and emerging poultry keepers by providing a broad perspective on what it takes to breed and perfect poultry. I write this for those who want to take their backyard chicken (and other poultry) efforts to the next level and become competent breeders that produce productive and healthy birds that can provide delicious products for your family's table.

Over the years I've become a certifiable chicken nut but channel that passion into useful breeding projects for the birds on my farm. My current project is with the critically endangered Crèvecoeur chicken. It was in its heyday the ultimate table bird in France. Unfortunately, through some unfortunate events they were nearly wiped out during World War II. They have never recovered, and my job, as I see it, is to bring them back to being a premium table bird. I'll be up front in that I don't raise pets. I produce birds that meet breed standard and are productive for meat and eggs. A lucky few end up as pets for others but typically not on our place. I love the birds and treat them with all the respect and kindness they deserve from when they hatch up until the day we serve them on our table. As Temple Grandin puts it so eloquently, "Raising livestock and poultry is ethical when done right, but the animals must have a life worth living." We do our best to make it so on our farm.

I work for The Livestock Conservancy so obviously my focus is on heritage breeds, but all of the topics and principles to be discussed in this blog should apply to any breed whether they are rare or not. First off let's start with the basic philosophies needed to put things in proper perspective for new breeders reading this blog:



One of Jeannette's Crèvecoeur cockerels. Photo by Jeannette Beranger.

- If it were easy (or cheap), everyone would do it.
- There's always someone who knows more than you, so keep an open mind and give credit to those that walked the path with the breed before you did.
- Don't keep all your eggs in one basket – literally. If you get hit by disease, natural disaster, or predators, years of work will go down the drain if you don't share your genetics when you can with other producers.
- Do what is best for the flock and don't accumulate "pets" or poor specimens that do not contribute to your breeding program. Not every bird is meant to be a breeder, so have a plan for what you will do with your extras. Giving them away as pets is not a long term viable option – it's wishful thinking.
- Remember that "You get only what you tolerate." If you have sickly birds that need antibiotics in order to thrive or nasty roosters that jump on you whenever you enter the coop, then that's what you will get. What can you live with?
- Be generous in sharing information on

your successes *and* failures so others may learn and be fruitful in their poultry endeavors.

- Have fun. If you don't truly enjoy it, get another hobby.

It's an exciting prospect to become a breeder of quality poultry. When you walk out into your coop and see all of the effort pay off in the form of a beautiful and productive flock, you are on your way. You may have had a taste of successfully maintaining a flock and now want to break free of being dependent of others to be more self-sufficient. I can tell you from personal experience that it's worth it if you know what you are getting yourself into. That's why I am here and will help you figure all that out.

I want to begin by clarifying what I refer to as a breed so we are all on the same page. In the case of poultry that is fairly easy to do. There is this brilliant book put out by the American Poultry Association (APA) for over 100 years called the *Standard of Perfection*. This is

the "poultry bible" that describes in great detail which birds are recognized as breeds by the APA and what they should look like. The important thing to understand about this book is the breed descriptions were written by a panel of experts that knew the breed best at a time when it was in production for its original purpose. It gives a breeder reasonable goals to shoot for in order to make their birds shine. Another *Standard of Perfection* put out by the American Bantam Association does the same for the diminutive bantam cousins of the large fowl birds. For heritage breeds, The Livestock Conservancy's website, www.livestockconservancy.org is also a wealth of information and includes a few breeds that are not recognized by the APA or ABA. Those exceptions are listed because they are considered important breeds for genetic conservation by The Conservancy. This blog will discuss mostly large fowl but many of the principles are similar for both large and bantam fowl.

Deciding what breed to raise

The first important step is to decide what you ultimately expect of your birds.

continued on next page

Chicken Codex

Continued from previous page

Not a complicated question, but there are many facets to the decision making process in order to select a species and breed that will meet your intended goals. What do you hope to accomplish with the birds? Will they be meat, egg, dual purpose, or show birds? Each breed was created with a specific purpose in mind so whittle down your list of prospects to those that help you reach your goals. Sometimes breed history will give you some important clues to what the birds were intended to be, so familiarizing yourself with that background information may be useful. Among that group of breeds that might work

for you, take a look at their adaptations for weather and environment similar to where you expect them to live. Don't fight Mother Nature – she works for cheap but can be an expensive adversary if you have to battle her constantly. For instance a Leghorn chicken is nicely adapted to hot conditions but may not be the best pick for a cold climate because its large comb and wattles will be prone to frostbite. A large-bodied Brahma chicken on the other hand, will have little trouble in the cold with its short pea comb and wattles, but will be challenged to effectively radiate its massive body heat in a hot climate. The Brahma also has feathered feet and will need to be on well-drained soil, whereas the Leghorn is clean-legged and can cope better with muddy conditions. Sure, each

will survive in both climates and conditions but may need extra help from their owners to do so efficiently.

The very *last* question you ask yourself before you make a breed choice is, "Do I like the breed?" I see so many people jumping the gun by first selecting an appealing breed without much thought as to how it will fit with their expectations or conditions. In the end, many fail because of poor thinking and planning. It's like Indiana Jones choosing the right Holy Grail in a sea of cups....Choose wisely. ❖

The second post discusses planning for your first breeding and flock-raising season. The end of the year is the time for beginnings, and advanced planning at this time will be crucial if you are to have a productive spring.

Florida Cracker Cattle

The Florida Cracker Cattle Association (FCCA) mission is to preserve the cattle that were so important to the agricultural history of Florida. One goal of the FCCA is to educate and encourage Florida youth to preserve and promote the breed through a scholarship program. The FCCA awards recipients \$500 to be used for educational expenses toward a degree or certificate program. High school seniors or current degree or certificate program attendees who reside in Florida are eligible to apply. The scholarship application and more information about Florida Cracker cattle can be found at www.floridacrackercattle.org.

2018 Scholarship Winner Essay

By Ryan K. Taylor

Florida Cracker cattle are one of the oldest breeds in the United States. They are also one of the rarest breeds of cattle, and are listed as "Critical" by the Livestock Conservancy. This decline of Florida Cracker cattle is majorly the result of free-roaming livestock and the introduction of larger breeds in 1949. These small, long-horned cattle need to be preserved because of their great resistance to parasites and their ability to handle the heat, which makes them easily adapted to the Florida terrain.



Florida Cracker cattle. Photo by Stephen Monroe.

Preservation needs can be met through education and awareness of the community. This can easily be done by having other agricultural organizations assist expanding public awareness of Florida Cracker cattle. With the help of Farm Bureau, FFA, 4-H, Young Farmers and Ranchers, and other groups, more of the public will receive education and awareness about the diminishing Florida Cracker cattle population. As an FFA member myself, I would be interested in watching a workshop about this important breed. A workshop would create awareness among kids about my age, who will then tell their parents about the importance of Florida Cracker cattle. A majority of the students in these organizations are planning future careers in the agriculture industry. This new knowledge may help foster future Florida Cracker cattle farmers. Another way to promote the breed

and educate the public would be to show one or two as livestock exhibits at our local county and state fairs. This would reach both

those interested in agriculture and the general public. Also, commercials could be run on popular channels, explaining how important these cattle are to our society. This technique will bring the information to those who are not familiar with agriculture.

Florida Cracker cattle are a huge part of the history of Florida that should not be erased through extinction. Creating awareness and education in the community with the help of other agricultural organizations, media outlets, and fair associations, will soon help the public understand the need for preservation of this livestock. Together as a state and one large community, we can preserve and protect our history of Florida Cracker cattle for future generations. This long-horned breed has held a spot in our history's heart that will not be diminished. ❖

Board Elections—Vote Now!

Jay H. Calvert, Jr.

A seasoned commercial litigator, Jay H. “Jerry” Calvert Jr. handles large, high-profile business disputes, including matters involving antitrust, intellectual property, and securities law, and healthcare and regulatory issues. His clients range from global enterprises in the airline, banking, and pharmaceutical fields, to those in the oil, healthcare, life sciences, and electric utility industries. A former managing partner of Morgan Lewis, Jerry has also served as a member of the firm’s Executive Committee and manager of its Litigation Practice.

After a year’s hiatus, Jerry is once again serving on the Board of Directors of the Zoological Society of Philadelphia and also formerly served as its Chairman. He received the Zoo’s Conservation Impact award in 2015. He is a former member of the Board of Trustees of the Eastern Pennsylvania Chapter of the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society and also served as the President of the Board. Jerry currently serves on the Steering Committee of the Sunday Breakfast Club.

David Day

David lives in Noblesville, Indiana on a small farm where his family raises Lincoln sheep, a heritage breed. While the Days have only raised Lincolns for the last five years, the family has over 28 years of experience raising purebred sheep. (See their farm by searching “Creek Road Farms” on Facebook or visit www.creekroadfarms.com.)

David has been active in local, state and national sheep organizations. He was president of the Hamilton County Sheep Producers and superintendent of the county 4-H show. He was director of the Indiana Sheep Association for over ten years, the association’s president for two years, treasurer for several years and de facto executive director for a year. He was a director of the American Romney Breeders Association and currently serves on the Board



of the National Lincoln Sheep Breeders Association.

David is the managing partner of Church, Church, Hittle & Antrim, a general practice law firm. David represents primarily Indiana public school districts and family-owned businesses. He also has provided advice to several not-for-profit organizations on organizational and tax issues.

David also currently serves on the Board of Conner Prairie, an interactive history park located in Fishers, Indiana with a program dedicated to preserving rare breeds (www.connerprairie.org). He is also on the Board of the Indiana 4-H Foundation and the Hamilton County Extension Board.

David and his wife, Brenda, have three children and seven grandchildren. A native of Indiana, he received a bachelor of science degree in education from Ball State University in 1973 and his law degree from Harvard Law School in 1977.

Adam P. Dixon

Adam is President and Co-Founder of Applied Constructal, Inc. a company focused on bringing high-tech and energy-saving solutions to ecological and environmental problems. He has worked for companies in a wide range of renewable and sustainable technologies, including the “Smart Grid”, electric mobility, and distributed generation technologies such as marine turbines. As a long-time student of climate change, he is currently working as a consultant in an innovative new form of carbon finance.

Adam has had extensive experience in Central Europe and the former Soviet Union, having spent the first ten years of his professional life in these regions, including working for the Chatham House (Royal Institute of International Affairs) as a specialist on Central Asia, before moving into the renewable energy sector in 2003.

Mr. Dixon has been involved with the Akhal Teke horse since 1998, when he first encountered them while working for Chatham House on the re-invention of national identities in post-Soviet Central Asia. He has been participating in the breeding program at Shenandoah Farm in Staunton VA since 2004.

Adam studied at Harvard (BA 1983),



Oxford (M.Phil 1988) and Leningrad State University (1986). Born in New York City, he is a U.S. citizen who lives between Vienna and New York, and is married with four children.

Brice Yocum

Brice is a committed member of the Livestock Conservancy and has been fascinated with farm animals as long as he can remember. As a boy, his parents introduced him to

James Herriot, in the BBC series, “All Creatures Great And Small.” His love for the small family farm has never waned.

He and his wife, Erin, have continued a five-generation legacy of farming on their 17-acre heirloom walnut farm in Central California. After returning to the Central Valley from law school in 2008, they started Sunbird Farms. They raise rare, heritage poultry for food and fun, which they share with their customers across the country. They have three daughters who have been actively involved with the farm chores, sometimes even willingly.

Brice is a licensed attorney, former higher-ed administrator and faculty member, and now leads Tucoemas Federal Credit Union. A self-described “gentleman farmer,” Brice is passionate about good food and good farming and believes heritage livestock have an important part to play in both. You can see some of what the Yocums do at www.sunbirdfarms.com.



Ballot

All Livestock Conservancy members may vote for the Board of Directors, with one vote cast per membership.

There are four candidates and four open seats on the Board. You may vote for as many as you wish. Photocopies and fax ballots are acceptable with a signature.

Return ballots to The Livestock Conservancy-Board Elections, PO Box 477, Pittsboro, NC 27312 or fax your signed ballot to 919-542-0022. Ballots must be postmarked no later than November 6, 2017.

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- David Day
- Adam P. Dixon
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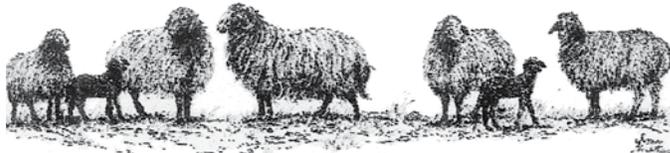
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DATED MATERIAL

CALENDAR

★★ denotes Livestock Conservancy event
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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 or mail to PO Box 477,

October

★ **October 21-22 – The Mother Earth News Fair** will be held in Topeka, KS. 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.motherearthnews-fair.com for more information.

★ **October 21-22 – The New York State Sheep and Wool Festival** will be held in Rhinebeck, NY. Visit <https://sheepand-wool.com> for more information.

November

★★ **November 9-11 – The Livestock Conservancy's Heritage Livestock Conference** will be held in Williamsburg, VA. For accommodations at Fort Magruder Hotel and Conference Center call 757-220-2250 and mention the Conservancy for our special rate. Visit <https://livestock-conservancy.org> for more information or to register or call 919-542-5704.

November 11-12 – The Ohio National

Poultry Show will be held in Columbus, OH. Visit www.ohionational.org for more information.

December

December 1-3 – Cleveland Bay breed classes will be hosted by Cleveland Bay horse enthusiasts at the Texas Rose Autumn Breed Show in Tyler, TX. Purebred and Part-bred/Sport Horse Breeding classes are planned. All Cleveland Bay enthusiasts are encouraged to join in for a tailgate lunch "Meet and Greet." Email info@clevelandbay.org for more details.

December 2 – Highland Cattle Auction will be held at the Sycamore Springs Exotic Sale Barn in Locust Grove, OK. Visit www.highlandauction.com or call 417-345-0575 for more information.

★★ **December 31 – DEADLINE to update information and submit ads** for the Livestock Conservancy's 2018 Breeders and Products Directory. If needed, update your information online with your member log-in at LivestockConservancy.org. Email rwalker@livestockconservancy.org or call 919-542-5704 for more information about advertising in the directory.

January

January 6-21 – The National Western Stock Show will be held in Denver, CO. This event features more than 15,000 head of horses, cattle, sheep, swine, goats, llamas, alpacas, bison, yak, poultry and rabbits each year. Visit www.nationalwestern.com for more information.

January 11-12 – The Minnesota Organic Conference will be held in St. Cloud, MN,

with 30-plus breakout sessions on soils, crops, livestock, certification, marketing, and more. Visit www.mda.state.mn.us/moc for more information.

January 17-20 – The Southern SAWG Conference "Practical Tools and Solutions for Sustaining Family Farms" will be held in Chattanooga, TN. Visit www.ssawg.org for more information.

January 24-27 – The EcoFarm Conference "Sow Good" will be held in Pacific Grove, CA. Visit www.eco-farm.org for more information.

January 30-February 1 - The Grazing Conference "Covering All Ground" will be held in Wisconsin Dells, WI. Landowners, farmers, graziers, and agency staff will gather to discuss beef, dairy, sheep, goats, rabbits, poultry, and more. Visit www.grassworks.org/events/grazing-conference/ for more information.

February

February 7-10 – The 27th Annual Farming for the Future Conference will be held at Penn Stater Conference Center in State College, PA. Visit www.pasafarming.org/conference or call 814-349-9856 for more information.

February 15-17 – The 39th Annual Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association (OEFFA) Conference, "A Taste for Change," will be held in Dayton, OH. Sustainable food and farming workshops, a trade show, from-scratch meals, a kids' conference, childcare, and keynote speakers. Visit www.oeffa.org/conference2018 for more information.