



2020 Microgrant recipients at Nash Farm in Texas used their funding to preserve heritage breeds and knowledge for future generations (like Theodore, pictured with a Gulf Coast Native lamb) by restoring a corral for their sheep and increasing their educational outreach about the endangered breed. Photo courtesy of Cody Jolliff.

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THE LIVESTOCK CONSERVANCY™

Conserving rare breeds since 1977
Winter 2022 | Volume 39, Issue 1

THE FINISHING TOUCH FOR CHICKENS - PART TWO

By Jeannette Beranger

This article is the second in a series dedicated to the art of finishing heritage breeds for the table. Read the first installment in the Autumn 2021 edition.

As an animal ages, its flavor profile can change dramatically, bringing it to new heights for your inner foodie. At the risk of dating myself, I remember the old adage, "There is no wine before it's time." I firmly believe the same holds true for meat animals. The tasteless offerings from the average supermarket simply don't compare to animals that grow more slowly, especially those raised in a natural environment with opportunity to eat bugs or natural forages. Older animals can be a challenge for inexperienced cooks who relegate these birds simply to the stew or stock pot.

FAT EQUALS FLAVOR

I mentioned capon (castrated males) in the previous installment, but felt I also needed to mention poullarde or fatted "hens." A poullarde is usually a chicken over 4 months old fed a high fat diet so they can put on weight. This usually keeps the birds from coming into lay, so eggs are not part of the plan with these chickens. In the early twentieth century, there was great demand for fattened hens that could provide up to three times the amount of meat as a younger bird. The point was not to make them overly fat, but pleasantly plump with the extra fat making them tender and more flavorful than younger birds.

ROOSTERS AND SPENT HENS

Every flock owner who has a breeding operation has to make the decision to keep older birds as pets or move them on

when their role in the breeding flock has ended. We have only one pet Leghorn hen and she's now 14 years old. Beware! Pet chickens can live a long time if they have a cushy life!

Older birds present an opportunity to push flavor to the next level for someone who takes the time to prepare them properly. Roosters and spent hens are often overlooked as a culinary delight because they have the reputation for being tough and not worth the bother. Nothing could be further from the truth. If they are nice and plump, there are a number of cooking options that make them shine as a table bird.

It can be difficult to put weight on and finish birds that were in an active breeding flock. When you start to think about processing them for the table, consider separating males from females so that breeding is not as much on

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The key to cooking older birds is low and slow. For a simple coq au vin recipe, prep your hen and veggies before placing the hen in the pot. Season your bird with salt and pepper and chop celery, onions, carrots, leeks, etc. for a flavorful stock. Photo by Jeannette Beranger.

their mind, and the females can have a break. If you don't have the space to separate the sexes, fatten and process them during their breeding down time in late fall or early winter, after they finish molting. We feed our birds all kinds of goodies during the last month, including appropriate table scraps and whey (when we have it), mixed in their food. We also broadcast cracked corn in their yard every day as an extra special treat to make sure they fatten.

Sometimes we have individuals that are too old and can't gain weight. These are the birds we typically use for making stock. We process these birds and part them out, roast the meat and bones in the oven until they are golden brown, then move them to a large stock pot where they are simmered in water until the stock reaches the desired finishing point. We like a very dense stock which may take four hours or more. Be sure to stir the stock a couple of times an hour so nothing becomes overly cooked at the bottom of the pot.

COOKING THE OLD BIRD

The key for cooking older birds is slow and low. It takes time for the meat to become tender. One of the most famous dishes created for older roosters is the iconic coq au vin or rooster with wine. The wine not only adds flavor, it adds

acidity to help break down the meat proteins and tenderize the bird. Having a true coq au vin is unforgettable and its preparation can be as complicated or simple as you want to make it. The basis for the dish is a fairly simple stew utilizing a slow cooked rooster with stock, red wine, carrots, mushrooms, and spices. It's a great crock pot recipe, but I prefer using a good old-fashioned cast-iron Dutch oven.

If you want something simpler or more to your personal tastes for dinner, season the bird as desired and brown the chicken on all sides on the stove top. Remove and put it into a pot filled with a good stock that reaches about halfway up the bird. Add whatever veggies you like, such as carrots, onion, celery, leeks, mushrooms, new potatoes, etc. Cover and bake at 275 degrees Fahrenheit for 3 ½ hours. I like to flip the bird over halfway through cooking. Fancy or not, it's a great way to cook an old bird. I also need to mention the aroma of these dishes is not to be understated. It's simply heaven in the kitchen.

For something different, we sometimes debone the meat from the cooked bird and make pulled barbecue with our favorite sauces. By the time the bird comes out of the oven, the meat is falling off the bone and perfect for this use.

I NEVER MET A PÂTÉ I DIDN'T LIKE

The French version of what is basically meatloaf is called pâté de compagne or country pâté. Every butcher and farm family in France has their own version of this dish. It is made with many different products, including ground meat and livers from older chickens mixed with pork fat or goose fat, spices, onions, milk, and breadcrumbs to bind it together. Place the mixture in a covered dish and bake in the oven at a low temperature. Once cooked, chill the pâté in the refrigerator before serving. In some versions of the recipe, you can cook the ingredients on a stove top before placing into a covered dish to chill. Either way, the final product is spread on a crusty baguette as an appetizer or eaten as a very rich sandwich.

THE FORGOTTEN FAT

If there's one thing to be said about older birds, it's that they carry more than their share of extra fat. Rendered chicken (or goose) fat flavored with onions is a wonderful product known as schmaltz. *The Book of Schmaltz* author Michael Rhulman quotes his neighbor on the importance of it in cultural cuisine, "Schmaltz is like a thread that runs through a great tapestry."

Recently it's become trendy to cook with poultry fat, but more so with duck

and goose fat, than chicken fat. An example is the recent upsurge in fries cooked in duck fat, a dish now found in numerous restaurants across the country. Outside of traditional dishes, chicken fat is mostly overlooked by the mainstream cook. But like its poultry counterparts, chicken fat can be a useful and flavorful cooking product. Older birds, especially old hens, provide ample amounts of fat to make a nice batch of schmaltz.

At my house, we like to render fat in a crock pot so it can take its time. Set the crock pot on low and add in the trimmed fat and skin along with some chopped onions. Let the mixture cook until the skin and onions start to brown. Separate the liquid from the leftover skin and onions. What's left is your schmaltz.

Schmaltz freezes well, so there's no need to use right away. It can be used in many dishes the same way you would use butter or oil. You can cook schmaltz on a stove top, but don't walk away from it too long or it might overcook.

UP NEXT ...

In the next installment of *The Finishing Touch*, we will cover finishing ducks. I hope you are enjoying the series!

Jeannette Beranger, Senior Program Manager at The Livestock Conservancy, has more than 30 years of experience working as an animal professional in zoological and non-profit institutions. She is an active lecturer, writer, and photographer. At home she practices what she preaches, maintaining a heritage breed farm with a focus on critically endangered Crèvecoeur chickens.

Coq au vin is a great winter recipe for your crock pot or good old-fashioned cast-iron Dutch oven pot. It's also good for slow cooking old hens and roosters. Photo by Jeannette Beranger. First prep your veggies for the pot and brown your bird on all sides. Remove and add a good stock. Add your bird back in and fill the pot with stock and veggies until halfway covered. Cover and cook for 3 1/2 hours, flipping the bird halfway through. Enjoy the amazing aroma filling your kitchen and house. Afterward, serve whole or debone for barbecue or pate.



NEW AT THE LIVESTOCK CONSERVANCY

FOR DOWNLOAD ON THE WEBSITE



Poitou Donkey Foal Support Protocol by Charlene Couch, Keith Youngblood, Patrick Archer and Chris Jones

Help improve the survivability of delicate and critically-endangered Poitou donkey foals. Download printable PDFs online at <https://bit.ly/PoitouFoalProtocol>



Heritage Sheep Breed Fiber Profiles by Deb Robson

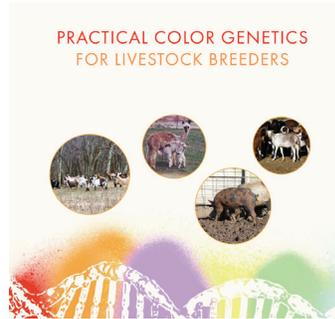
The new fiber profiles detail each breed's fleece weight, staple length, fiber diameter, lock characteristics, natural colors, and best uses for fiber projects. Download printable PDFs online at <https://bit.ly/SE2FiberProfiles>



Modern Heritage Swine Guide by The Livestock Conservancy & University of Missouri Extension

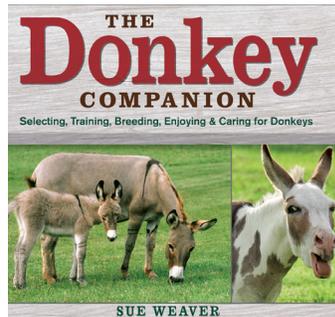
Knowledge and skills to benefit your bottom line and conserve heritage breeds. Download printable PDFs online at <https://bit.ly/HeritageSwineGuide>

AVAILABLE IN THE ONLINE STORE



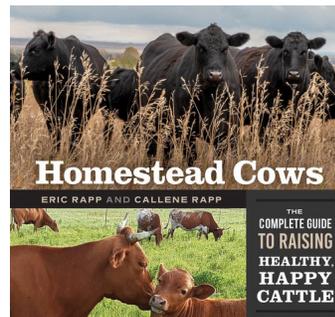
Practical Color Genetics for Livestock Breeders by Dr. Phil Sponenberg

A guide for breeders that explains coat color genetics in large animals to help them implement breeding strategies to achieve their desired coat color results.



The Donkey Companion: Selecting, Training, Breeding, Enjoying and Caring for Donkeys by Sue Weaver

Comprehensive, colorful, and captivating, this in-depth guide showcases donkeys for what they truly are: fascinating, stunning, and endlessly varied.



Homestead Cows: The Complete Guide to Raising Healthy, Happy Cattle by Eric and Callene Rapp

This book distills decades of hard-won, practical knowledge into an essential guide to successful small-scale cattle farming for every homesteader and farmer.

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 conservation programs by becoming Life Members:

Samuel J. Brungardt
Saint Paul, MN

Robert Tomas
Trumbull, CT

Matthew Hunker
Graham, NC

Susan and David Wase
Hillsboro, VA

Douglas Nunn
Manakin Sabot, VA

**Jessica Hart and
Kenneth Moore**
Mishicot, WI

Bruce and Marge Petesch
Siler City, NC

To become a Life Member, contact Karena Elliott at 806-570-0874 or kelliott@livestockconservancy.org

Marion and Vi Stanley
King City, CA

COMING TO THE STORE LATER THIS YEAR



From The Livestock Conservancy:

- New edition of *Equine Reproduction Manual*
- New edition of *Managing Breeds for a Secure Future*

From Storey Publishing for Shave 'Em to Save 'Em:

- *The Essential Guide to Color Knitting Techniques* by Margaret Radcliffe
- *The Knowledgeable Knitter* by Margaret Radcliffe
- *The Spinner's Book of Fleece* by Beth Smith
- *Uniquely Felt* by Christine White
- *Inventive Weaving on a Little Loom* by Syne Mitchell





SELECTING FOR PARASITE RESISTANCE

Gulf Coast sheep, listed as Critical on the Conservation Priority List, are one of the many livestock breeds recognized for their innate resistance to intestinal parasites. Selection by breeders can restore and maintain this trait in their flocks. Photo by Jeannette Beranger.

By Alison Martin

A number of livestock breeds on the Conservation Priority List are recognized for their innate resistance to intestinal parasites, particularly those breeds that have been strongly influenced by natural selection in North America. This genetic resistance is an important tool for the livestock breeder, particularly in sheep and goats. Some breeders have reported declines in natural resistance in their flocks. Such declines occur when selection pressure for parasite resistance is relaxed, enabling parasite-susceptible animals and their offspring to reproduce on an equal basis with resistant animals.

Selection by the breeder can restore and maintain parasite resistance in their flocks. Resistance can be improved even in breeds not commonly thought to be resistant. Following are some general breeding principles for breeders who wish to add parasite resistance to their selection program.

1. Commit to the long haul.

Progress will take place over generations. As a livestock owner, you're already planning to continue this work for many years, just think of the satisfaction to be gained by improving your flock over time. Selection for parasite resistance reduces wear and tear on your animals and reduces the time and money that you spend on deworming.

2. Address as many management issues as possible,

such as diet, minerals, overgrazing, etc. Some animals might appear less resistant than they truly are if they are stressed in other ways.

3. Decide on your goals and how you will measure progress.

FAMACHA scoring is a good method for measuring infection by Barber Pole Worms (*Haemonchus contortus*) but misses other common parasites. Some breeders

like to have their veterinarian perform an annual fecal test on the entire flock, or teach themselves to do fecal counts by microscope. If this is done only once a year, it should be during peak parasite season. It's possible to select only on hardiness and absence of diarrhea, but these general signs may not yield progress as quickly.

4. Evaluate the entire flock at one time, or males at one time and females at another.

RECORD your measurements by ear tag. If you use the FAMACHA system, start a spreadsheet that lists ear tags or other identification and record the results for each date that the flock is evaluated. This highlights results that occur over time and can be very helpful.

5. Decision time. When it comes time to make up matings for the next breeding season, pull out

those parasite measurements. Rank every animal in the flock from best to worst. Or, assign a 1, 2 or 3 score to the top, middle, and bottom performers. Look at the bottom performers first and select animals to cull from among these. Culling can mean removal from the herd, or simply not breeding. Males can be wethered if they have other desirable characteristics. Culling in the first year might remove only 10 percent of animals, the really poor ones, giving you time to gather more data.

6. **What about really great animals who have poor parasite resistance?** Look at their closest female relatives – daughters, sisters, nieces etc., and keep a few that fall midrange for parasite resistance. Or, select a mate with a much better parasite score for breeding. You will not want to keep sons from animals with very poor parasite resistance, and will probably want to limit the number of offspring kept for breeding.
7. **Look at your most resistant animals, too.** You want to keep more of those genetics in your flock, especially from resistant animals who are also good mothers, have good conformation, easy birthing, good milking, nice wool, good temperament, long lived, or all of the above! Consider keeping sons from such animals as replacement rams or bucks.
8. **Repeat.** Trends will begin to emerge as you measure parasite load in the same animals year by year. You may observe differences between families, or certain individuals may be resistant in “average” years, succumbing only in stressful years such as during drought. Some animals may do fine with parasites when they have single offspring but may get pulled down by twins – and you may choose to manage this by culling or by supplementing feed – depending on your farm’s management system.

Applying one or more of these breeding practices will lead to gradual improvement. Over the course of many years of selection it is not unusual to find quite highly resistant individuals for parasites, so that chemical interventions need only be used occasionally. Sound selection practices make for healthy flocks today and into the future.

Alison Martin, Ph.D. is The Livestock Conservancy’s Executive Director. As a teenager, she raised backyard poultry, waterfowl, rabbits, and horses. This early experience led to a career of more than 20 years in poultry science, specializing in health and vaccine development. Alison was a key leader on the world’s first in ovo (in the egg) vaccine for coccidiosis. She holds a Ph.D. in Genetics from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in Blacksburg, Virginia, where she specialized in disease resistance in poultry. Alison’s skills in building collaborative partnerships have helped The Livestock Conservancy to expand its strategic scientific and technical capacity in conservation programs.



Pineywoods Cattle, listed as Threatened on the Conservation Priority List, are also known for their parasite resistance. Photo by Cindra Kerscher.



Carolyn and Lowell Larson driving a pair of Arabian horses at Old World Wisconsin, courtesy of Carolyn Larson.

PASS IT ON

Lowell L. Larson (1931-2021) died peacefully at his home in Wisconsin in November. Lowell and Carolyn, his wife of 66 years, have been members of The Livestock Conservancy since the 1980s. The Larsons shared a passion for history, and raised several heritage breeds for many years at their Buffalo Ridge Farm.

The Larsons have generously supported rare livestock breed research at The Livestock Conservancy, helping raise the numbers for American Cream and Caspian horses, as well as Dexter cattle. Their support was vital to bringing Cleveland Bay horses to Colonial Williamsburg to hopefully improve their status on the Conservation Priority List.

Equines, and specifically carriage horses, remained near and dear to their hearts. After retirement Lowell pursued his interest in driving horses, volunteering at Old World Wisconsin in period costume, driving his beautiful pair of Arabians. A high point of his driving days was participating in the Great Circus Parade in Milwaukee. He was knowledgeable about antique horse drawn vehicles, actively collecting and restoring them, and serving on the board for the Carriage Museum of America.

“We always enjoyed talking about The Livestock Conservancy’s progress and undertaking our various projects over the years,” Carolyn said. “It was very rewarding for us.”

2021 LIVESTOCK CONSERVANCY MICROGRANTS AWARDED

The Livestock Conservancy is excited to award more than \$22,000 to 12 rare breed farmers, ranchers, shepherds, and breed organizations across the country. Now in its fourth year, the competitive Microgrants Program puts funding into the hands of our most important conservation partners – the people doing the hard work day after day to steward these genetic treasures for the security of tomorrow's food systems and fiber sources.

"Small financial awards can make a big difference for heritage breeders," said Dr. Alison Martin, Livestock Conservancy Executive Director. "These strategic investments were selected by a panel of judges as excellent examples of livestock conservation in action."

New in 2021 are microgrants from Premier 1 Supplies and for heritage breed associations, clubs, and registries. The Premier 1 Supplies Microgrant provides funding for fencing and related project needs benefiting heritage breeds listed on the Conservation Priority List.

"Premier 1 Supplies and its customers have long valued raising livestock and poultry," said Ben Rothe, Chief Executive Officer at Premier 1 Supplies. "We also know how hard it is to get started. That's why we've partnered with The Livestock Conservancy to encourage and help future farmers conserve traditional breeds and promote biodiversity on our farms via microgrants."

NATIONAL AND PREMIER 1 SUPPLIES MICROGRANT RECIPIENTS



The **Barcenas** family plans to improve grazing opportunities for their flock of Lincoln and CVM/Romeldale sheep with electro-net fencing that will make it easier them to move the sheep from pasture to pasture, grazing on nutritious forage while remaining parasite free.



Channa Kinohi plans to install turkey fencing on pasture for breeding and growout flocks of Royal Palm, Slate, and Narragansett turkeys. The added space will prevent overcrowding, reduce breeding stress, and allow the turkeys to run and fly safely while on pasture.



Sarah Campbell plans to expand and improve her barn at Hickoryneck Rabbitry so there will be enough space to keep breeding groups intact while maintaining two separate lines for breeding. This will enable her to offer unrelated breeding stock to new breeders.



Jessa Lane and **Jeff Kreis** plan to build predator-proof outdoor runs corresponding to each of their indoor pens for heritage chickens and turkeys. Their design will also collect rainwater runoff to be filtered into a water tank that will redirect water flow toward the fields when full.



Arik Engstrom plans to add new breeding pens for Russian Orloff chickens so he can expand the number of breeding groups and improve genetic diversity. The improved enclosures will reduce stress, improve laying, and increase quality breeding stock available for customers.



Katy Turnbaugh plans to install paddocks and extend her existing water lines for Mulefoot hogs and heritage chickens. These improvements will allow her to expand her herd and flocks, increasing production of meat, eggs, and registered breeding stock.



Jodi Jess plans to establish a seasonal grass-based dairy using Kerry cows at Little Black Cow Dairy. Her goal is to demonstrate that a small mobile dairy can be viable while also raising the profile of heritage breed cattle.



Christina Weger plans to purchase solar-powered electric poultrynet fencing from **Premier 1 Supplies** to more effectively separate her seven breeds of endangered ducks and keep them safe from predators. Better rotational practices will also improve soil fertility on farm.

The Livestock Conservancy is grateful for the support of Standlee Premium Western Forage, Premier 1 Supplies, and the many donors who have given funds for microgrants and who support The Livestock Conservancy.

YOUTH MICROGRANT RECIPIENTS



Violet Castillo-Osman plans to upgrade her incubator so she can hatch more heritage breed turkeys that she sells to local 4-H youth. During the last two years she has only hatched a few eggs which prevented her from expanding her breeding program of White Holland, Black, and Slate varieties.



Felicity Hart plans to improve calf pens at Hart Burn Farm, where her family hand milks a small herd of Milking Devon and Kerry cattle. The new pens will make it safer to secure calves during milking time. The family began selling milk shares to a handful of customers, and with the improvements, they can expand their offerings of rare breed dairy products.

BREED ASSOCIATION MICROGRANT RECIPIENTS



American Cotswold Records Association (ACRA) plans to revise their website and publish a Flock Book that includes members, their stock, and Cotswold-specific information. This will help Cotswold fans and breeders find breeding stock and other important genetic data.



The **Lippitt Morgan Preservation Project** plans to re-grant \$500 each to four breeders to defray the cost of the training, collection, freezing, and shipment of their stallion's semen to the USDA for future preservation of the original Morgan horse.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE MICROGRANT RECIPIENTS



Eliseo Curley and Drake Mace received hay and feed courtesy of Standlee Western Forage to help their critically endangered flocks of Navajo-Churro sheep through severe drought in New Mexico.



Shannon Hawkins received support to help collect semen of an aging Marsh Tacky stallion. The stallion is from a rare bloodline that would have been lost without collection to use in future breeding.



Robin Collins received support to help feed her herd of 50 threatened Wilbur-Cruce line of Colonial Spanish horses because of drought in California.





HOW ARE CLYDESDALES LIKE POTATO CHIPS?

By Cathy R. Payne

Shannon Martin has been actively breeding Clydesdale horses for 17 years. She lives at Appalachee Shoals Farm, the home of Classic City Clydesdales and Classic City Farm. The farm includes 220 acres of hill country in the Piedmont region of Georgia, far away from the Clydesdales' native Scotland. It can be found off of Highway 441 in the town of Bishop, between Madison and Athens. Athens is known as the Classic City, which inspired the name of the business. The horses, while very much at home on the farm, are living in a hot, humid climate much different from that of their Scottish origins.

Shannon and her husband, Mark, previously owned Clydesdale horses in Michigan, a venture that began with a single riding horse for Mark. It soon expanded to 11 horses. When they were offered a business opportunity that took them to Georgia, they sold their herd and put Clydesdales on hold while they spent a few years starting their new business.

In 2009, Shannon and Mark rescued an abused Clydesdale gelding and began raising the breed once again.

For Shannon, Clydesdales are "kind of like potato chips. You can't have just

one." She continues to make a serious commitment to this threatened breed that will have an important impact for years to come.

The Martins keep a large herd, including five stallions and 20 brood mares. They breed about six to seven horses a year. At any given time, the farm will have between 40 and 50 horses. This is an incredible feat for any horse farm, but especially for a farm raising large draft horses. They take extra effort to raise and breed because of their size, feed requirements, and difficulties with raising foals to weaning.

CLASSIC CITY CLYDESDALES

Classic City Farm is open to the public by appointment. They offer farm tours, a close encounter with the Clydesdales, a petting zoo, and trail rides for all ages. They also have a peaceful rustic lodge, The Lodge at Classic City, in the middle of it all. Those who visit the farm may find themselves humbled and enthralled as they approach the entrance to the farm, follow miles of winding driveway bordered by black horse fencing, and admire large groups of Clydesdales in each paddock. These horses may be foals with their dams, groups of weanlings, mares, stallions, and a gelding or two.

Shannon, a petite blonde woman with seemingly endless energy and knowledge, greets each horse affectionately, calling them by their nicknames, patting them and reciting their pedigrees and ages to visitors.

Shannon's naming protocol is fun. "All of our horses are named after rock stars, musicians, or artists," she said. "They also have the first initial of the mom. So Reese Witherspoon is out of Rachel, who has produced lots of foals for me."

BIGGER IS BETTER

Clydesdales of different colors and markings abound on the property. While generally found in bay and brown with white markings, they can also be black, roan, and chestnut. Many of them have a white blaze and white on their legs. In Scotland, black horses were traditionally most valued, but they are quite rare today. Gray has been bred out of Clydesdales, but exists in the Shire breed, another endangered draft horse.

The Sabino 1 mutation produces white patterns and roan coloring. "Old-breeder" mentors have told Shannon that good foot and good hair correlate highly with the Sabino 1 pattern. Keeping a diversity of colors, including much white throughout the coat helps

the breed survive, Shannon said. Any standardization that might prohibit existing colors could have deleterious effects on the genes they correlate with and damage the breed. A Clydesdale's "fingerprint" is its muzzle. Closeup shots of the muzzle are part of each Clydesdale's registration.

Draft horses like the Clydesdales have large feet for support, a strong back, and long, well-muscled quarters. They are built for power, and their large feet act like shock absorbers that hold up to the pressure of heavy loads.

"I like big, solid, wide feet on these guys," Shannon said. "They need a lot of that to carry around their weight when they're full grown."

Draft horses were bred to move large loads in a fast and efficient manner—pulling a farmer's plow as he walked behind, driving or pulling a cart, pulling loads of tree trunks for loggers, or working in hitch teams to deliver goods. The Budweiser company has popularized the breed by displaying showy, iconic, eight-hitch teams of matching bay horses with white blazes and four white legs.

The breed also makes a good trail horse and some have even been trained for dressage. They exhibit a high-stepping, showy movement that makes them an elegant and memorable horse. In a word, the breed is versatile.

"For me, it all starts at the bottom," Shannon explained, when asked what she looks for in a Clydesdale. "So when I'm looking at a new horse to add to my program, I'm starting at the foot. Next is all the joints that we look at. The ankle, hocks, knees, shoulders, all those things play a big part."

Shannon continued, "And then you get into some of the nit-picky finer things like the hock joint, how much ankle do they have, how flat is the bone, and how much bone do they have."

Since Shannon runs a breeding farm, mares are very important to her. "They should have a good enough spring of rib. There should be room in there for a foal. My mares can be a bit longer, but not too much. If they're too long, they just break down. I want them to have a nice, round, apple bottom."

A good Clydesdale also needs a long neck. "They're a draft horse, and they wear a collar, so there's got to be enough of that neck to do that without shortening up and cutting off any wind,"



In the photo on the left page, a Clydesdale runs across the pasture at Classic City Clydesdales in Bishop, GA. Shannon Martin, who runs one of the largest breeding farms in the U.S., hugs a foal in the photo above. Left, a foal plays in the pasture. All photos by Michelle Randolph, courtesy of Shannon Martin.

BUDWEISER CLYDESDALES

Clydesdales were first imported to North America in the 1840s. The breed's attractiveness and size led to its use in promotional hitches. In the 1930s, the Anheuser-Busch Company of St. Louis, Missouri, began using Clydesdale hitches to celebrate the end of Prohibition and to represent the company's products. The "Budweiser Clydesdales" became an immediate sensation when they delivered the first post-Prohibition beer to the White House. Anheuser Busch continues to maintain a Clydesdale breeding program, and their commitment to the breed in the 1950s-60s was critical to its survival in North America. The hitch remains one of the most iconic of all time.



Shannon Martin leads a mare and foal through a pasture in Georgia. Photo by Michelle Randolph, courtesy of Shannon Martin. Clydesdales stand 16.2-18 hands at the withers and weigh between 1,600-1,800 pounds. But some can weigh up to 2,200 pounds.

Shannon said.

"There's a saying in the Clyde world, too, 'Little ears—hard head,'" Shannon shared. "Especially in the young horses. I'm looking for these big Eeyore, floppy ears. A big, soft eye without eye-rolling and showing the whites of the eyes all the time."

"Temperament-wise, they're a wonderful first-time-horse-owner horse. They're very forgiving. They're very kind. But if they've been in a bad situation, they won't forget. Maintenance-wise," she cautioned, "they're more intermediate or advanced horses. You have to be willing to wash legs at least once a week, if not more often."

BIGGER IS ALSO MORE EXPENSIVE

She explained other factors that discourage beginning horse owners from the breed. There is the cost of feed, which is about 2 percent of body weight. Since Clydesdales weigh twice as much as an average horse, they require twice

as much feed. This can be as much as 40 pounds of hay and 20 quarts of feed each day, washed down with 30 gallons of water. Owners need economic resources plus appropriate housing, infrastructure, zoning, and access to water. There are also climate considerations.

"Arizona is not Clyde-friendly," Shannon said. "Think about your goals for the horse. Giving carriage rides in Atlanta is not appropriate for the breed, as the horses will not hold up. I'm all for horses working, but I don't want them to suffer. I usually like to have veterinary references. If they don't have any, then that's a red flag for me."

SUPPORTING THE FUTURE

Like any of the rare heritage breeds, members of the public can help support their future survival. One way is to support heritage breeders like Shannon. By attending a farm tour, staying at the lodge, or booking a trail ride, you are supporting her ability to continue her

important and difficult work. Purchasing a gelding or mare as a riding horse or draft horse is an option if you are set up for that. Fewer people are set up to raise their own Clydesdales as breeders, as this requires even more horses, more acreage, quality stock, the ability to handle a stallion, and experienced equine veterinary care nearby. At the date of this interview, there were five stallions on the farm.

"More than one stallion is unusual," Shannon said. "A lot of the time, it's hard to keep one stallion. You have to have the setup for it, and you have to have people that can handle one. They weigh 2,000 pounds and can be pretty intimidating. You have to know what you're doing. Peyton is one of the hardest stallions that I've worked around. He's got a lot of testosterone, so if he gets around another stud, he wants to fight. If he gets around mares, he wants to go up. So my husband, Mark, is the only one that handles him."

BREEDING AND FOALING

As crucial as breeding Clydesdales is for preservation, it is a huge commitment that should not be taken lightly. Foal survivability can be a real issue. Shannon said that not all breeders are having this problem, or not admitting to it. However, she candidly shared her own experience. Her first two years were easy, but when they continued their breeding program with multiple pairs, they began to see problems more consistently.

"The biggest issues we deal with here are the babies—these guys are like big, gooey, wet spaghetti noodles when they're born," Shannon said. "They don't just pop up like a Quarter Horse and start nursing. So we now know that going into it, we have to be there for the delivery. We have cameras, and we sleep in the barn. For me, as soon as I see the mare lay down and I see the front legs and nose presenting, I'm breaking bags and pulling babies. The longer the foals take to deliver, the more chance of dummy foals we have."

Dummy foals exhibit abnormal behaviors or neurological signs during their first few days of life. "The oxygen just has to get to their brain at some point," she continued.

"We don't have a lot of time. I figure if I don't have a live foal out on the ground in 15 minutes from the time that bag presents, that means I call my vet who's on speed dial, and he needs to be headed here. We also run into issues with the babies standing up. It takes so much energy to move this big, floppy baby around."

Foals typically weigh 125 to 150 pounds at birth, and can be as heavy as 185 pounds. Shannon developed strict protocols for foaling and after-care to prevent problems such as sepsis. This infection can cause the death of a foal within the first 48 to 72 hours of birth. This is especially heart-breaking after seeing the mare through a 345-365 day gestation period. Shannon also offers a care sheet with the protocols to all her new breeding-horse owners.

"Generally, I advise new people not to do the breeding right away," she said. In my care sheet it asks, 'Are you sure?' This isn't something for the faint of heart. Everybody has a story, such as, 'When I was a kid, my grandma took me to a parade, and I remember seeing the Budweiser horses, and I've loved

them ever since. I've always wanted to own one.' So they get into it, and they get really excited. Then they start having foals, and the foals die. I think it's so traumatic and so hard when that happens. They really wanted to do the right thing, and they've had these horrible experiences."

When foals do survive, the mares have great mothering abilities. "It is very rare that I have an orphan foal," Shannon said. "If we do, it's because the mare died, not because of rejection. There's always a mare that will take that baby. It's not uncommon when my helpers bring them in and put them in their boxes that the wrong baby would be in with the mares. In the morning, they seem fine with it. 'Whatever baby you give me, I'll take it,' is their attitude."

FIND A GOOD MENTOR

Shannon stressed the importance of breeders having mentors. "A mentorship program is so important. If you don't know the right questions, you'll make some mistakes. Mark and I made them, too. But you kind of learn from them. And I'm not saying we still don't make mistakes. We're human, too. But you learn who the trustworthy people are and you ask them questions and build relationships. People start answering questions. You've got to be persistent. I used to be one of the people driving other people crazy, because I didn't want to do it wrong. These horses deserve better than that.

She continued, "The most important thing going forward with our breed is that we need to begin communicating. We need to really start talking about these things that are detrimental to the breed. Why are they happening? The horses are threatened. It's happening."

She believes it's vital that experienced breeders be both honest and helpful to beginning Clydesdale breeders. "They should be honest about difficulties, and ready to help out by listening and offering advice," Shannon said.

Shannon's dedication to Clydesdales is evident by the time, energy, and devotion she puts into this magnificent breed. Because she and others put mentoring at the forefront, and continue the hard work of breeding foals, the horses are more likely to survive far into the future.



The Livestock Conservancy
MEMBER

UPDATED BY-LAWS

Thank you for voting on the amendments to the organization's by-laws in December. We are pleased to notify you that the new by-laws were adopted by a margin of more than 96 percent "Yes." If you'd like to review the new by-laws, they can be found on our website at <https://livestockconservancy.org/members/>

WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Thank you for voting to elect the 2022 Board of Directors for The Livestock Conservancy. We'd like to welcome our newest Board Members Judy Brummer, Rebecca Burgess, Sam Garwin, Nancy Irlbeck, Neil O'Sullivan, and Bud Wood.

Bios for the 2022 Board of Directors can be found in the Summer 2021 edition of the newsletter or online at <https://livestockconservancy.org/aboutus/staff-board-directors/>.

Cathy R. Payne first learned about The Livestock Conservancy in 2008. When she retired from teaching in 2010 and started a sustainable farm, she decided to focus on heritage breeds. She became a member and raised Khaki Campbell ducks, Silver Fox rabbits, Gulf Coast sheep, and American Guinea Hogs. She advocates for heritage breeds year-round and works part-time as a Program Research Associate for The Livestock Conservancy. Cathy sold her farm in 2018 and is the award-winning author of Saving the Guinea Hogs: The Recovery of an American Homestead Breed.



PLANNING FOR FLOCK DISPERSAL

Jacob sheep, listed as Threatened on the Conservation Priority List. Photo courtesy of Jeannette Beranger.

By Bob May

For those unfamiliar with them, Jacob Sheep remain a primitive breed. The sheep are spotted, of slight build, typically have black eye patches, black muzzles and between 2 and 6 horns. Hand-spinners like the naturally-colored fleeces which are in the medium range—not fine, but not coarse. The Livestock Conservancy lists the breed as Threatened on its Conservation Priority List. Jacob sheep are not native to the U.S., but were imported more than 50 years ago.

In the mid 1970's, Todd Hescock, Maizie's son, came across the Jacob breed while working on a sheep farm in Scotland. In 1976, Todd, with his mother's approval, selected a group of Jacobs to be shipped to Canada. At that time, sheep from outside of the U.S. could not be imported directly into this country because of scrapie regulations. Todd's Jacobs were then quarantined in Canada for seven years.

On May 27, 1983 the flock of Scottish Jacobs, along with their many descendants, arrived at Trade Winds Farm in Shoreham, VT. Maizie later changed her farm name to Jacob's Ladder and a detailed account of the 7-year quarantine process was written by Todd. It appeared in the July/August 1984 edition of *Sheep Production* magazine.

After Todd passed away in 1987, Maizie continued as the steward of the Jacob's Ladder Flock, and it remained closed for the last 45 years. No outside ewes or rams had ever been introduced into the flock. Maizie kept only the best of her lambs for her breeding program providing a strong foundation for the flock that survives today.

For being a closed flock, I am impressed with the strength of horns—all rams and majority of the ewes are 4-horned. Face and muzzle markings are also predominant and the color pattern is in the range of 30 to 35 percent black and the balance white. While some sheep have split eyelids, they are not widespread throughout the flock and are part and parcel for four-horned Jacobs.

In the mid-1980's, Maizie participated in discussions with other Jacob sheep breeders and representatives of the then American Livestock Breeds Conservancy (now The Livestock Conservancy), which eventually led to the formation of the Jacob Sheep Breeders Association (JSBA), including a breed registry. In 2005, JSBA presented Maizie with a Lifetime Achievement Award and a Lifetime Membership in the organization.

Over the last decade or so, I, along with fellow Jacob sheep breeder and good friend, Royal Unzicker, visited Maizie on a number of occasions and purchased several Jacobs from her for an infusion of

pure Scottish Jacob genetics in our own flocks. A close friendship and a mutual admiration developed between us.

In late June 2021, I received a phone call from Maizie in which she stated her health was starting to slip and she felt that she was no longer able to care for her flock. She asked if I would help her with the dispersal. My immediate response was to tell Maizie that Royal Unzicker and I would gladly purchase her Jacobs. Subsequently, on Sunday morning, June 27, Royal and I arrived at Maizie's farm where three of her sons, Jonathan, Joe, and Tim, were on hand to help with catching, photographing and loading 16 Jacobs: 13 ewes and 3 rams into Royal's trailer—the remaining members of the Jacob's Ladder Flock.

After loading the sheep, Royal and I went inside to visit with Maizie. I wasn't sure how stressful parting with her flock of Jacobs would be after 45 years of caring for them. In 2019, Maizie had asked me to write an article for the JSBA Newsletter about dispersing her flock. However, after writing the article, Maizie called me and said, "Bob, I know that I should disperse my flock, but my heart won't let me." Much to my surprise and relief, Maizie seemed perfectly at peace with her decision and equally pleased that Royal and I would be the new stewards of her Jacob's Ladder Flock.

Maizie was truly a remarkable



Jacob's Ladder ewes (top photo) courtesy of the Hescocock family. Maizie Hescocock and Bob May (left photo) by Royal Unzicker. Crumply hanging on Bob's wall (right) by Rachel May.

individual and her mind was as sharp as ever! She helped identify several ewes with missing ear tags by looking at photos Royal had taken on his iPhone. We left her farm with a folder full of sheep pedigrees, a flock inventory, and the mounted head of "Crumply," the last of the original Scottish Jacob ewes imported from Scotland in 1976. I assured Maizie that I would "hang" Crumply on the wall in my home office until passing her on to the next steward for the Jacob's Ladder Flock.

Royal and I divided the Jacob's Ladder Flock between us, thinking it would be the safest way to assure their survival. We intend to use several of the rams on ewes in our own flocks to produce lambs with 50 percent Scottish bloodlines, in addition to pairing the Scottish rams and ewes for pure Scottish Jacob descendants. We are appreciative and grateful of the trust that Maizie Hescocock had in us and will do our utmost to

ensure this treasure of Scottish Jacob genetics can be shared with other Jacob breeders for years to come!

**Note: Bob May wrote and submitted this article in July 2021. Sadly, on Tuesday, November 9, 2021, Maizie Hescocock passed away at age 93. In speaking with her son Tim after his mother's passing, he indicated how pleased his mother was with her decision to disperse the Jacob's Ladder flock to Royal Unzicker and me.*

Bob May, along with his wife Diane, run Swayze Inn Farm located in Hope, New Jersey. Their 37 acre farm was purchased in August 2001 and named in honor of the original farmstead owner, Israel Swayze who built the farmhouse in 1759. Bob and Diane continue the farming tradition with heritage breed animals, which include flocks of Jacob and CVM/Romeldale sheep and Dexter cattle.

SUCCESSION PLANNING ADVICE FOR YOUR FARM

"The story of Maizie Hescocock's flock represents an excellent example of good stewardship for decades of breeding all the way through to a successful dispersal," Phil Sponenberg, DVM, Ph.D., Livestock Conservancy Technical Advisor

Everyone who cherishes a rare breed flock or herd should consider, **"What's the worst that can happen?" Then think about what you could do now to mitigate the effects of those imagined disasters.**

Do you have a back-up plan for farm labor or housing your animals if current arrangements suddenly fall through? Have you identified someone who cares about what you do to inherit your farming legacy? Some people have written specific instructions in their wills, gifting treasured lines or breeding projects to a fellow stewards.

Make a list of potential new stewards by putting the word out to your network, including breed associations, show contacts, social media, and The Livestock Conservancy.

To set the new caretakers up for success, **prune flocks and herds down to ideal breeding animals.** If the new caretaker is willing, mentor them in the breed standards, selection criteria, flock or herd management tips, and marketing techniques.

Remember that **everyday good management practices can buffer some of the impacts of unfortunate events.** Keep veterinary and breeding records up to date, so information isn't lost and can be handed down.

Text adapted from an article written by Julie Gauthier that appeared in the 2021 Directory.

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The first part of the series will focus on the basics of building your brand and helping your audience find you online through a website and social media. The second part expands on your audience-knowledge to help you become more profitable by setting realistic prices, talking to your processor, and finding niche markets. The last part of the series encourages you to engage your active audience in new ways through on-farm experiences and community-building.

We hope you'll join us each month during our live broadcast on Facebook to ask questions and learn more from our series of special guests.

2022 SERIES CALENDAR

Marketing Monday airs the **fourth Monday of every month from 2-3 pm EST**. Please join Brittany Sweeney and Samantha Gasson from FACT via The Livestock Conservancy's Facebook page to ask questions of guests and panelists. All sessions are recorded and available to watch or listen to later on Facebook, YouTube, and Podbean, or wherever you enjoy downloading podcasts.



- **February 28:** Building Your Brand and Finding Your Audience with Special Guest Jennifer Kendall
- **March 28:** Staying in Touch with your Audience through Email Marketing for your business with Special Guest Carolyn Rose-Seed
- **April 25:** Social Media 101 with Special Guest Paige Jackson. Learn how to set up your social media channels and the basics of running social media business campaigns.
- **May 23:** Social Media 201 with Paige Jackson. Learn how to build audience engagement.
- **June 27:** How to Price Your Products for Your Audience with Special Guests Sarah Blacklin and Lee Menius
- **July 25:** How to Talk to Your Processor and Sell More Products with Special Guest Cecilie May
- **August 29:** Locking People Into Your Brand through Niche Marketing Panel
- **September 26:** Showcase the Whole Animal with Value Added Products. This panel will help you get creative with your marketing for items other than steaks and bacon.
- **October 24:** Getting to Know Your Farmer with Agritourism and On-Farm Experiences Panel
- **November 28:** Marketing to the Next Generation with Kids Camps
- **December 26:** Converting Your Audience into Lifelong Learners with On-Farm Classes for Adults Panel

Thank you to Manna Pro for sponsoring Marketing Mondays. Learn more about how Manna Pro is Nurturing Life at <https://www.mannapro.com/promotions/nurturing-life-2022>.