



*Conserving rare breeds since 1977*

## 2020 Changes to the Conservation Priority List

By D. P. Sponenberg

During the past year we decided to make several changes to the Conservation Priority List, and with the way 2020 is going we may expect more changes next year! Each breed on The Livestock Conservancy's Conservation Priority List faces unique challenges, and each of them can benefit from the efforts of dedicated breeders.

Changes for this year include an updated name for a cattle breed from Criollo North Central Mexico to Criollo Chihuahua. This reflects the breed name used in scientific literature, allowing people to connect with the breed and find information a bit more easily. Criollo Chihuahua cattle have an especially high proportion of Iberian genetics that came to the Americas centuries ago; they now exist only in the Western Hemisphere.

A handful of horse breeds also changed. The Puerto Rican Paso Fino entered the list as a Threatened breed. This is an old breed of gaited horses, descended from horses brought to the Americas



**Based on further investigation, many rabbit breeds moved to new categories on the Conservation Priority List. The Blanc de Hotot rabbit moved from Threatened to Critical. Barb Semp's Blanc de Hotot senior doe, photo by Jeannette Beranger.**



**The Large Black hog breed is moving to the Critical category after a detailed census of registrations. This photo of a sow and piglets is courtesy of Kay Wolfe.**

by Spanish colonials. It has long held an important place among gaited breeds throughout the Americas. A minor name change puts Rocky Mountain in front of Mountain Pleasure (Rocky Mountain/Mountain Pleasure) on the list to reflect the status of the registries conserving this American breed. Brabant horses are an important heavy draft breed from Belgium and were recently removed from the American Belgian Horse registry. They have now been placed in the Study category, as they are a recently imported breed that is still developing the number of breeding programs that would allow it onto the main list.

The Large Black hog breed moved to the Critical category after a detailed census of registrations. This truly international breed is endangered in all countries.

The Teeswater sheep breed was added to our list in the Critical category. The

breed in the United States includes sheep that are graded up from other longwool breeds as well as a few from imported semen and purebred embryos from the United Kingdom. As is common among longwool sheep breeds, numbers are low everywhere and American breeders contribute to this international breed's survival.

Rabbit breeds have seen greater investigation, leading to a few changes and a more accurate listing. Critical breeds include the Blanc de Hotot, Silver Marten, and Silver. Threatened breeds include the Argent Brun, Checkered Giant, Crème d'Argent, and Standard Chinchilla. Several breeds are in the Watch category: American, American Chinchilla, Giant Chinchilla, Lilac, Rhinelander, and Palomino, which was added to this list. A few breeds increased breeding and saw greater

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# 2020 Heritage Livestock Conference Canceled

What a year 2020 has been so far! Usually, around this time, The Livestock Conservancy announces our annual conference. But due to COVID-19, we are keeping everyone's health and safety in mind and have canceled the Heritage Livestock conference this year.

While disappointed about the conference, we can't wait to share some new virtual content with you. Based on popular demand, a training video for writing grants is in the works. Meanwhile, please enjoy some of our current online content:

**Virtual Chicks in the Classroom** series on YouTube (<https://bit.ly/ChickVideos>). Our newest program guides viewers through the incubation process and embryonic life cycle in a series of 15 short videos. While designed for kids, it is great for adults too.

**Marketing Your Fiber Products** course on Teachable (<https://livestockconservancy.teachable.com>). This course focuses on connecting and creating better communication between the people who produce wool and those who use it, in its multiple varieties. It is taught by Deborah Niemann, Program Coordinator for the

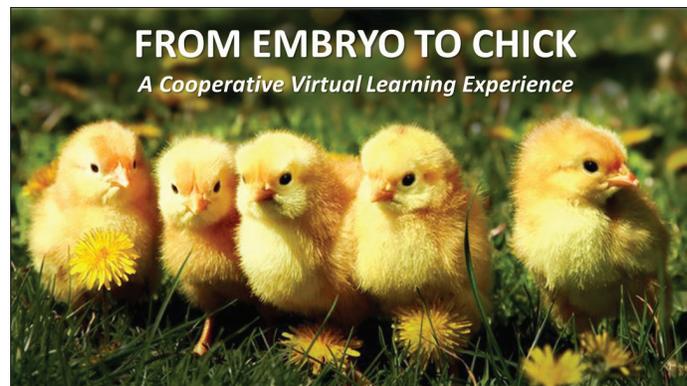
Conservancy's wildly popular Shave 'Em to Save 'Em fiber challenge.

**From Farm to Fiber Folk** course on Teachable (<https://livestockconservancy.teachable.com>). Learn the difference between wool, hair, and kemp and what breed's wools are best for which projects. This course will also help you understand how fleeces grow and how to select a good one.

**Card Grading Cattle** on YouTube (<https://youtu.be/vQjqs8zkHhw>). The objective of card grading is to evaluate individual animals relative to a breed standard and assess their potential as breeding

stock. Card grading, with its evaluation of all individuals within a group of animals, strengthens breeders' understanding of the characteristics and attributes of their breed and, in turn, encourages the protection of genetic diversity within the breed. This is in contrast to competitive judging, which encourages uniformity by rewarding only a single "best" animal within a show class.

Your feedback is always welcome. Please reach out with any suggestions for future talks, training, or workshops. While we can't see you in person this year at the conference, fairs, or festivals, we remain committed to helping members steward heritage breeds. ❖



**Even though the 2020 Heritage Livestock Conference was canceled, we have plenty of online content to browse, including the newest Chicks in the Classroom video series on YouTube. Watch the series at <https://bit.ly/ChickVideos>.**

## The Livestock Conservancy News PO Box 477

Pittsboro, North Carolina 27312 USA  
(919) 542-5704 • Fax (919) 545-0022

[www.LivestockConservancy.org](http://www.LivestockConservancy.org)  
[bsweeney@LivestockConservancy.org](mailto:bsweeney@LivestockConservancy.org)

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

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

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

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

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Jeannette Beranger, Senior Program Manager  
Michele Brane, Donor Information and Research Manager

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Karena Elliott, Development Director  
Cindra Kerscher, Administrative Assistant  
Deborah Niemann, Program Research Associate  
Angelique Thompson, Operations Director  
Brittany Sweeney, Marketing and Communications Manager

### Advisors

D. Phillip Sponenberg, DVM, PhD, Technical Advisor

# The Livestock Conservancy's Response to the COVID-19 Emergency

The Livestock Conservancy exists to protect and preserve more than 150 breeds of rare and endangered livestock. Our most important partners in conservation are the farmers, ranchers, and shepherds who steward these irreplaceable genetic resources.

Today, every American is feeling the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and our farmers are no exception.

Many of our members depend on direct sales to market their heritage breed products and breeding stock. However, some local farmers' markets have closed, access to meat processors is delayed, restaurant sales are down, livestock shows are canceled, and direct interaction with buyers is much more difficult. Farm families who depend on off-farm employment for consistent income or healthcare coverage are also facing job loss or income reduction as our economy tightens due to the pandemic.

**When farms and farmers face a crisis, rare breeds of livestock are in even greater danger of being lost.**

The Livestock Conservancy's dedication to protecting rare livestock and poultry remains unchanged. But, how we support our farmers is changing to meet the current situation.

We began promoting almost 50 different online resources to help members in late March, sharing links on our website for:

- Buying and Selling Local Meat and Products
- Webinars and Online Learning Opportunities
- Emergency Resources, Grants, and Relief Funds
- Species-specific Resources
- COVID-19 and Animals



**Steph Jacobs welcomes a new lamb into the world. Like Steph, many members are feeling the affects of the pandemic. The Emergency Response Fund was created to help those farmers in need.**

## • National, State, and Other Helpful Links

We also pulled out all the stops to launch the Heritage Breed Marketplace ([heritagebreedmarketplace.org](http://heritagebreedmarketplace.org)) in April. The new mobile-friendly site replaces the Conservancy's former classifieds site and allows members to post unlimited, free listings from breeds on the Conservation Priority List.

Sharing topical information, securing genetic resources, and advising breed associations are essential efforts during this time. We are also increasing our cryopreservation work, moving educational training online, and helping our farmers navigate new marketing challenges. These critical programs are launching or continuing with new urgency while we remain available for the phone calls and emails that arrive daily, asking for help.

**We want to ensure farm crises that arise during this time do not become breed crises.**

Our response to the COVID-19 emergency continues to evolve as farmers share more of their front-line needs with us each

day. We are being contacted by many new poultry owners asking for help starting backyard flocks. And, webinars are replacing the in-person training events that normally occur throughout the U.S.

Many heritage breeders are facing difficult decisions to reduce or eliminate their herds and flocks. Some of these herd reductions will occur as a result of careful planning. But we are also preparing to rescue irreplaceable bloodlines and genetic material should that become necessary.

**The Livestock Conservancy's Emergency Response Fund is helping meet these needs.** It began supporting both rare breed farmers and the endangered livestock they steward with emergency grant funds in May. We will provide rescue and relief throughout the COVID-19 pandemic as funds are available.

**Please consider supporting the Emergency Response Fund with a special gift today.** You can give online via our website or mail your check to our Pittsboro, North Carolina headquarters. Help us help them. ❖



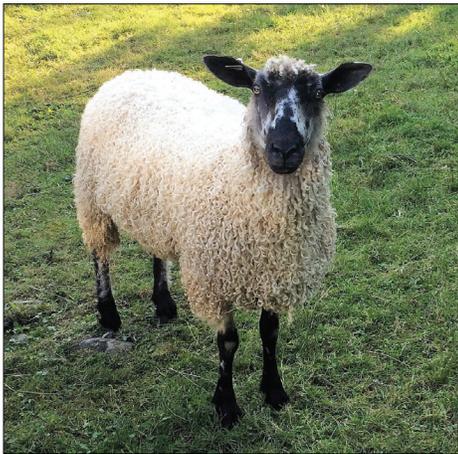
Emergency Response Fund



Give Now

# Meet the New Heritage Breeds on the CPL

The Livestock Conservancy added eight more breeds to the Conservation Priority List, including two horses, one sheep and five rabbits. The ranked list of heritage livestock and poultry breeds is based upon the annual number of registrations in the United States and the breed's estimated global population size. Get to know our new additions:



## Teeswater Sheep

The Teeswater sheep breed was developed in the Teeswater region of England and named for the River Tees. Grazed in the dales of the countryside, these large sheep were used as sires in crosses with smaller hill sheep to produce crossbred lambs for market production. A polled, hardy breed, Teeswaters are useful for both meat and wool production in their own right. The shining, lustrous fleece is appreciated by hand spinners for its staple length and fine, long, curly locks. For meat purposes, the Teeswater is lean, with well-fleshed, square hindquarters.

Teeswater sheep were imported to the United States in the 1800s but lost popularity when other long-wooled breeds were imported. Teeswater semen, and later, embryos and some rams, were again imported to America at the end of the twentieth century and used to develop purebred Teeswaters. There is now reciprocity with the U.K. breed society for the international exchange of genetics. *Photo by Staci Holtby.*

**Breed Associations:** American Teeswater Sheep Association, <https://american-teeswatersheep.com> and Teeswater Sheep Society of North America, [www.teeswatersheep.org](http://www.teeswatersheep.org).



## Puerto Rican Paso Fino Horse

Ancestors of the Puerto Rican Paso Fino horse first arrived on the island of Puerto Rico with Columbus. Juan Ponce de León later introduced horses again. Several Iberian breeds, including Andalusians, Spanish Barbs, and the now-extinct Spanish Jennet contributed to the modern Puerto Rican Paso Fino, which was developed through hundreds of years of breeding and selection. The breed is valued for its four-beat gait in which hooves strike the ground in a quick 1-2-3-4 movement, resulting in the "fine step." This smooth lateral gait produces a comfortable ride. Puerto Rican Paso Finos are versatile, sure-footed, and hardy.

The breed comes in a variety of colors, with and without markings, and ranges in size from 13 to 15 hands. An autosomal recessive genetic trait found only in this breed, known as "Tiger eye," can produce a yellow, amber, or orange colored iris.

Fewer than 500 of these horses are registered in the United States and fewer than 2,500 are found globally. In 1987 the Pure Puerto Rican Paso Fino Federation of America, Inc. was incorporated to

preserve, protect and promote the breed. *Photo by Peg Cornell.*

**Breed Association:** Pure Puerto Rican Paso Fino Federation of American, Inc., <https://pprpfpa.org>.

## Brabant Horse

Brabants are a heavy draft breed from Belgium. They were one of the founding influences of the American Belgian horse and contributed to most western European heavy draft horse breeds. The American Belgian and Brabant underwent fairly complete genetic isolation from one another for nearly a century. Selection by breeders for a different style of horse led to two very distinct breeds from this once common origin.

Brabants are heavy, thick horses used for agricultural work and are the heaviest of all draft breeds. They come in a wide range of colors, including bay, bay roan, chestnut, chestnut roan, and blue roan. This breed was re-imported into the United States beginning in the early 1970s, and has an active breed group. While Brabants were once eligible for registration in the American Belgian herdbook, the association decided to separate the two breeds because of their long isolation from one another and their very distinct types.

The American Brabant Association was formed in 1999 to conserve and promote the breed.

**Breed Association:** American Brabant Association, [AmericanBrabant@gmail.com](mailto:AmericanBrabant@gmail.com).



## Argent Brun Rabbit

The Argent Brun rabbit breed first appeared in the late 1800s in France but disappeared in the early 20th century. From 1939 to 1941, H.D.H. Dowle worked to re-create these beautiful rabbits. Their signature silver-frosted brown coat makes them an eye-catching breed on a show floor. Their temperament is friendly and sweet, if worked with early in their lives.

## Changes to the CPL

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numbers at rabbit shows, leading to their inclusion within the Recovering category, including the Belgian Hare, Beveren, and Silver Fox. Rabbits remain an important "beginner" animal for many livestock breeders.

There were only a few changes to poultry breeds, including the removal of the American Game fowl because of breed census numbers. ❖

Their mothering ability is excellent with an average litter size of eight kits. The breed is also well-sized for meat production, reaching a mature weight of nine lbs.

The American Argente Brun Rabbit Club was formed in 2015 and the breed was accepted into the American Rabbit Breeders Association Standard of Perfection in 2016. *Photo courtesy of ARBA.*

**Breed Association:** American Argente Brun Rabbit Club, [julsennes447@gmail.com](mailto:julsennes447@gmail.com).



### Checkered Giant Rabbit

Large spotted rabbits were known in Europe since the 1800s. Checkered Giant rabbits became popular in Germany and were used in some crossbreeding efforts, including improving the size and type of Flemish Giant rabbits. In 1904, Otto Reinhardt introduced them to Black Flemish Giants, although some say they were Gray Flemish, to produce the Checkered Giant rabbits we know today. Others joined his efforts and the breed eventually became popular in Europe and the United States.

By 1910, the required spotted color pattern was set in a standard for the breed, including the distinctive “butterfly” shaped marking, in which the wings circle the nose and body extending toward the forehead of these rabbits. In a nod to this marking, they became known as the Giant Papillon in Europe. Today, exacting color patterning on the body is paramount breeding and can be a challenge to perfect, including a dorsal line along the top of the back, solid color ears, specific patterns of spots on the sides of the body, eye circles, and cheek spots. This distinctive patterning is all laid out in the American Rabbit Breeders Association’s Standard of Perfection. In 2019, the breed celebrated 100 years in the ARBA standard and was chosen as the fancy’s “The Rabbit Beautiful.” They are recognized in two colors, black

and blue. The Checkered Giant is a large rabbit reaching a weight of 12 lbs or more. Despite their size, they manage to carry their slightly arched bodies higher off the ground than other large breeds. Checkered Giants are considered a “running breed” and need a large cage or enclosure with room to move and be comfortable. *Photo courtesy of ARBA.*

**Breed Association:** American Checkered Giant Rabbit Club, [www.checkeredgiant.org](http://www.checkeredgiant.org).



### Palomino Rabbit

Mark Young, of Coulee Dam, Washington, is considered the father of the Palomino rabbit breed. He began purchasing local meat rabbits with the intent to breed and produce his own breed of meat and exhibition rabbit in 1910. He saved kits of light yellow or buckskin coloration and they were interbred and mixed with blood “of other sources.” By the 1950s, Mark was on track to perfect a beige rabbit breed. During the 1952 American Rabbit Breeders Association convention, Mark put a coffee can next to his rabbits and invited people to make suggestions for a breed name. The winner was “Palomino.” By 1957, ARBA recognized the Palomino breed. The following year, they recognized both color patterns, the Lynx with a pearl-gray color diluted with orange-beige and the popular Golden. The Palomino Rabbit Co-Breeders Club was founded in 1955, even before the breed was accepted into the ARBA standard. The club to this day is very enthusiastic about their breed, promoting their beloved “Pals” in both color varieties.

The Palomino is still an excellent meat rabbit and its attractive color varieties make them a desirable show animal

## Photo Contest

Have great photos of your heritage breed livestock and poultry? We want to see them! Submit your best photos for our July photo contest on social media.

We’re looking for photos in the following categories:

- Breeds on the Conservation Priority List
- Food products from animals on the Conservation Priority List
- Fiber products from animals on the Conservation Priority List
- Kids with animals on the Conservation Priority List
- People in action, working on the farm, carding, spinning, husbandry, etc.
- Farms at sunset/sunrise
- Animals from the Conservation Priority List at work on the farm

For more information, check out our social media channels (The Livestock Conservancy on Facebook, [@LConservancy](https://www.facebook.com/LConservancy) on Twitter or [@LivestockConservancy](https://www.instagram.com/LivestockConservancy) on Instagram) or email Lettie Haver at [lhaver@livestockconservancy.org](mailto:lhaver@livestockconservancy.org)

or eye-catching pet. These hardy rabbits weigh 8-11 lbs and mature quickly. *Photo by Jeannette Beranger.*

**Breed Association:** Palomino Rabbit Co-Breeders Club, [www.palomino rabbits.org](http://www.palomino rabbits.org).



### Silver Marten

The Silver Marten rabbit breed originated in the United States, first appearing in 1921. At the time, Chinchilla rabbit breeders introduced black Tan rabbit genetics into the gene pool to improve

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# THE LIVESTOCK CONSERVANCY™

## Conservation Priority Livestock Breeds 2020

**Critical:** Fewer than 200 annual registrations in the United States and estimated global population less than 2,000. For rabbits, fewer than 50 annual registrations in the United States, estimated global population less than 500, fewer than 150 recorded at rabbit shows in the previous 5 years and 10 or fewer breeders.

**Threatened:** Fewer than 1,000 annual registrations in the United States and estimated global population less than 5,000. For rabbits, fewer than 100 annual registrations in the United States, and estimated global population less than 1,000, fewer than 300 recorded at rabbit shows in the previous 5 years and 11-30 breeders.

**Watch:** Fewer than 2,500 annual registrations in the United States and estimated global population less than 10,000, and breeds that present genetic or numerical concerns or have a limited geographic distribution. For rabbits, fewer than 200 annual registrations in the United States, estimated global population less than 2,000, fewer than 500 recorded at rabbit shows in the previous 5 years and 31-60 breeders.

**Recovering:** Breeds that were once listed in another category and have exceeded Watch category numbers but are still in need of monitoring. For rabbits, over 500 recorded at rabbit shows in the last 5 years and over 61 breeders.

**Study:** Breeds that are of genetic interest but either lack definition or lack genetic or historical documentation.

	<b>Critical</b>	<b>Threatened</b>	<b>Watch</b>	<b>Recovering</b>	<b>Study</b>
<b>Cattle</b>	<b>Canadienne</b> Dutch Belted Kerry Lincoln Red <b>Milking Devon</b> Heritage Shorthorn (Native) <sup>1</sup> <b>Randall or Randall Lineback</b> <b>Texas Longhorn (CTLR)</b> <sup>2</sup>	Ancient White Park <b>Florida Cracker</b> <b>Pineywoods</b> Red Poll	Ayrshire Belted Galloway Galloway Guernsey	Ankole-Watusi Red Devon Dexter	<b>Chirikof Island</b> <b>Criollo Chihuahua</b>
<b>Goats</b>	Arapawa <b>San Clemente Island</b>		<b>Spanish</b>	<b>Myotonic or Tennessee Fainting</b> Oberhasli	Golden Guernsey
<b>Pigs</b>	<b>Choctaw</b> Large Black Meishan <b>Mulefoot</b> <b>Ossabaw Island</b>	Gloucestershire Old Spots <b>Guinea Hog</b> <b>Red Wattle</b>	Tamworth	<b>Hereford</b>	Saddleback
<b>Rabbits</b>	Blanc de Hotot Silver <b>Silver Marten</b>	Argent Brun Checkered Giant Crème d'Argent Standard Chinchilla	<b>American</b> <b>American Chinchilla</b> <b>Giant Chinchilla</b> Lilac Palomino Rhineland	Belgian Hare Beveren <b>Silver Fox</b>	Harlequin
<b>Sheep</b>	<b>Florida Cracker</b> <b>Gulf Coast or Gulf Coast Native</b> <b>Hog Island</b> <b>Santa Cruz</b> Teeswater	Black Welsh Mountain Clun Forest Cotswold Dorset Horn <b>Jacob – American</b> <b>Karakul – American</b> Leicester Longwool Lincoln <b>Navajo-Churro</b> <b>Romeldale / CVM</b>	<b>Barbados Blackbelly</b> Oxford Shropshire <b>St. Croix</b> <b>Tunis</b> Wiltshire Horn	Shetland Southdown	

Breeds unique to North America are printed in bold.

<sup>1</sup> Milking Shorthorns that qualify for the "Native (N)" designation, identifying them as pure, old line, dual purpose Milking Shorthorns, as verified by the AMSS office.

<sup>2</sup> Cattlemen's Texas Longhorn Registry.



# THE LIVESTOCK CONSERVANCY™

## Conservation Priority Equine Breeds 2020

**Critical:** Fewer than 200 annual registrations in the United States and estimated global population less than 2,000.

**Threatened:** Fewer than 1,000 annual registrations in the United States and estimated global population less than 5,000.

**Watch:** Fewer than 2,500 annual registrations in the United States and estimated global population less than 10,000. Also included for all livestock are breeds that present genetic or numerical concerns or have a limited geographic distribution.

**Recovering:** Breeds that were once listed in another category and have exceeded Watch category numbers but are still in need of monitoring.

**Study:** Breeds that are of genetic interest but either lack definition or lack genetic or historical documentation.

	Critical	Threatened	Watch	Recovering	Study
<b>Donkeys</b>	<b>American Mammoth Jackstock</b> Poitou			Miniature Donkey	
<b>Horses</b>	<b>American Cream</b> <b>Banker</b> <sup>1</sup> <b>Canadian</b> Caspian Cleveland Bay Dales Pony Dartmoor Exmoor Fell Pony <b>Florida Cracker</b> <sup>1</sup> <b>Galiceño</b> <sup>1</sup> Hackney Horse Highland Pony <b>Marsh Tacky</b> <sup>1</sup> <b>Morgan – Traditional</b> <sup>2</sup> <b>Newfoundland Pony</b> Suffolk	Akhal-Teke Clydesdale <b>Colonial Spanish</b> <sup>3</sup> <i>Strains:</i> <b>Baca-Chica</b> <b>Choctaw</b> <b>Santa Cruz</b> <b>Sulphur</b> <b>Wilbur-Cruce</b> Gotland Irish Draught Lipizzan <b>Puerto Rican Paso Fino</b> <b>Rocky Mountain/</b> <b>Mountain Pleasure</b> Shire		Belgian	Brabant <b>California Vaquero</b> <sup>1</sup>

**Breeds unique to North America are printed in bold.**

<sup>1</sup> Each of these has an independent, stand-alone registry and conservation program. In addition, each has contributed to the Colonial Spanish breed.

<sup>2</sup> Includes horses whose pedigrees are absent of outcrosses after 1930.

<sup>3</sup> This includes several different registries, each with somewhat different goals (SMR, SSMA, SBBOA, AIHR, HOA). Under this umbrella some strains have independent conservation programs and those are noted individually.

### Conservation Priority List: Endangered Bloodlines

To assign breeds to the Conservation Priority List (CPL), The Livestock Conservancy uses annual registration numbers to assess breed status in USA populations, along with international census figures for those breeds with international populations. In a few breeds the census can be quite high, but rare bloodlines within the breed can remain seriously endangered. Endangered bloodlines occur in many breeds. The Livestock Conservancy only lists those with validation of old, purebred, traditional status in breeds that have otherwise undergone introgression from other breeds. A few breeds, such as Shorthorns, Texas Longhorns, and Morgans carefully validate these traditional lines, and are listed on the CPL. Bloodlines in many other breeds lack independent validation and identification, which limits The Livestock Conservancy's ability to list these separately from the larger introgressed breed.



# THE LIVESTOCK CONSERVANCY™

## Conservation Priority Poultry Breeds 2020

**Critical:** Fewer than 500 breeding birds in the United States, with five or fewer primary breeding flocks (50 birds or more), and estimated global population less than 1,000.

**Threatened:** Fewer than 1,000 breeding birds in the United States, with seven or fewer primary breeding flocks, and estimated global population less than 5,000.

**Watch:** Fewer than 5,000 breeding birds in the United States, with ten or fewer primary breeding flocks, and estimated global population less than 10,000. Also included are breeds that present genetic or numerical concerns or have a limited geographic distribution.

**Recovering:** Breeds that were once listed in another category and have exceeded Watch category numbers but are still in need of monitoring.

**Study:** Breeds that are of genetic interest but either lack definition or lack genetic or historical documentation.

	<b>Critical</b>	<b>Threatened</b>	<b>Watch</b>	<b>Recovering</b>	<b>Study</b>
<b>Chickens</b>	Campine Crevecoeur <b>Holland</b> La Fleche Malay Modern Game Nankin Redcap Spanish Sultan Yokohama	Aseel <b>Cubalaya</b> Faverolles Houdan Icelandic Lakenvelder Old English Game <b>Rhode Island White</b> Russian Orloff Sebright Spitzhauben	Ancona Andalusian <b>Buckeye</b> Buttercup Catalana <b>Chantecler</b> Cornish <b>Delaware</b> <b>Dominique</b> Dorking Hamburg <b>Java</b> <b>Jersey Giant</b> Langshan Minorca <b>New Hampshire</b> Phoenix Polish <b>Rhode Island Red – Non industrial</b> Shamo Sumatra	Australorp Brahma Cochin Leghorn – Non-industrial <b>Plymouth Rock</b> Sussex	Araucana <sup>1</sup> Manx Rumpy or Persian Rumpless Saipan
<b>Ducks</b>	Aylesbury Dutch Hookbill	Buff or Orpington Magpie Saxony Silver Appleyard	<b>Ancona</b> Campbell <b>Cayuga</b> Rouen – Non-industrial Swedish Welsh Harlequin	Runner or Indian Runner	<b>Australian Spotted</b>
<b>Geese</b>	<b>Cotton Patch</b> Roman Shetland Steinbacher	<b>Pilgrim</b> Pomeranian Sebastopol	African <b>American Buff</b> Chinese Toulouse (Dewlap)		Gray
<b>Turkeys</b>	<b>Beltsville Small White</b>	Black <b>Royal Palm</b> <b>White Holland</b>	<b>Bourbon Red</b> <b>Bronze</b> <b>Narragansett</b> <b>Slate</b> <b>All Other Varieties</b> <sup>2</sup>		

<sup>1</sup> Breed identity in poultry breeds is challenging. Many breeders of all kinds (exhibition, production, hatchery) are diligent in breeding standard-bred birds. Other breeders in each category resort to crossbreeding to achieve their goals, and yet promote their birds as standard-bred. The Livestock Conservancy is unable to validate each breeding program, but buyers are encouraged to ask if birds offered for sale are pure-bred and meet breed standards.

<sup>2</sup> Varieties that are distinct but not APA recognized include Chocolate, Jersey Buff, Midget White, Lavender, and a host of other distinct color varieties. Does not include broad-breasted varieties, because they are not endangered.

# New Breeds on the CPL

*Continued from page 5*

the fur of their Chinchillas. The result was an occasional color mutation known as a “sport” would appear in some of the Chinchilla litters. The breeders at the time referred to them as the “strange little black rabbits” because they had a black top color with white under the chin and belly, under the tail, inside the ears, in the nostrils, and in delicately rimmed eye circles. Silver ticking also adorned their amazingly glossy coat in the bottom section of the black area along the bottom of the side of the belly. This color combination was known as “silver marten” in reference to the mink-like wild marten that has a similar color pattern. The silver marten sports, when crossed, bred true and produced offspring that looked like their parents and not like their Chinchilla grandparents. These animals became the foundation of what we know today as the Silver Marten breed, a strikingly beautiful rabbit named for its unique color pattern. Not long after its creation, the Silver Marten Rabbit Club was formed in 1927 by enthusiasts of the rabbits.

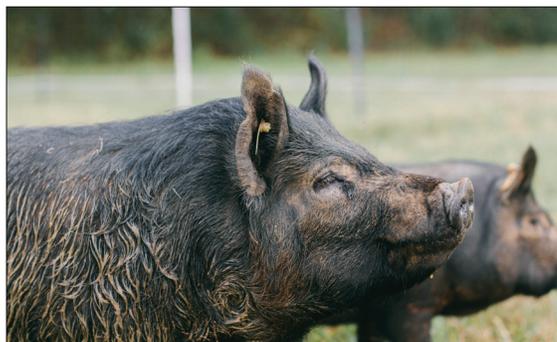
Silver Martens are known to be gentle and reach a maximum weight of 9.5 lbs. The breed has endured, but is rare. They were used to introduce their unique color to other breeds, including the Mini Rex and Netherland Dwarf. Other accepted color varieties of Silver Marten include the Chocolate, Blue, and Sable Silver Marten.

*Photo by Jeannette Beranger.*

**Breed Association:** Silver Marten Rabbit Club, [www.silvermarten.org](http://www.silvermarten.org).

## Guinea Hog Correction

In the Winter 2020 edition of the Livestock Conservancy Newsletter (Volume 37, Issue 1) a photo with the caption “Purebred Guinea Hogs. Photo by Jeannette Beranger”



ran as part of the “Considerations for the Heritage Hog Breeder” article on page 10. The piglets in the photo were not purebred Guinea Hogs. They were Guinea Hog crosses, 75% Kune and 25% American Guinea Hog. This photo, courtesy of Cathy R. Payne, is of purebred Guinea Hogs.

## Standard Chinchilla

France lays claim to the creation of the original Chinchilla rabbit breed known as the Standard Chinchilla. First shown in 1913, they became an instant sensation in Europe with fur that resembled the South American Chinchilla, an entirely different species and not a rabbit at all. The South American Chinchilla was rare but exceedingly famous. Its luxuriously soft pelts fetched enormous amounts of money in the fashion world, for those that could afford them. South American Chinchillas are tiny creatures; it took almost 100 pelts to make a single coat. This became a great motivator for rabbit breeders to produce a larger, similarly colored pelt that could be produced more quickly and sold for less than the smaller South American Chinchilla, and allowed more people to afford garments that looked like the more expensive counterpart.

The Standard Chinchilla arrived in America in 1919. Shortly after its arrival in the United States, a larger American Chinchilla rabbit breed was created as a more meat-type rabbit, reaching a weight of up to 12 lbs. A Giant Chinchilla breed was created not long after the American Chinchilla and reaches a massive weight of up to 16 lbs. The Standard Chinchilla is the smallest of the three Chinchilla breeds and reaches a maximum weight of about 7.5 lbs.

As the demand for fur coats diminished in the later part of the 20th century so did the numbers for Chinchilla rabbits. All three breeds of Chinchilla rabbits are now considered endangered.

**Breed Association:** American Standard Chinchilla Rabbit Breeders Association, [www.ascrba.net](http://www.ascrba.net). ❖

## Remembering Anne Bass

Anne Hendricks Bass passed away on April 1, 2020 at her home in New York following a long battle with ovarian cancer. She was 78.

“Anne was an important breeder and advocate for Randall Cattle, having developed and supported a herd that is essential to the future of the breed,” said D. Phil Sponenberg, DVM, Ph.D. and Technical Advisor to The Livestock Conservancy. “She was tireless in her respect for a wide range of breeders and for her efforts to pull them all together to work for a secure future for the breed. Her appreciation of the cattle was deep and she shared it freely with others.”

Bass was the owner of a large and genetically important herd of Randall cattle, which she kept at her sprawling, country estate in northwest Connecticut known as Rock Cobble Farm. She acquired her herd from Cynthia Creech, moving the cattle from Virginia to South Kent, Connecticut, where they are thriving in the cooler temperatures.

Her generous philanthropic support included The Livestock Conservancy, the New York Public Library, the Museum of Modern Art, the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, the New York Botanical Garden, the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.



**Anne Bass was passionate about Randall cattle and kept a herd at her country estate in northwest Connecticut.**

# Being Prepared for Disasters

By Julie Atwood

The advent of COVID-19 has created awareness of the importance of planning in ways that bad weather never could. Preparing for a potential disaster during a pandemic has added layers to our planning and the need for serious self-assessment. Identifying safe locations and reliable transportation to evacuate livestock and family members has never been more important, to avoid seeking refuge at crowded emergency shelters.

Planning for disasters is something many ranchers and livestock owners put on their “to-do” list, but never quite get done. We’re an independent bunch, with a centuries-old culture of self-sufficiency. However, modern times have radically changed the social fabric of our communities (and families), resulting in many livestock owners with perilously few backup resources. Most small agriculture business owners feel they simply “don’t have time” to develop a plan, and “can’t afford” to invest in resilient infrastructure. Most run their livestock programs with little or no staff, and many live alone on rural properties.

Summer is an intensely busy time for farmers and ranchers. It’s also the start of months of possible severe weather, so for many of us, it’s time to step up our readiness.

The goals of good disaster planning should always be to keep people, pets and “hobby” or backyard livestock, and all livestock herds out of shelters and safe on the farm, and to preserve business sustainability. COVID-19, and higher incidence of infectious equine and livestock diseases, have made this more imperative than ever.

There are lots of great Disaster Plan-

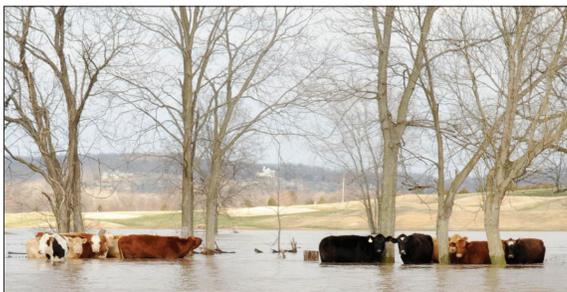


Photo South Dakota State University Extension



ning articles and resources for farmers and ranchers. They provide good checklists specific to a region or species. Yet, what is missing in just about every article is what we’ve found through experience: one plan is never enough.

## Assessing Your Risks: Worst-Case Scenarios

To be truly ready for almost anything, animal owners first need to make three lists:

List 1: Everything that might happen, and everything that could go wrong. *From my own personal experience, here’s an example: Firestorm, no warning, many trees down, every road on the ranch is blocked. All the tractors and emergency tools are safely stored – in a place we can’t get to.*

List 2: The potential ramifications. *Example: We needed a tractor and chainsaws to clear roads to get vehicles and water wagon to the ranch evacuation area, where the animals (and equipment) were safe, but not safely accessible other than by foot.*

List 3: The “fixes.” What will you need to be safe and self-reliant in each scenario? *Example: We now have “safety sheds” and equipment staging areas in three strategic locations on our small ranch.*

Remember the “Rule of Multiples.” Make sure you have more than one of everything, including:

- Plans for evacuating AND for sheltering in place. Plan A is not enough.
- Go-bags, tools and equipment, emergency supply crates, communication devices.
- Evacuation destinations and, whenever possible, evacuation routes.
- Emergency contacts for every need.
- Resources for animal transport and care

Disaster planning often feels overwhelming, but, like any big task, it’s doable when you break it down into manageable chunks.

There’s no “one size fits all” plan, but there are key elements that are universal. Review these essentials, prioritize them for

**Graphic from the Texas Animal Health Commission, [www.tahc.texas.gov/emergency](http://www.tahc.texas.gov/emergency)**

your own situation and needs, and dive in. To help, we’ve compiled a library of resources, templates and fillable forms, available to Livestock Conservancy members at [www.halterproject.org/make-a-plan](http://www.halterproject.org/make-a-plan).

Having a plan and knowing how to implement it can truly be life-saving.

And, while many people will take risks for themselves, and even their business, preparing for the safety of their animals provides the motivation to make plans for their welfare. The result will benefit you, and your business, too.

## 10 Agriculture Disaster Planning Essentials

**1. Make or update your Disaster Action Plan (DAP).** Your local Cooperative Extension Service, State Department of Agriculture, and the USDA are great resources. HALTER Project has many resources on its website ([halterproject.org](http://halterproject.org)), including sections for equine and livestock owners. Your DAP is your most important tool. It’s also the “go-to” resource for people caring for your animals. Your DAP, which can be a binder or portable file, should include your plans and resources for everything needed to keep yourself and your animals safe, and the info you will need in the aftermath of a disaster. You need three copies or files: one stays with you; one stays with a person who’s a reliable emergency contact, and who has authority to act on your behalf, and one resides in a safe, accessible place on the farm. Your DAP should include site maps and infrastructure details for everything on your property, all emergency contacts, veterinary information, insurance documents, animal/herd identification and critical breeding and health documents, and Advance Medical Directives for yourself and your animals.

**2. List your Human Resources.** Decide who’s in charge of each urgent task. Develop or update your emergency network contacts, local resources, and out-of-state

contacts. Have multiple contacts and resources for every need.

**3. Sign up for all local and regional alerts.** Make sure everyone caring for your home and animals in your absence is signed up for the appropriate alerts for your area. Make sure “farm-sitters” and caregivers are familiar with your DAP and evacuation routes.

**4. Increase your communications capacity.** Learn new social media skills and follow your local emergency services. Get NOAA radios with a “SAME” alert feature. Invest in satellite phones, family radios, GPS, or other devices that are not cell tower or internet-dependent, and learn to use them. Include backup power and cables in all your go-bags and safety equipment “caches.”

**5. Conduct safety inspections for barn, farm, home, and vehicles.** You can find a checklist of resources for each of the items below on the Halter Project website at [www.halterproject.org/make-a-plan](http://www.halterproject.org/make-a-plan).

- Barn and property safety checklist
- Vehicle safety checklists
- Fire, flood, earthquake and storm safety checklists
- Generator and house fire safety
- Food safety

**6. Refresh your ready-kits, supply caches, microchip registrations, etc.** Refresh food and potable water supplies, update prescriptions, rotate batteries.

**7. Take first-aid and CPR courses** (and invite neighbors!). Get an Automated Electronic Defibrillator (AED) and training to use it. Make sure medical supplies are refreshed, in multiple locations, and are clearly identified and accessible. The American Red Cross website ([redcross.org](http://redcross.org)) is the best source for kit checklists, and training information if no resources are available locally.

**8. Prepare advance care directives for your animals and yourself.**

**9. Update your business recovery plan.** This should include:

- Backup of EVERYTHING, preferably in hard copy AND digital files, stored safely in multiple locations.
- Current risk and infrastructure assessments for water, power, waste management, food or product storage capacity, payroll, and current home and business property inventories. Make quick but



Photo courtesy of Flickr.

complete videos, if nothing else.

- Plans to facilitate the biosecurity of your herd genetics. This is a critical component of disaster planning for breeders. Many veterinary schools offer good species- and product-specific resources.
- Your business and personal insurance and finances. Are you adequately covered for most potential scenarios? Can your business and family survive and recover without coverage for certain items or incidents? Is your lending source secure? Can you access credit and cash? Can you provide for your workers?

The USDA, many university agriculture programs, and some insurers offer excellent checklists for specific regions, species, and industries.

#### 10. Practice ALL your plans!

- Animal Evacuation Drills: Work with animals so they can be loaded for transport quickly, by strangers, in a variety of rigs. How long will it take? Are your “Shelter-in-Place” areas and evacuation destinations ready for breeding stock, pregnant females, mothers with babies? Who goes? Who stays?
- Practice evacuation with people who might need help, like elders, little kids, partners recovering from knee surgery. How long will it take?
- Sheltering in Place: Part of every DAP, your SIP drills should include managing vital infrastructure backup for power, water, animal feed, waste management, product storage, road access, etc. Who does what? Where are the instructions? Who’s the backup? Make sure someone is cross-trained for every essential task so you’re not dependent upon just one person.

#### Final Thoughts

First and foremost: BREATHE!  
Having plans provides tremendous peace of mind. Thinking about your plans and taking action to facilitate them re-

duces stress and acts like a mental preparedness drill. Disaster planning starts with an honest look at your capacity to stay safe, care for your family and your animals, and rebound.

Knowing your neighbors, and sharing resources, have long been mainstays of rural life and can be lifesavers. But as rural demographics

shift, so do our needs to develop new resources who can help. City-dwellers retiring to country life might be great technology and communication resources, while their new farm neighbors possess critical, traditional survival know-how and tools.

As custodians of genetic diversity, it’s a good time to look around your farm and beyond your fence line, and do everything you can to create a stronger safety net, one that ensures the future you want. ❖

*Julie Atwood lives in Glen Ellen, CA, and is the founder and director of The HALTER Project. She is a disaster preparedness advocate and educator, a volunteer with five regional Animal Disaster Response Teams, and a certified Large Animal Rescue Technician. She is a recipient of 2 FEMA ICP Awards for Individual and Community Preparedness Action.*

## Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus

In March of 2020 the reportable disease in rabbits, Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease (RHD), mutated and began to infect the predominant wild rabbit populations in the continental United States – jack rabbits and American cottontails. Until March of 2020, it was thought that RHD would predominantly infect only domestic rabbits that were descended from European wild rabbits, *Oryctolagus cuniculus*.

While the infections originated in New Mexico, the virus is steadily spreading across the southwestern United States and it is only a matter of time before this virus becomes endemic in the United States. Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease is fatal in rabbits, but does not impact human health.

For up-to-date information, including factsheets, maps and disinfecting recommendations, visit the American Rabbit Breeders Association website at [arba.net/announcements](http://arba.net/announcements).

# 2020 Heritage Livestock Microgrants Now Open

*The Livestock Conservancy is now accepting applications for the Heritage Livestock Microgrant program! Submit your microgrant for one of the following two categories before August 16, 2020.*

**National Microgrants:** This U.S.-based program provides funding for residents and organizations of the U.S. working with livestock and poultry breeds listed on the Conservation Priority List. Support will be provided through this competitive program for a variety of farm-related operations, including, but not limited to, livestock, poultry, processing, milk, meat and egg production and sales, agri-tourism, wool milling, promotions and marketing. Awards typically range from \$500 - \$2,000, at the discretion of The Livestock Conservancy.

**Youth Microgrants:** This U.S.-based program provides funding for youth projects for individuals 8-18 years of age who are actively working with breeds listed on the Conservation Priority List. Support will be provided through this competitive program for a variety of farm-related operations, including, but not limited to, livestock, poultry, processing, milk, meat and egg production and sales, agri-tourism, wool milling, promotions and marketing. Awards typically range from \$500 - \$2,000, at the discretion of The Livestock Conservancy.

*An additional category of Microgrant, new this year, will address emergency needs that may not be covered by the National and Youth grants. There is currently no deadline for applications. Grants will be made available as funding allows.*

**Emergency Response Fund:** Through the generous contributions of grantors and private individuals, we have secured funding for emergency response assistance, on a case by case basis, to rare breed stewards and organizations. Occasionally The Livestock Conservancy is alerted to situations where genetically important animals (individuals or groups) are in danger of being lost to the breed due to environmental



catastrophe, global crisis, or owner death or disability. In some of these situations it is appropriate for The Livestock Conservancy to provide assistance to assure that they are not lost to the breed. These funds are for emergencies only and it will be up to the discretion of The Livestock Conservancy to determine if the project meets our conservation mission. Once an application is received, an evaluation of the genetic importance of the animal or group will be made through pedigree research or historical records, to be accomplished by The Livestock Conservancy staff or experts it designates. This will help determine whether rescue is necessary or whether the loss of the animals to the breed is not a threat to the genetic integrity of the breed. Project focus must be with breeds listed on the Conservation Priority List. Funds may be used for purchase of animals, transportation, short term housing, and in some cases short term feed, veterinary care, and infrastructure. Awards will typically be in the range of \$500 - \$1,000 per application and at the discretion of The Livestock Conservancy.

## Applying for a Grant

For full consideration, microgrant applicants must:

- Work with livestock, poultry, or products from animals on The Livestock Conservancy's Conservation Priority List of heritage breeds, which can be viewed online at [livestockconservancy.org](http://livestockconservancy.org) or in this newsletter.
- Complete the online application, including a detailed plan for the use of the grant funds, a clear timeline for achieving proposed goals, a summary of how the project will impact both the breed and other producers, and a strategy for how you will evaluate success.

- Include two letters of recommendation from a professional relationship or educator. If the applicant is under 18, a letter of support from a parent or guardian is also required. These can be attached within the online application as a PDF, MS Word, or JPEG file. Letters may not be requested of or provided by current staff or board members of The Livestock Conservancy.

Microgrant recipients are required to submit a written report on the use and impact of the microgrant funds within one year of accepting the award.

Special consideration will be given to farmers who are active members of their breed association, as well as those farmers who will represent The Livestock Conservancy at local events by displaying heritage animals during the year following receipt of the microgrant.

Qualified applicants will be considered without regard to age, race, color, religion, sex, pregnancy, gender identity, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, or veteran status.

**For more information or to apply online, visit <http://bit.ly/Micro-Grant>.**

Microgrant applicants will need to register for an account within the microgrants system. Note that this is NOT connected to a Livestock Conservancy membership account. This is a new account just for submitting microgrant applications.

A paper copy of the application for those without online access may be requested at:

The Livestock Conservancy  
Attn: Microgrants  
P.O. Box 477  
Pittsboro, NC 27312

Paper applications should be submitted to the mailing address above. ❖

Please contact [info@livestockconservancy.org](mailto:info@livestockconservancy.org) or (919) 542-5704 with questions.

# True Shropshire Sheep Are Holding Their Ground

by John Wilkes – A Shropshire Lad

Pittsboro, North Carolina may not be on the tourist map for a new resident immigrant from the United Kingdom, though on February 15, 2013 I purchased a car from the Pittsboro dealership and happened to stop along Hillsboro Street before heading back to Raleigh.

A window sign caught my eye – “The Livestock Conservancy.” Having been a sheep and cattle farmer in the county of Shropshire, England, I had to walk in. This was the start of my relationship with the knowledgeable, enthusiastic, and gracious Livestock Conservancy team.

As I learned from staff at The Livestock Conservancy, several U.S. heritage breeds of livestock with U.K. origin are on its Conservation Priority List as well as on the Watchlist of the Rare Breeds Survival Trust in the U.K.

Two sheep breeds on The Livestock Conservancy’s Conservation Priority List – Shropshire and Clun Forest – have roots deep in the hills of South Shropshire near my farm (1970 through 2001). These breeds are especially dear to me because they originate in my home county.

Shropshire sheep were removed from the Rare Breeds Survival Trust Watchlist in 2013. Fewer than 500 registered animals in the 1970s grew to more than 3,000 by 2012. However, it is a different story in the United States. True Shropshire sheep of U.K. type are under pressure.

“Registries to the American Shropshire Registry Association put the breed under The Livestock Conservancy’s ‘Watch’ category. The population of true pedigree and breed standard sheep should be considered critical,” said Cody Hiemke of Mapleton Mynd Shropshires.

The number of production-type Shropshire sheep most closely resembling their British counterparts is just a small portion of the breed in the United States, where larger sheep have been bred for world of show lambs. In some cases, outside genetics have contributed to developing the traits that work best in the show ring.

Aficionados of true Shropshire sheep, like Dr. Fred Groverman of Groverman Shropshires in Petaluma, California, long-term associate, Cody Hiemke of Mapleton Mynd Shropshires in Stoughton, Wisconsin, and Ryan Kerr of Kerr Shropshires



**Dr. Fred Groverman moves Shropshire sheep on his quad in California. Photo courtesy of Cody Hiemke.**

in Shiocton, Wisconsin, advocate support for the survival of true-type (production) Shropshire sheep.

Dr. Fred Groverman is resolute to maintain his “true” Shropshire sheep. These sheep have been in his family since 1934. His father, Bernard Groverman, first experienced the effect of the show ring when he founded the Groverman flock with the purchase of six Shropshire sheep from Petaluma High School students in 1934. The initial flock purchased had a full wool-look around the eyes of as a result of show ring fashion back in the day. On the ranch, however, subsequent problems occurred from foxtail grass seeds becoming trapped in the facial wool and embedding in sheep eyes. Groverman began selecting against facial wool.

In 1946, Bernard Groverman sought to remedy the problem by acquiring a Shropshire ram with a clean, open face. Though small in stature, this sire was used to breed his original sheep to produce a flock of 85 mostly clean-faced sheep by 1950.

Bernard Groverman was determined to acquire from the U.K. a ram with genetics to improve his flock and keep wool off sheep faces. He wanted to eradicate the problem in the U.S. by use of pure Shropshire genetics, not through crossbreeding, and relied upon a well-known California Suffolk sheep breeder named Howard Vaughn to find the perfect candidate on a buying trip to the U.K.

The ram lamb Vaughn procured was called “California New Type 2” and he be-

came a game changer. His genes are found in many pure Shropshire-type U.S. sheep today. In his first season in 1951, the ram lamb covered 86 ewes – all lambed.

In October 1951, Bernard Groverman died unexpectedly, so he never saw the progeny of California New Type 2. His son Fred stepped in and the extraordinary legacy of California Type 2 genes continues in the Groverman flock. Although Shropshire sheep produced with California New Type 2 were deemed unacceptable in judges’ eyes on the show circuit, Fred knew he was on the right track and remained committed to his chosen path. By early 2000s, two dedicated “true” sheep breeders came together – Fred Groverman and Cody Hiemke. Both determined to preserve what is left of true production-type Shropshire sheep. Cody said their shared goal, “traditional genetics with a modern purpose,” is vital to ensure a viable future for the Shropshire breed as a sire of prime American lamb.

Technology is critical. The American Sheep Industry Association (ASI) has a program called the National Sheep Improvement Program (NSIP). It uses the Estimated Breed Values (EBV) to accelerate genetic improvement by determining the best-performing animals. The Groverman flock meticulously recorded performance data for every animal since 1934, and selected sheep for meat production. Joining the NSIP program in 2009 seemed an obvious move.

*continued on page 20*

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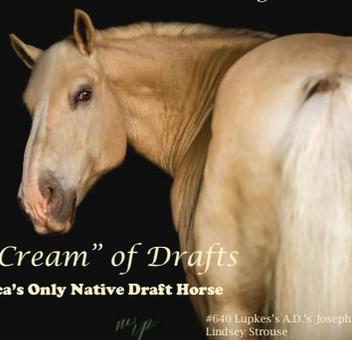
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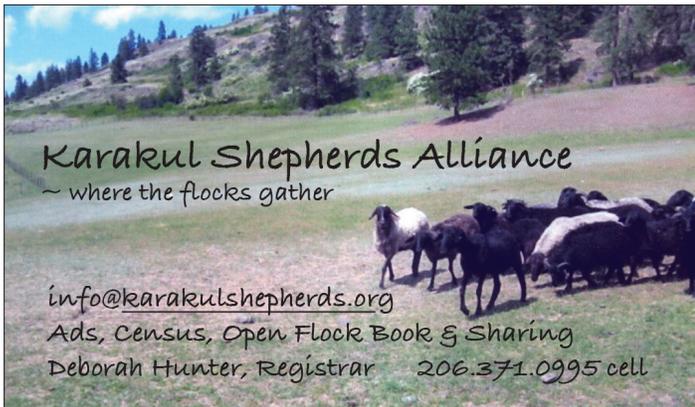
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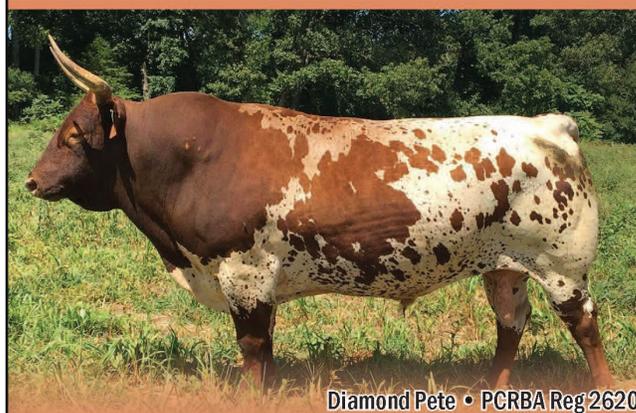


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## Continuing the Legacy of the Oldest Shropshire Flock in the World



Worldwide, Shrops were the most common pure breed of sheep the turn of two centuries ago because of their adaptability, and quality lamb, mutton, & wool. Left: Fred & Elsa Goverman, circa 1937.

Dismayed with the American wool-blind showing fad, Bernard Goverman imported an original-type UK ram to increase size & open faces. Right: Fred with two imported "California New Type 2" sons as CNT2 looks on, circa 1952.



Forty-eight years later (2010), Fred exported straws back to the UK. 5429 (at left with Fred) has progeny in the UK that remain at the top of Signet lists for terminal and maternal indexes.

The Goverman flock is not *just* the source bloodlines for the only purebred Shropshire left in the U.S., it's also backed by generations of growth & carcass data. The Mapleton Mynd & Kerr flocks are working to continue Fred's 80+ year legacy. We are looking for more partners. If you are keen on production data and would like to start a 15+ ewe flock, let us know.

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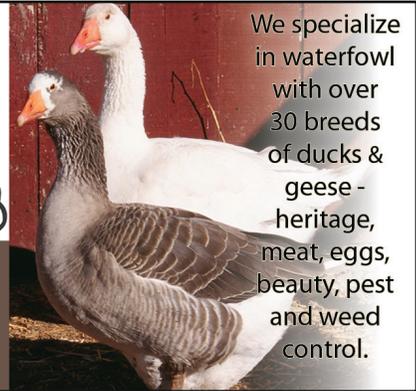
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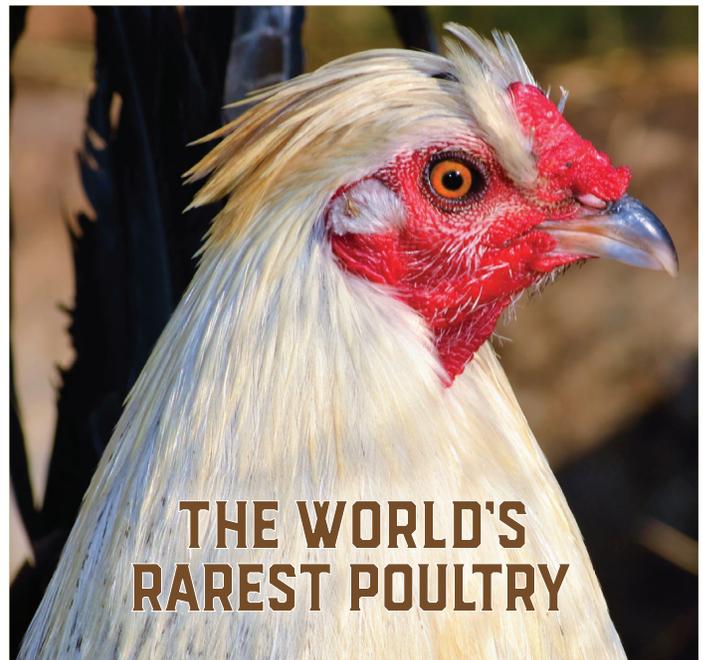


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## CALENDAR

Many events are being modified, rescheduled, moved online, or canceled due to COVID-19. Check our events page and with event organizers for the latest updates before making plans to attend any event.

## True Shropshire Sheep

*Continued from page 13*

Cody Hiemke, a lamb buyer for Niman Ranch meat company, brought his knowledge and experience from the commercial industry to boost true Shropshire sheep through production of top-quality commercial lamb sires.

Hiemke operates Mapleton Mynd Shropshires, which uses technology aligned with NSIP to keep improved production at the forefront. Use of NSIP Genetic Trends program allows “for more accuracy when selecting for important traits to make better sheep,” Hiemke said.

In 2013, taking a more global view of Shropshire sheep, Hiemke engaged with Shropshire breeders from several countries to submit samples of DNA for a genomic profiling project. The purpose of this program is to genetically evaluate genetic diversity within the breed. Shropshire sheep breeders now have plans to widen the scope to compare other sheep breeds.

Over many years, Groverman, Mapleton Mynd, and Kerr Shropshire flocks have



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coordinated to create 15- to 20-ewe starter flocks for prospective U.S. shepherds who are keen on the Shropshire breed. Their foresight augurs well for the future. For example, Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture in New York, founded by famous Chef Dan Barber, raises sheep alongside his Blue Hills Michelin star restaurant. Shropshire lamb from his flock is now featured on the menu.

About 210 lambs are born each year from Mapleton Mynd, Groverman Shropshires, and Kerr Shropshires. “If you add in other ‘true’ U.S. Shropshire breeders, they now make up around 6% of registered Shropshires in the U.S.,” Hiemke said.

Going forward, a recent importation

of semen from established Shropshire flocks in New Zealand and the possibility of importing semen or embryos from the U.K. will enhance the effort to breed and sustain “true” Shropshire sheep – a magnificent sheep legacy. ❖

*Author’s note: As a two-term board member of The Livestock Conservancy, I am proud of its accomplishments and as I step away from service in late 2020, I am confident the path forward*

*will be conscientious, well guided and productive to its mission to protect and ensure the survival of heritage animal breeds.*

*John Wilkes consults and writes about commercial U.S. livestock production. His column in U.K. Farmers Guardian, View from the Hill, gives the British agricultural industry insight into U.S. trade and farming issues. He also enjoys a small role with the U.K.’s Rare Breeds Survival Trust as their North America Ambassador. He feels that the genuine and warm spirit of cooperation between The Livestock Conservancy and RBST holds benefit and value for both organizations.*