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Conserving rare breeds since 1977

THE LIVESTOCK CONSERVANCY™ NEWS

Praise for the Rare “Princes of Poultry”

Article and photos by Jeannette Beranger

Few items are relished on the holiday table as much as the traditional Christmas goose, but there is more than meets the eye to the aptly named “Prince of Poultry.” The goose is held in high regard throughout the world as a culinary delicacy, and keeping geese has many rewards – some beyond the desirable food and down products they provide. They are incredibly versatile animals thriving in almost any climate or landscape. Geese are superb multi-taskers and, surprisingly, can be put to work doing small jobs to help them earn their keep around the farm. Heritage breed geese are particularly hardy, offer many breeds from which to choose, and have been an integral part of human culture and history.



African



Toulouse

First domesticated as early as 5,000 BCE, the goose has played a wide variety of roles. The species has been known throughout the centuries as a “security guard extraordinaire.” In one case, the Roman goose breed was credited with saving the city of Rome by raising the alarm at the approach of Celtic hordes intent on taking the city. On today’s farms, the creatures are no less observant and can serve to alert the residents of a farm to approaching predators or visitors. The diminutive Chinese goose and the massive African goose are the most common choices for this job and are recognized as two of the more vocal members of the goose family – although most breeds will



White Chinese

do the job nicely.

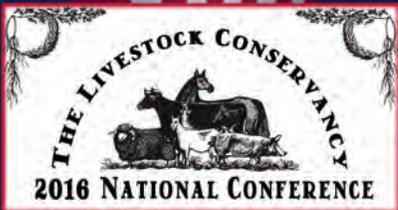
Geese are natural lawn mowers and are happiest when they have access to grass and forage. (My small flock of American Buff geese was kept in our front yard all summer and there was little need to mow throughout that season!) This natural and highly active foraging ability enables them to work as effective weeders as well. The Cotton Patch goose was a breed traditionally kept in the rural South in...you guessed it...cotton fields to help control weeds. Geese can be kept in vineyards, orchards, and even backyard gardens for the same purpose – provided the cultivated plants are past the soft and succulent stage and

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MEMBER VOICES

Supporting the Galiceño

By Dr. Richard M. Blaney, Pat K. Blaney, and Heidi M. Reinhardt

As professional biologists and scientists, we understand very well the importance of genetic diversity for the survival of a species. Much of our field work has been devoted to studying that diversity, variation in populations, and survival in various and changing environmental situations. We have been devoted to studying and protecting endangered species. It was a small step from that, to concerns of endangered breeds of livestock. All of us had a love of horses from childhood, although it took until our senior years to rekindle that love.

We were introduced to Galiceño horses by our partner Heidi Reinhardt, whose grandfather had been involved with this breed in the 1960s in Spokane, Washington. We immediately recognized the special history of this breed (descended from the first horses brought to the Americas by Cortés in 1519) and quickly learned of its unique genetic place among various horse breeds. We met all the breeders



Heidi, Marie, and Galiceño horse "Dee Dee" with cart. Photo by Rick Blaney.

of Galiceños and realized that fewer and fewer breeders remained. Here was truly a very special Heritage breed that needed recognition by the Livestock Conservancy. After thorough studies by the Livestock Conservancy, Galiceño Horses were listed as Critically Endangered.

There are many livestock breeds that are being lost as commercial farming techniques have tended toward one breed or strain type that reproduces and matures

quickly. Meanwhile other genetic types are being lost. We support the Livestock Conservancy's efforts to prevent those losses. ❖

Drs. Richard and Pat Blaney are retired professors of biological sciences and own Galiceños of Suwannee Horse Ranch in Live Oak, Florida. Heidi is an environmental scientist, biologist, and educator, and partner at the farm. Learn more at www.Galiceno.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

This year, our 39th, The Livestock Conservancy will return to Hampshire College in Amherst, Massachusetts, for our annual conference with a theme of collaboration and cooperation. Working together has a powerful influence on discovering, securing, and sustaining rare breeds, and takes many forms.

In our first ten years, conservation emphasized discovering endangered breeds and securing them. The importance of breeders working together to secure breeds cannot be over-emphasized, and the Conservancy helped many groups of cattle, sheep, and pig breeders to organize and form breed associations. Today, we collaborate with over 150 breed associations, registries and clubs with a shared interest in a specific breed. At their best, members work together to preserve knowledge about their breed, share their knowledge and experience with potential breeders,

Tell Us About It!

Please share your thoughts, ideas, and images with The Livestock Conservancy! Send photos and notes about your rare breeds and your conservation efforts, as well as your comments about the newsletter, to editor@livestockconservancy.org or mail them to PO Box 477, Pittsboro, NC 27312. Your feedback is always welcome.

and help each other with training, breeding, marketing, and advice.

Important partnerships take place at the farm level, too. Time and again you have shown us how working together can secure breeds and improve profitability, one on one and in small groups. Breeding stock exchanges, co-marketing, barter, and sharing talents, skills, and equipment are just a few creative ways you are working with your family, neighbors, and other breeders. Poultry- and rabbit-raising partners schedule processing on the same day to split inspection costs or share equipment and processing crews. Shepherds work together to set shearing dates. A nephew talented in web design manages a farm website, in exchange for a little ground beef for the freezer. A sheep cooperative in Southern Virginia combines all of these through an annual breeding stock exchange, bulk feed and supply purchases, and using the combined volume of lamb from all the growers to sell into markets that none of them alone could possibly supply.

Here in The Livestock Conservancy's offices, teamwork is an important theme. Our trust in each other allows us to do more with less. When one person's load becomes too heavy, another steps in. Member support may come from several staffers, and you benefit from our varied expertise. Member volunteers and our board of directors are also important resources. Likewise, partnership with a vast array of agricultural organizations ensures a much broader array of expertise and expands the network of resources available

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 Ryan Walker at 919-542-5704, ext. 102, or rwalker@LivestockConservancy.org.

Dielle Fleischmann

The Plains, VA

Jan French

Romoland, CA

to members and breeders. USDA and the SVF Foundation are important partners for cryopreservation of rare breeds, and International Heritage Breeds Week in May highlights our partnerships with livestock conservation organizations around the world.

The old saying is that "Many hands make light work." No one can or should have to do it all themselves. Collaboration, cooperation, and partnership add richness and diversity to farming *and* conservation. Consider adding or expanding how you work with others for the good of rare breeds, and come share what works at the conference in November. ❖

Free Way to Help The Livestock Conservancy Raise Funds

An easy way to support the Conservancy is to create your free iGive account. After that, all you need do is shop at any of the 1,700-plus online stores in the iGive network through the iGive.com website, newsletters, or install the optional iGive browser Button to make sure you never miss an opportunity to raise money when you shop online. In fact, smart shoppers will enjoy iGive's repository of coupons, free shipping deals, and sales. It's all automatic, and it's all free of charge.

iGive lets you control your membership information with a private password. You can review your store visits and purchase/donation history, and confirm the total amount raised and distributed to The Livestock Conservancy. iGive values your privacy and will never release shopper information without consent. And there are no hidden fees or extra costs when you shop through iGive. Up to 26% of each purchase benefits The Livestock Conservancy! **Start iGiving at:** www.iGive.com/LConservancy

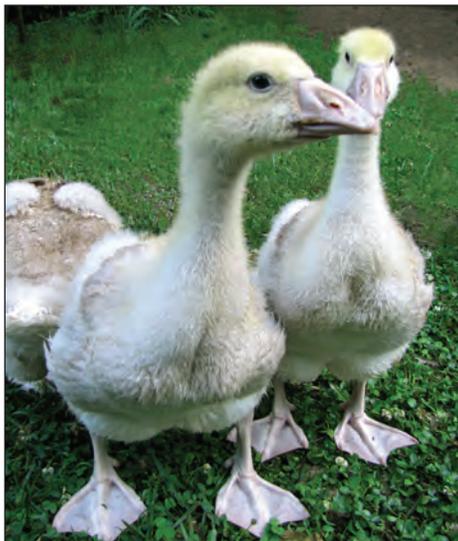


Rare “Princes of Poultry”

Continued from page 1

are not attractive to the palate of the geese. Aquatic plant control is on the goose’s resumé as well; geese can be used to keep plants such as pondweed, eelgrass, bulrush, and others in check. When abundant and tender forages are available, minimal supplemental feed is needed in rearing geese so feed costs can be reduced while the webbed wonders work.

The eggs of geese can be a real treat, especially in the hands of pastry and dessert chefs. They are much richer than chicken eggs but will not whip up well, so they should not be used for light recipes, such as angel food cake; use these large flavorful eggs in desserts like crème brûlée



American Buff



Brown Chinese

and thicker cake recipes. If you want geese primarily for eggs, the best layers are the Chinese geese which can lay nearly 100 eggs per year.

It can be a challenge to choose the right goose for your farm as they come in a wide variety of sizes, looks, and personalities. From the massive Dewlap Toulouse to the slight Roman and the flamboyant Sebastapol, choosing the right goose breed for your farm is an important step to success with this species. If you plan to breed, you will need to provide an appropriately sized pool or pond for the larger breeds for successful mating.

It is wise to plan early if you plan to purchase goslings as many breeders are sold out by spring; December may be a good time to reserve your birds with the hatcheries. Do your homework to understand which breed will fit your needs, property, expectations, and experience, and



Sebastapol



Roman

you will be off to a winning relationship with these “royal citizens” of the poultry community. ❖

Contribute to Our Newsletter

Do you have an idea for an article you would like to see in our newsletter? We welcome all ideas and submissions for consideration. If you don’t feel comfortable writing an article, but would like to chat with staff over phone or email for a brief interview, we welcome it. A few ideas of article topics include:

- General rare breed information
- Your farm or ranch’s story
- Perspectives from non-livestock owners
- Husbandry tips
- Marketing tips

- New research findings
- Historical accounts involving rare breeds
- Creative uses for rare breed products
- Event recaps and announcements
- Youth involvement with rare breeds
- Breed association or registry news

If you would like to contribute to our newsletter, please contact Ryan Walker at rwalker@LivestockConservancy.org or 919-542-5704, ext. 102.



Jefferson's Chickens at Monticello

By Pat Foreman

In the 1800s, many gardens, home-steads, and farms included livestock. Animals were integrated into the fabric of everyday life, providing daily sustenance and being a part of the community's commerce. But while Monticello's gardens and orchards are world-famous for vegetable and fruit production and the volumes of garden notes and sketches by Jefferson give deep insights into production gardens of his time, there is very little in all his writings and records about keeping poultry.

Among his few references is a record from his granddaughter Anne Cary Randolph about foodstuffs purchased from the Monticello slaves for the Jefferson household's fine dining and entertaining: "On September 29, 1805 the Jefferson kitchen purchased...(among other produce), 47 dozen eggs and 117 chickens."

To put that single purchase in context, Anne bought 564 eggs and about



Jefferson (Bill Barker) holding chicken celebrity Oprah Hen-Free, a heritage bantam Chantecler at Monticello's 2015 Heritage Harvest Festival. Photo courtesy of Pat Foreman.

527 pounds of poultry. That's more than a quarter ton of chicken (at an average weight of 4.5 pounds/bird).

Chickens were a major source of food and income for the enslaved community. According to Monticello's website, "More than half of the black adults at Monticello sold produce to the Jefferson household and all but three adults among of them also sold chickens."

So why did Jefferson not include poultry in his livestock records? It might be because in the days of our founding fathers, raising chickens was viewed by some as a lower-class activity. Notes Colonial Williamsburg's website, "Poultry, held in low regard during the eighteenth century, was usually omitted from farm stock listings."

This helps to explain the exclusion of chickens from the livestock accountings in Monticello stock inventories.

However, despite the widely-held belief that chickens were a lower-class occupation, maintaining European flocks were all the rage. Keeping ornamental and fancy fowl was considered a genuine royal class occupation. Raising bantams, a small variety of poultry, was especially popular for "gentry-class

young ladies".

According to Colonial Williamsburg, "Ornamental and bantam fowl were becoming increasingly popular (in America) as the colonists copied prevailing trends in England."

Jefferson definitely qualified as America's upper class and was quite active in breeding bantams and ornamental chickens. In a letter dated November 30, 1806, Jefferson wrote to Ellen Wayles Randolph Coolidge:

"By Davy I send you a pair of Bantam fowls; quite young: so that I am in hopes you will now be enabled to raise some. I propose on their subject a question of natural history for your enquiry: that is whether this is the Gallina Adrianica, or Adria, the Ad-satck cock of Aristotle? For this you must examine Buffon etc."

On June 29, 1807 Jefferson asked Coolidge:

"How go on the Bantams? I rely on you for their care, as I do on Anne for the Algerine fowls, and on our arrangements at Monticello for the East Indians (fowl)."

This letter (among others) shows that Jefferson was experimenting with varieties of chickens.

Chickens on Mulberry Row

The painting "Mulberry Row" by Nathaniel Gibbs shown at lower right portrays chickens being fed by African-American laborers at Monticello.

What breeds of chickens might have been on Mulberry Row? Colonial Williamsburg has a Rare Breed Program which has researched and selected four breeds that existed during the 1700s. These are the Dorking, Dominique, Hamburg and Nankin Bantam. I'm including the Pyncheon as well. According to Jeanette Beranger of The Livestock Conservancy, the Pyncheon was a popular breed and may have been one of the bantam breeds Jefferson raised and gave as gifts.

The Pyncheon bantam breed still exists but is quickly slipping into extinction as its breeding numbers dwindle. This breed was dropped from exhibitions (American Poultry Association poultry shows) in the mid-1900s. I have only found one American breeder of Pyncheons listed on the internet. We can only hope there are more in Europe.

Losing chicken breeds is nothing new.

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"Mulberry Row" by Nathaniel Gibbs portrays chickens as a part of daily life along Mulberry Row. Photo courtesy of Pat Foreman.

Jefferson's Chickens

Continued from previous page

Many breeds of the past are now extinct. The Livestock Conservancy lists more than 40 breeds of chickens in danger of extinction, losing their genetic uniqueness forever.

Chicken Keeping in Colonial Times

The archives of Monticello contain very little about the practices of chicken keeping. Description of Colonial Williamsburg, however, indicate that most family farmers and residents let the birds free-roam, without providing shelter.

Writes Brian Heldberg of the SPPA, "They drove them to roost in orchards or stands of timber. Chickens were expected to forage for most of their food, cleaning up behind the more important meat and draft animals or occasionally receiving table scraps or grain from their owners. In a town setting, they may have even sheltered them in their houses or other nearby outbuildings."

How many chickens were kept at Monticello? No written records seem to exist. But based on that single chicken and egg purchase by Anne Cary Randolph in 1805, it is clear there had to have been thousands of chickens that fed not only the enslaved community but also the Jefferson household.

How were these chickens raised, kept and utilized? I believe the answers might still be available through the descendants of the enslaved community who raised chickens for Jefferson.

The *Getting Word* oral history project started at Monticello in 1993. This project is to preserve the stories of Afro-American families of Monticello by taking histories from their descendants. An NPR show, entitled: "Life At Jefferson's Monticello, As His Slaves Saw It" is an excellent description of the project. I propose it would be a useful research project to conduct a "Chicken Keeping and Employing"

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A Pyncheon bantam hen may have been the breed kept by the Jeffersons as a family pet. The Pyncheon breed is in grave danger of extinction. Photo courtesy of Pat Fore-

survey of the Monticello African American descendants to glean information handed down about poultry keeping in the 18th century. I would love to participate in such a project.

I have been presenting chicken workshops at the Heritage Harvest Festival at Monticello for several years. I always bring my co-presenter, Oprah Hen-Free (a Heritage chicken), to show festival guests how dignified, beautiful, and personable chickens can be.

At a book signing in the gift shop, Ms. Hen-Free, with the usual clucking that represents the sound of a forthcoming egg, presented an egg with as much grace and dignity as can be expected of any fine hen. People were thrilled! The still-warm egg was passed around and marveled at by those who had never held a truly fresh egg.

I asked the staff if this might be a historic egg? Might this be the first egg laid at Monticello since Jefferson's time? The staff was clearly stunned. But the question remains. Was that a historic egg? Could Oprah Hen-Free, in presenting a single egg to the Monticello gift shop, possibly have laid the first egg at Monticello in more than a hundred years? Might Oprah Hen-Free have uttered: "the cluck heard around the world" as a clarion call announcing that it is time to bring chickens back into our culture?

It is clear there were chickens kept by

Searching for Pyncheon Chickens

Pyncheon chickens are a very rare breed and none were reported during the 2015 North American Poultry Census. Although there are some indications that there are breeders in the U.S., The Livestock Conservancy has thus far been unable to determine if a broad enough genetic base for a viable population exists. If you or someone you know raises Pyncheons, we would like to know how many purebred breeding birds are in your flock in order to determine the conservation priority for this breed. To report Pyncheons to The Livestock Conservancy, please email Jeannette at jberanger@LivestockConservancy.org or call 919-542-5704.

the residents of Mulberry Row and as such, an authentic recreation of life on the plantation has to include the 18th century poultry breeds. Not only to recreate glimpses into the lives of the people who lived and labored on Monticello, but also to preserve the breeds of chickens that served them so they can continue to serve future generations.

May the flock be with Monticello. ❖

A Short History of Watusi Cattle

Over 8,000 years ago humans first domesticated aurochs, the wild ancestor of the numerous breeds of cattle that have played such an important role in human development. In the thousands of years after this momentous event, humans have bred herds of domesticated animals for use as transportation, companions, protection, clothing, and food. In these domesticated groups individual animals exhibiting certain characteristics were selected by the herdmaster and bred to each other. The resulting generations ultimately created the hundreds of breeds of cattle presently known to man. The aurochs themselves became extinct prior to 1627, but their legacy lives on.

For some 6,000 years a group of very similar cattle with huge horns have played a role in the lives of African tribes. Various strains of cattle were mixed through generations as humans moved across the African continent until the distinctive Sanga type was produced. Sanga cattle are the background type for many of the individual breeds now available. One of the oldest and definitely most exciting breeds of these cattle is most commonly referred to as Watusi. Also known as the Cattle of Kings, Ankole cattle and Royal Ox, this breed originated in eastern Africa, most commonly in the areas of Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, Lake Victoria, and Tanganyika. The various lines of this breed are often named for the tribe that raises



Watusi are especially resistant to drought, heat, and direct sunlight. Their huge horns act as a natural cooling system by circulating blood through to the ends of the horn to disperse the heat before returning it to the body. Photo by Jeannette Beranger.

them or are classified by the area in which they are raised; Watusi, for the Tutsi tribes of Rwanda and Burundi; Ankole, Bahima, Bashi and Kigezi and Kivu. Cave drawings which have survived for thousands of years, Egyptian tomb paintings, and other artifacts suggest that the predecessors to the present-day breed played an important role in the lives of the tribes. In Rwanda where the Tutsi ruled, the common type of Watusi were known as Insanga (meaning “the ones which were found” because according to tradition they had been discovered by the first kings) and excep-

tional individuals with huge horns were known as Inyambo (“the cows with long, long horns” purportedly to have been twelve feet or more from tip to tip). These were only owned by the King and considered to be sacred.

The cattle herds played and continue to play an important role in tribal life. The

herds provide a valuable commodity for barter and trade, and are a sign of wealth within the tribe. The animals provide a source of food when none would otherwise have been available. Seldom slaughtered for meat, except in ceremonies such as the coming of adulthood, the cows are frequently milked and bled to make a yogurt like high protein drink. This clabbered milk drink is a staple of the diet. The animals themselves provide status for a man within the tribe, his wealth being measured by the number and quality of animals that he owns. In addition they are used as gifts to a bride’s family at the time of marriage, a tradition known as bridewealth.

Nature helped to develop the characteristics of Watusi in order to allow the survival of the breed. In the predator-infested wilderness of eastern Africa an animal that could not protect itself and its young from predators would be doomed to quick and violent death and eventual extinction. For this reason nature and the herdsmen selected the large horned females that could fend off the cunning attacks of groups of jackals or lions to protect herself and her young.

The young have to be born quickly and they must be strong enough to outrun the predators within a short time of birth. The mother must produce a highly nutritious

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A Watusi bull in South Carolina. Photo by Jeannette Beranger.

A Short History of Watusi Cattle

Continued from previous page

milk to nourish the young for the speed and stamina necessary in the environment and must be able to produce it from whatever feed may be available.

In Watusi, the cows and bulls are long legged, making them capable of running and jumping with tremendous agility. The cows have a small, tight udder that would not be an easy target for predators or thorn bushes, yet they produce milk to nourish their young that tests out with very high butter fat. They give birth to a very small calf with the ease that is natural to wild species of animals. The calves are especially alert and are capable of running along with their mothers and the herd within a short time of birth. The breed is highly social, much preferring to stay in a group for company and protection. At night they tend to form a circle with adults lying on the outside, horns out, to protect the calves located in the inner circle. The calves will hang in groups by day, always in close proximity to at least one adult, and when frightened will instinctively run in front of the horns of a retreating mother or under her belly for protection.

Physically even present-day Watusi cattle are striking. They possess the largest and most dramatic horns of any breed of cattle. Individuals in this country have been known to have horn bases that measure 28 inches in circumference, eight inches in diameter and eight feet from tip to tip. The horns vary from lateral, almost flat growth to an upswept arched shape known as lyre, sometimes with the tips almost touching. Watusi are stately and tall, relatively long-legged, and possess a small to negligible cervico-thoracic hump (placed up towards the base of the neck). These animals have an extremely long, rope-like tail for swatting insects. Watusi are most commonly a deep red or red with some white speckling; however, they are also known to occur in black, brown, white, yellow, dun, gray, and brindled, as well as some heavily spotted combination of these colors. Modern Watusi are a medium sized bovine with cows generally weighing from 800 to 1,200 pounds and bulls weighing from 1,000 to 1,600 pounds. The newborn calves weigh from



Watusi steers featured at the Houston Zoo. Photo by Jeannette Beranger.

30 to 50 pounds.

In the harsh environment in which this breed has adapted for centuries, survival is the primary consideration. Through all of these years they have become highly tolerant to brutal extremes of condition. Watusi are especially resistant to drought, heat and direct sunlight. Their huge horns act as a natural cooling system by circulating blood through to the ends of the horn to disperse the heat before returning it to the body. In addition, their digestive systems have the ability to utilize poor quality and limited quantities of food and water. Their native homeland can boast days in the which temperatures can soar to 120°F and nights can plummet to 20°; this in addition to low-quality sparsely available feeds, seasonally limited water supplies, virulent diseases, predators and parasites that would have long ago destroyed less hardy animals. Yet through it all, Watusi have flourished. These survival abilities have allowed them as a breed to not only survive the centuries in Africa but to become established on the continents of Europe, South America, Australia and North America.

Watusi can fulfill the requirements and goals of many in the animal industry. The first and most obvious benefit is the uniqueness of this animal. They look exotic and are certain show stoppers as a display novelty. They are as striking for display as antelopes, gazelles and other, horned hoofstock, yet handle with the ease of cattle. To cattle breeders, Watusi possess some very desirable traits of great importance to the potential buyer and many

that have been lost or bred out of other modern breeds. In addition they can add some exciting differences that appeal to a broad range of needs and desires.

Watusi cattle first made their appearance in the United States in 1960 when two bulls, which were born in Scandinavia, were imported. It took another three years before the first female was brought in to keep them company. From these recent and meager beginnings an arduous breeding program was developed. To aid in the development of the breed whose numbers were so severely limited and to add hybrid vigor to such a small genetic pool, an upbreeding program was developed. Under this program, Foundation Pure bulls (those of 100% Watusi bloodlines) were bred to females of other breeds. The female offspring of this first mating were registered as 1/2-blood and bred back to Foundation Pure bulls. The offspring of this second generation were registered as 3/4-blood. The females of this 3/4 generation were bred back to Foundation Pure bulls again to produce 7/8-blood offspring. Females of 7/8 and above are now registered as Native Pure, males must reach 15/16 prior to being designated as Native Pure. Any Native Pure female bred to a Foundation Pure bull will produce a Native Pure offspring. Native Pure bulls can be bred to percentage females and their offspring registered. Foundation Pure animals are only the result of breeding Foundation Pure to Foundation Pure.

Today, thanks to the efforts of dedicated private breeders and zoos who have worked over the years to help preserve →

Heritage Eats

By Ryan Walker

Located on the north side of Napa, California is a culinary gem that is earning high praise from customers. Heritage Eats opened in 2015, and has already earned outstanding ratings on Yelp, Facebook, Zagat, and others. Of course, these ratings are not surprising to us, considering that the “fast-fine” restaurant’s main focus and inspiration are serving globally inspired sandwiches, wraps and salads made with – you guessed it – heritage breed products.

Heritage Eats was founded “with the belief that restaurants should have a purpose beyond serving amazing food.” On their website, they prominently reference the benefits of using heritage breed proteins and urge consumers to create a stronger demand for them, which in turn encourages farmers to increase their populations. In addition to promoting heritage breeds, Heritage Eats also supports No Kid Hungry, a nonprofit that provides vulnerable kids with nutritious food and teaches their families how to cook healthy, affordable meals.

I had a chance to catch up with chef Jason Kupper recently to see how things have been going since the restaurant opened. Jason said the reception from customers has been terrific and several people have commented that this was their first experience with heritage breeds. He said one of the biggest surprises since opening the restaurant has been the effect that the weather plays on his ability to purchase products from farmers and ranchers. Many

Watusi Cattle

these magnificent animals, breeding stock is now available to the public. ❖

The World Watusi Association was formed as a non-profit corporation designed to collect, record, and preserve the pedigrees of Watusi cattle worldwide. It maintains the breeding registry and stud book as well as regulates the standards by which this multi-faceted breed is known. The Association also sanctions sales and shows in order to help promote and present these magnificent animals to the public. The World Watusi Association publishes information on this breed in its official newsletter, Watusi World, which is available in the bi-monthly publication Rare Breeds Journal.



Heritage Eats uses fun imagery to convey important messages.

of the products Jason sources come from drought-stricken California and Texas; the resulting rising food prices are something that chefs have to keep a close eye on.

Jason was also quick to admit that finding enough heritage breed products to supply a restaurant can sometimes be a challenge. In the Bay Area in particular, demand for heritage breed products is very strong, making readily available products harder to find. Fine dining restaurants often have larger budgets to spend on products, but even in Heritage Eats’ “fast-fine” model, customers expect to pay less than they would at a traditional fine dining establishment. While Heritage Eats does not exclusively use breeds found on The Livestock Conservancy’s priority list, they do make efforts to include them as much as possible, and inform customers about which breeds are used.

“Individual small farmers sometimes have difficulty producing enough to meet the needs of restaurants,” says Jason, “but if both chefs and farmers are creative, arrangements can be made.” For instance, if a farmer produces a particular breed but can’t supply enough to

meet the need, perhaps the restaurant can offer weekend specials featuring a limited supply of that farmer’s particular product. Another option would be chefs using limited quantities for special events, such as private dinners or cooking competitions. Additionally, multiple farmers teaming up to jointly meet the needs of a chef could be beneficial. It’s also helpful, Jason observed, if farmers broaden their skillsets to develop an online presence such as a website or social media page, and become familiar with email as a way of communicating with potential buyers.

Finding ways to introduce Heritage breeds to the mainstream audience is a core goal for Heritage Eats. Jason sees a large potential for growth in the heritage breed market over the next several years, as more and more customers are reintroduced to the meats, dairy, and eggs that until somewhat recently were common on everyone’s plates. At the end of our conversation Jason commented, “I believe everyone in the supply chain should be treated fairly – from the farmer who grows the livestock to the chef and restaurant employees who purchase, prepare, and serve it, to the customer who gets to enjoy the final product. Heritage breeds provide the perfect opportunity to meet these goals, and this “fast-fine” concept is one more way to help their populations become more secure.” ❖

The flagship Heritage Eats restaurant is located at 3824 Bel Aire Plaza, Napa, California. The restaurant can be reached at 707-226-3287 (EATS), or online at www.HeritageEats.com.



The Trials and Errors of City People Getting Involved with Santa Cruz Island Sheep

By Sonja Straub

I'm not sure how others get involved with endangered breeds but for us it all happened accidentally and without a game plan. My daughter had grown up and left home, and we wanted to finally move to the country, have some land, and keep some animals. I wanted to get a donkey; I had been involved with some neighbor's donkeys as a kid and remembered it to be so much fun. My husband, working the night shift at that time, researched through all kinds of donkey books for me and that is where we learned about the Poitou donkeys, but that is a story for another time. We also learned about The Livestock Conservancy and its website.

Looking around on The Livestock Conservancy's website, we learned about the plight of all kinds of endangered livestock, not just donkeys. It was there that I for the first time learned about the Santa Cruz Island sheep. As a dog lover I had gotten involved with some shepherding lessons for my German shepherd. So I said "Let's also get some sheep, they will mow the lawn for us," thinking that I could do my own shepherding practice at home. Little did I know at that time how involved I would get with these "free lawn mowers".

I searched online, learned about SVF and emailed Program Director Sarah Bowley, asking about the sheep and if they would be herdable. I had learned by then that not all sheep breeds are good candidates for that. She said her dog was working her sheep at SVF, but that he was very experienced and knew how to be gentle with them as they were a feral breed and thus very light. I think I didn't really want to hear that – otherwise I would have had second thoughts, as my dog wasn't that well trained yet. She didn't say it was impossible, so I guess that was enough for me to keep going with my idea. Sarah has since been a great resource of information. She always gets back to us in no time and



Sonja poses with a Santa Cruz lamb. Photo courtesy of Sonja Straub.

has answered many questions and helped us make connections to the handful of other breeders in the country.

Again my husband, having some time on night shift, found some people in California that wanted to sell their Santa Cruz sheep, as they were moving to Canada. They seemed to be in a hurry so they were even willing to deliver them. I took that as a good omen and a sign that we were meant to move ahead with it.

So, only shortly after we had moved to our new home in the countryside a half hour outside of Portland, Oregon, the people from California rolled up with their trailer and out jumped two rams, five females, and a couple of offspring, one just a few days old. It was October and I remember them wandering around in the leaves under our large maple trees. It all was so picturesque. I was ecstatic.

Then we went into December and suddenly a friend discovered that one of the female's udders was large. Oh, my gosh,

they were going to have babies! This hadn't even occurred to me yet. What had I been thinking? That sheep was named Mary, and naturally she gave birth to our first baby lamb right on Christmas Day. We almost called him Jesus. It was snowy and icy and just real cold. We do have a stable to put them in at night, but it didn't seem to me much warmer in there. I was so worried about the little lamb turning into a lambsicle that I cut up an old fleece and sewed little coats for it and the other two lambs that came shortly after. The coats never really wanted to stay on, but I diligently kept checking on the babies and putting them back on. Well, they all made it through that cold snap, and we swore to never have lambs again at that time of the year. I guess I had just learned that our sheep would breed all year round and weren't limited to seasonal breeding.

It was my shepherding instructor Ian Caldicott from Wolston Farms in Scio, Oregon, that taught us many of the hands-on tricks of how to cut umbilical cords, dock

tails, give shots, handle sheep, cut hooves, tag ears, and deworm them. He has been the most generous source of information over the years. He came once and used his experienced dogs Bear and Joe Kid to start to dog-train the sheep so I could begin using my dog with them. He even banded a ram boy one day for us, although I have to say that left me more traumatized than the ram baby himself.

Spring finally happened and I found though connections a shearer to come and shear our little troop of sheep on their way home from a 600-head shearing job. He was so sweet and didn't blink an eye, when I hovered over his every move and fretted about my sheep's welfare as if they were made out of glass. I didn't know that the rams wouldn't recognize each other after shearing, and was horrified to watch them back up and charge from 50 yards apart. Worried they were going to kill each other, I ran at them screaming loudly and waving

my stick, not even thinking they could hurt me. Today, we have a yearly big event on shearing day where we all share a big meal together after work.

But what to do with the fleeces? I made several wrong starts in trying to develop a market for them. The first year I gave them to the daughter of the owner of a wool processing factory. She had been very excited about the fleeces when she saw them, only to learn month later that their machine had ripped them all apart. They were not able to handle that fine a fiber. I had contacted some local spinners and tried to get them interested in my fleeces, but I didn't understand enough how special they were and couldn't really advertise them the right way. One night, still hoping to find some leads I was sitting up in bed with my laptop, and searching "Santa Cruz wool".

I came across a comment in Deb Robson's blog lamenting that she only had a very small sample of Santa Cruz fiber to work with and wished she had more but couldn't find any. That night I sent her an email and offered some of mine, excited that somebody else was interested in the same thing. I was surprised when next morning I already had an enthusiastic and urgent answer. Apparently she was working on some kind of book and a photo shoot had to be delayed for 10 days. so we had a little window to still make it in time. I rushed our wool to Deb, and she immediately worked on creating some yarn sample to be photographed and ultimately make into her book just in the nick of time. I had no idea how comprehensive and trendsetting her *Fleece and Fiber Sourcebook* was going to be.

It really was from her that I learned how unique the Santa Cruz fiber is, with its amazing crimp which spins into a wonderful fine and elastic yarn. This again was a connection made almost accidentally that made such a difference for us. We since have sold our fleeces to spinners all over the country. Thank you so much, Deb!

I am convinced that we must have something special in the soil or water here because it turns out we produce a lot of males. So what to do with our ram lambs? We knew we couldn't keep them all and had to have them butchered. I have to confess that we found it pretty hard to eat their meat. After all, we treated them like our pets for months and named them; some have become so tame that they eat from our hand and nibble on our clothing – and tis is a so-called "feral" breed.



Legacy Farm's Santa Cruz sheep are critically endangered. Photo by Sonja Straub.

From a Livestock Conservancy article I learned that their meat was sort of special too. In a blind tasting test in 2008 involving 90 food professionals, this breed had won out over all others, both Heritage and commercial breeds. With this article in hand, I market our lamb meat to friends and family. Some of them are already asking us when we are going to butcher again.

I now have a Border Collie named Fin who is irreplaceable when we have to work our sheep. We have two Pyrenees guard dogs to protect them from the bears, coyotes, and cougars we have in our area. We also have some donkeys that help protect our sheep as well. And last, we even have

a little website, www.legacyfarm.info.

Our little scheme of having somebody mow our lawn for free has grown into a much more elaborate production than we had never dreamed of. We not only learned so much from the animals and made friends with them, we also met so many helpful people along the way and have formed lasting friendships with many of them. Today, with 30 animals, we are proud to be one of the breeders of only a very small group. With lambing season underway, we are excited to see this year's babies! ❖



Heritage Breeds Worldwide

Thanks to everyone who participated in this year's International Heritage Breeds Week. More than a dozen organizations around the world joined forces to raise awareness about the need for heritage breed conservation. The Livestock Conservancy reached over 200,000 people on social media and welcomed nearly 75,000 people to its website during the week of observance. Save the date for next year's event **May 21-27, 2017**. More information can be found at www.HeritageBreedsWeek.org.

Training the Next Generation of Farmer-Veterans

The 'From Service to Stewardship' workshop for farmer veterans held in May went very well. Day one began with experienced farmers sharing why Heritage breeds are the right fit for their farms, and with an overview of farm financial planning. Steve Hart (Army, Ret'd) provided helpful philosophy and resources for infrastructure planning, a key component for farmers getting started or expanding their operations. After brief introductions to Heritage cattle, swine, poultry, and sheep, more in-depth discussions of each were provided in the afternoon by experienced breeders.

The event was held at Lakota Ranch in Remington, Virginia. This setting allowed participants to observe and engage with Lakota's grass-fed Red Devon cattle, Hog Island sheep, Tamworth pigs, and various poultry. Pasture management was amply demonstrated on the ranch, and participants had the opportunity to compare small tractors from Yanmar, a walk-behind baler, and hand scything, so that each could match the appropriate technology to the size and style of their own farm. Jeff Adams' demonstration of poultry processing made more than one veteran feel they



Attendees at the From Service to Stewardship workshop learn about sheep husbandry from Conservancy member Richard Larson. Photo by Lance Cheung, USDA.

could really do this themselves. An evening barbecue hosted by the Engh family featured succulent Red Devon beef, and offered a chance for everyone to mingle and get better acquainted.

Networking and sharing continued

on the morning of day two. Farmers and veterans are not discouraged by rain, and, while the outside demonstrations planned for the morning had to be moved indoors, everybody appreciated the chance to continue networking, and pick up a few tips for marketing products from rare breeds. Fencing, haying, and oxen demonstrations rounded out the morning.

In the afternoon, attendees scattered for visits to farms. Hock Newberry Farm exemplifies the small family farm or homestead. They raise heritage pigs, chickens, cattle, dairy goats, and have a large garden. All of these contribute to feeding the family, and products for market provide farm income. Old Gjerpen Farm breeds rare Leicester Longwool sheep, and owner Richard Larson has contributed much to saving and improving this breed. Ayrshire Farm demonstrated pastured pigs and educated visitors about the ins and outs of pasture management, forages, and husbandry for breeding, farrowing, and rearing pigs outdoors.

Many veterans who attended previous workshops came back and shared their experiences, and a new Facebook group has been started for current and former attendees to keep the conversation going. If you have attended a previous From Service to Stewardship workshop and would like to join the group, search for 'Service to Stewardship' on Facebook. ❖



Heritage Swine Represented at World Pork Expo

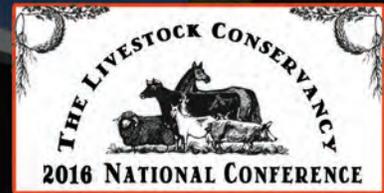
The Livestock Conservancy attended the World Pork Expo in Des Moines, Iowa in June. Over 20,000 pork producers and professionals were in attendance for what is billed as the "world's largest pork-specific trade show." The Conservancy shared a booth with USDA's National Animal Germplasm Program (NAGP) to promote conservation of rare swine and their use in niche production systems. Executive Director Alison Martin and board members Tim Safranski and Steve Kerns represented the Conservancy.

Photo above: Tim Safranski, Livestock Conservancy Board member and Swine Committee Coordinator for the National Animal Germplasm Program, with Alison Martin, Livestock Conservancy Executive Director, at the World Pork Expo.

TOP 10 REASONS TO BE EXCITED ABOUT THIS YEAR'S CONFERENCE

HAMPSHIRE C

1. NETWORKING!
2. Getting hands-on training from Heritage breed experts.
3. Snagging some great items at the silent auction.
4. Exploring ways we can work together to further Heritage breed conservation.
5. Catching up with members and friends from around the country.
6. Checking out all of the wonderful displays during the poster session.
7. Hanging out with the leader of the Rare Breeds Survival Trust.
8. Snapping a selfie with Heritage livestock during a pre-conference clinic.
9. Enjoying incredible meals prepared with Heritage breed products.
10. Being back in the northeast at the site of our very first meeting in 1977!



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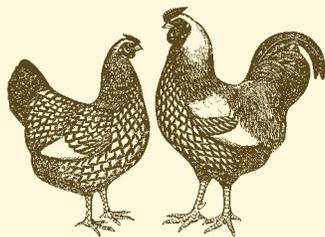
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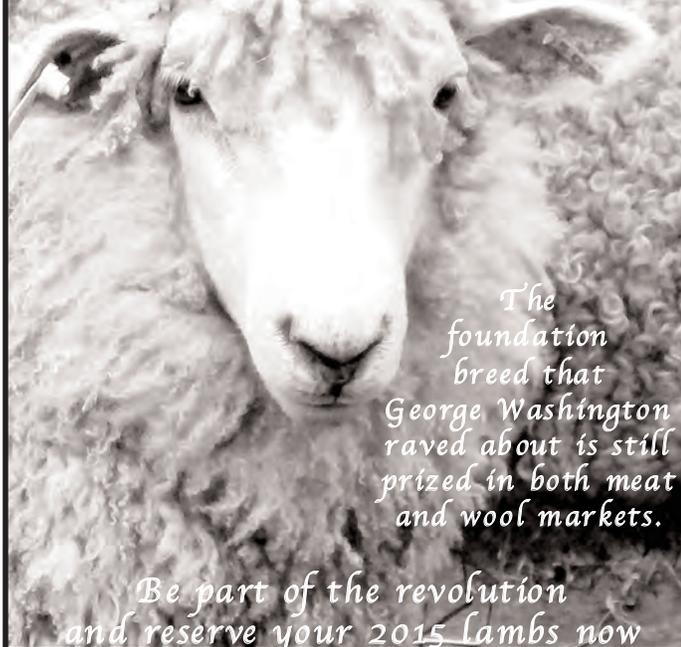
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See the Conservancy website for a more extensive list of events. The Livestock Conservancy encourages event organizers to submit events related to conservation, farming, sustainability, rare breeds, and more to the Conservancy's Calendar. Send your submission to rwalker@livestockconservancy.org or mail to PO Box 477, Pittsboro, NC 27312.

July

July 14-17 – The North East Youth Sheep Show will be held in West Springfield, MA. Visit www.nesheep.org for more information.

★ **July 15-17 – The Seed Savers Exchange Conference and Campout** will be held in Decorah, IA. Activities at Heritage Farm include two dozen workshops and events, a barn dance, vegetable taste trials, and talks by Aaron Keefer, Rowen White, Carol Deppe, and Dr. David Shields. Learn more at www.seedsavers.org/conference.

August

★ **August 3-4 – The Midwest Boar Stud Managers Conference** will be held in Saint Louis, MO. Visit <http://bsmc.missouri.edu/> or contact Tim Safranski at SafranskiT@missouri.edu or 573-884-7994 for more information.

August 17-21 – The Michigan Fiber Festival will be held at the Allegan County Fairgrounds in Allegan, MI. One of the Midwest's largest fiber festivals, it includes animals, vendors, fiber arts, workshops, and more. For more information, visit www.michiganfiberfestival.info, call 269-948-

2497, or email staff@michiganfiberfestival.info.

August 19-20 – The Texas Sheep and Goat Expo, hosted by Texas A&M Agrilife Research and Extension, will be held at the San Angelo Fairgrounds. See <http://agrilife.org/sanangelo/files/2011/10/2016-0504a.pdf> or contact Marvin Ensor at 325-653-4576 or m-ensor@tamu.edu for more information.

September

★ **September 6-8 – The National Heirloom Expo** will be held in Santa Rosa, CA. Dubbed "The World's Pure Food Fair," it is a massive assembly of pure food enthusiasts, home gardeners, farmers, school groups and leaders in the food industry. For more information, visit <http://theheirloomexpo.com>.

September 8-11 – The Wisconsin Sheep & Wool Festival will be held in Jefferson, WI. Visit www.wisconsinssheepandwoolfestival.com for more information.

September 10-11 – The Pennsylvania Endless Mountains Fiber Festival will be held in Harford, PA. Visit www.pafiberfestival.com for more information.

September 17 – The American Brabant Horse Association Annual Field Day will be held at W1725 Faber Ln, Medford, WI. Watch rare draft horses working. Contact Jason and Katrina Julian at 715-748-4606 for more information.

September 17-18 – Fall Harvest Fair will be held at the historic Alexander Schaeffer Farm, Schaefferstown, Lebanon County, PA. Enjoy period artisans, Colonial crafts, cooking, baking, cider-pressing, field and farm life demonstrations, and entertainment. Heritage breeds of livestock and poultry will be on display. For more information, visit www.hsimuseum.org.

[hsimuseum.org](http://www.hsimuseum.org).

September 20-22 – The National Small Farm Conference, hosted by Virginia State University's College of Agriculture, Virginia Cooperative Extension, and USDA, will be held in Virginia Beach, VA. Visit www.vsu.edu/nationalsmallfarmconference for more information.

September 24-25 – The Oregon Flock & Fiber Festival will be held in Canby, OR. The festival includes workshops, demonstrations, livestock shows, seminars, and kids' activities. Visit www.flockandfiberfestival.com for more information.

September 30-Oct 2 – The American Red Poll Association 72nd National Meeting and Sale will be held at Murray state university, Hutson school of agriculture in Murry, KY. For more information, call Dr. Dan Schmiesing at 765-425-4515 or visit www.americanredpolls.com.



2016 Mother Earth News Fairs

★ **West Bend, WI:** Jul. 9-10, 2016

★ **Seven Springs, PA:** Sep. 23-25, 2016

★ **Topeka, KS:** Oct. 22-23, 2016

These family-oriented sustainable lifestyle events feature dozens of practical, hands-on demonstrations and workshops on everything from beekeeping to using solar electricity. Visit www.motherearthnews.com/fair for more information.