



THE LIVESTOCK CONSERVANCY™

Conserving rare breeds since 1977

Summer 2023 | Volume 40, Issue 3

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The new 2023 Conservation Priority List has several changes for heritage livestock and poultry breeds – including graduations! See page 3 for more details.



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APPLICATIONS FOR MICROGRANTS ARE OPEN

Farmers, ranchers, breed clubs, and associations who are already working with any of the breeds on the Conservation Priority List can apply. Visit our website for more details. The deadline is August 30.

CONGRATULATIONS NEW BOARD MEMBERS

We welcome Dennis Bires, Cynthia Capers, Therese Coucher, David Day, Laura Marie Kramer, and Keith Ohlinger as our newest Livestock Conservancy Board Members following the election in May. We are delighted to have these exceptional individuals contribute their expertise and insights for heritage breed conservation.

SOLICITATION DISCLOSURES

Colorado: Residents may obtain copies of registration and financial documents from the office of the Secretary of State, 303-894-2860, www.sos.state.co.us/ re: Reg No. 20133007164.

Florida: Registration #CH37293. A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Division of Consumer Services by calling toll-free 1-800-435-7352 within the state. Registration does not imply endorsement, approval, or recommendation by the state.

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

North Carolina: Financial information about this organization and a copy of its license are available from the State Solicitation Licensing Branch at 1-888-830-4989. The license is not endorsed by the state.

Virginia: A financial statement is available from the State office of Consumer Affairs in the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services upon request.

Washington: For additional information regarding the organization's activities or financial information, The Livestock Conservancy is registered with the Washington State Charities Program as required by law and information may be obtained by calling 1-800-332-4483 or 360-725-0378.



Photo courtesy of Nicole Geijer Porter

2023 CONSERVATION PRIORITY LIST

Many populations of the endangered livestock and poultry breeds on the Conservation Priority List (CPL) remained steady over the last year. Even better, counts of some breeds improved significantly. Both outcomes are a testament to the committed efforts of breeders and breed associations as they work to ensure rare breeds do not disappear from our farms, ranches, and backyards throughout America.

CATTLE

Corriente cattle are being added to the CPL in 2023 as a Threatened North American breed. The breed is from northern Mexico and is part of the group of Criollo breeds of cattle that originated in Spain and were forged in the Americas. Criollo breeds are a very important genetic resource in the Western hemisphere. Agile and athletic cattle, the Corriente has long been valued and bred for rodeo competitions. Much of that appeal comes from the broader Criollo characteristics of good, strong horns and endurance. Corriente cattle in the United States (U.S.) are represented by the North American Corriente Association.

In the U.S., Corriente cattle are bred primarily in the Southwestern and Plains states. Their population has declined

significantly over the past 15 years, in both the U.S. and Mexico, mainly due to crossbreeding with other cattle. Today, the breeding population of purebred Corrientes is estimated to be fewer than 2,000 animals; annual registration numbers continue to decline.

The Corriente's long history of thriving in near-desert conditions makes the breed well-suited for ranging in areas plagued by persistent drought. Because these cattle eat a wide variety of plant species, they have a lower impact on native grasses than more popular, larger cattle breeds. Mature bulls generally weigh less than 1,000 lbs. and mature cows less than 800 lbs. While small in stature, Corrientes raised for beef on marginal lands reward ranchers with hardiness and longevity.

Also coming onto the 2023 CPL are **American Yaks**, long-haired bovines of Tibetan origin. The North American population has a surprisingly long history of isolation. They were imported to Canada and the northern U.S. in the late 1800s and early 1900s, first for zoo exhibition and later to evaluate them for beef production in cold climates. Several thousand purebred descendants of these American Yaks remain, distributed across the U.S. and Canada. With more than a century of genetic separation from their

cousins in the Himalayas, purebred yaks in North America represent a distinct genetic resource. As such, the group has been added to the CPL as American Yak in the Critical category. It is listed as a North American breed within the cattle group.

Yaks have proven useful for grass-based ranching in areas where stocking numbers must be restricted and environmental conditions are harsh. They produce lean, nutrient-rich beef; their hair, fine undercoat, and milk are valued by high-end fiber producers and cheesemakers. While yak-cattle crosses can yield viable offspring, these crosses produce sterile males. As with any other animal used for crossbreeding, purebred yaks must be carefully tracked by their registries to ensure the integrity of America's highly endangered pure lineages and to safeguard their future in North America.

Canadienne cattle will no longer appear on the CPL because the number of breeders in the U.S. with purebred cattle has declined below the minimum for the CPL parameters for imported breeds. The breed was developed in Canada and descends from Normandy and Brittany cattle brought to Canada between 1601 and 1660. This population was shaped by natural selection in the rugged environment of eastern Canada.

2023 CONSERVATION PRIORITY LIVESTOCK BREEDS

Critical (C) Breeds with fewer than 200 annual registrations in the United States and an estimated global population less than 2,000. For rabbits, fewer than 50 annual registrations in the U.S., estimated global population less than 500, fewer than 150 recorded at rabbit shows in the previous 5 years, and 10 or fewer breeders.

Threatened (T) Breeds with fewer than 1,000 annual registrations in the U.S. and an estimated global population less than 5,000. For rabbits, fewer than 100 annual registrations in the U.S., 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 (W) Breeds that present genetic or numerical concerns or have a limited geographic distribution, with fewer than 2,500 annual registrations in the U.S. and an estimated global population less than 10,000. For rabbits, fewer than 200 annual registrations in the U.S., estimated global population less than 2,000, fewer than 500 recorded at rabbit shows in the previous 5 years, and 31-60 breeders.

Recovering (R) Breeds once listed in another category, but have exceeded Watch category numbers and still need monitoring. For rabbits, more than 500 recorded at rabbit shows in the last 5 years, and more than 60 breeders.



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NORTH AMERICAN BREEDS



CATTLE

American Yak (C)
Milking Devon (C)
Randall or
Randall Lineback (C)
Texas Longhorn - CTLR
(Cattleman's Texas
Longhorn Registry) (C)
Corriente (T)
Florida Cracker (T)
Pinewoods (T)



GOATS

San Clemente
Island (C)
Spanish (W)
Myotonic or
Tennessee
Fainting (R)



PIGS

Choctaw (C)
Mulefoot (C)
Ossabaw Island (C)
Guinea Hog (T)
Red Wattle (T)
Hereford (R)



RABBITS

Silver Marten (C)
American (W)
American
Chinchilla (W)
Giant Chinchilla (W)
Palomino (W)
Silver Fox (R)



SHEEP

Florida Cracker (C)
Gulf Coast or
Gulf Coast Native (C)
Hog Island (C)
Navajo-Churro (C)
Santa Cruz (C)
Jacob - American (T)
Karakul - American (T)
Romeldale / CVM (T)
Barbados Blackbelly (W)
St. Croix (W)
Tunis (W)

BREEDS IMPORTED BEFORE 1900



CATTLE

Dutch Belted (C)
Heritage Shorthorn - Native* (T)
Red Poll (T)
Guernsey (W)
Galloway (R)
Dexter (R)
Red Devon (R)



PIGS

Tamworth (W)



RABBITS

Belgian Hare (R)
Beveren (R)



SHEEP

Cotswold (T)
Dorset Horn (T)
Lincoln (T)
Oxford (W)
Shropshire (W)
Southdown (R)

*Milking Shorthorns that qualify for the "Native" designation are identified as pure, old line, dual purpose Milking Shorthorns, by the AMSS office.

BREEDS IMPORTED AFTER 1900



CATTLE

Kerry (C)
Lincoln Red (C)
Ancient White Park (T)
Belted Galloway (W)
Ankole-Watusi (R)



GOATS

Arapawa (C)
Oberhasli (R)



PIGS

Large Black (C)
Meishan (C)
Gloucestershire
Old Spots (T)



RABBITS

Blanc de Hotot (C)
Silver (C)
Argente Brun (T)
Checkered Giant (T)
Creme d'Argent (T)
Standard Chinchilla (T)
Lilac (W)
Rhineland (W)



SHEEP

Teeswater (C)
Black Welsh
Mountain (T)
Clun Forest (T)
Leicester Longwool (T)
Soay - British (T)
Wiltshire Horn (W)
Shetland (R)

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Fortunately, the breed has a brighter future thanks to the work of the Canadienne Cattle Breed Enhancement Association (AVRBC), the Canadienne Cattle Breeders Association, and other partners who are promoting these cattle for dairying in Canada. Their campaign is bringing attention to genetic selection, and a marketing collective for the breed's cheese and milk. While the U.S. now plays a very small role in the genetic conservation of this sturdy breed, The Livestock Conservancy wholeheartedly supports and endorses the work of AVRBC and others as they raise awareness and market value for the special, well-adapted qualities of this traditional dairy breed.

PIGS

After several years of investigation, the **Saddleback** pig, also known as the British Saddleback, will not appear on the CPL. The Saddleback is a hardy and adaptable pig breed known for its foraging ability and maternal qualities. While a small population of Saddlebacks resides in North America, The Livestock Conservancy's investigation confirmed the breed does not meet the minimal requirements for listing on the CPL.

HORSES

Morgan horses have a long and distinguished history in America, dating back to 1789 when the foundation sire for the breed, a colt named "Figure," was born. Once Figure was purchased by Justin Morgan, the owner's surname became synonymous with the breed. Figure was used widely as a prepotent breeding stallion, highly valued for his ability to sire fine saddle horses, harness horses, and tough working stock. That sort of strong "triple purpose" all-rounder has become increasingly rare among horse breeds.

The Livestock Conservancy listed the traditional type of Morgan horse on our CPL beginning in 2013, limited to horses free of known outcrosses to other breeds after 1939. These horses largely remain true to the original "all-purpose" character of the breed.

Listing bloodlines or subpopulations within larger breeds on the CPL has always been a difficult challenge. The complicated reasons are grounded in the basic question of "What is a breed?" Although the continuation of original populations and bloodlines of any breed is especially important for conservation,

it remains a considerable challenge to list them separately from most breeds.

Since being added to the CPL, the situation for Morgan horses has changed favorably. Today, owners demonstrate an increasing interest in maintaining genetic diversity, breeding all types of Morgans, and promoting the Morgan horse in all its varieties and uses. In response to these developments, The Livestock Conservancy is removing the Morgan (Traditional) classification from the CPL. We will continue to monitor the breed to help assure this uniquely American treasure continues to be available for future generations. Breeders and their breed associations are critical partners in this important work. Their knowledge of and attention to the importance of maintaining genetic diversity and the original characteristics of the breed can assure success for Morgan horses by working closely together.

POULTRY

The CPL includes heritage varieties of chickens, ducks, geese, and turkeys. Data from several larger flocks and mail-order hatcheries have now been added to the results of the 2021 Murray McMurray Poultry Census as reported in the Spring 2023 *Newsletter*. Detailed charts and tables from the Census are available online at <http://livestockconservancy.org/>

mcmurray-national-poultry-census/. Many of the changes in poultry breeds have been positive!

On the 2023 CPL, there is good news for **Buff** and **Silver Appleyard** ducks, which both improve from Threatened to Watch. Mail-order hatcheries play an important role in conserving heritage breeds of ducks. More complete numbers from hatcheries, added to counts from individual breeders, revealed that both breed populations had grown sufficiently to support this move. Both breeds are good choices for all-around use as egg layers and meat producers.

Australian Spotted ducks join the CPL in the Critical category. Despite its name, the Australian Spotted duck is an American breed developed around 1920 by crossing a an unidentified wild Australian duck with Call ducks, mallards, and pintails. Australian Spotted ducks are a small and friendly bantam breed that retains the ability to fly. The breed is not recognized by the American Poultry Association (APA) but retains a small and loyal fanbase in the U.S.

CPL graduation for poultry depends on global population numbers because chickens, ducks, geese, and turkeys are not individually registered. The threshold is a global population above 25,000. With the growing popularity of keeping chickens, certain breeds have had a



Buff ducks - Watch

2023 CONSERVATION PRIORITY EQUINE BREEDS

Critical (C) Breeds with fewer than 200 annual registrations in the United States and an estimated global population of less than 500.

Threatened (T) Breeds with fewer than 1,000 annual registrations in the U.S. and an estimated global population of less than 5,000.

Watch (W) Breeds that present genetic or numerical concerns or have a limited geographic distribution, with fewer than 2,500 annual registrations in the United States and an estimated global population less than 10,000.

Recovering (R) Breeds once listed in another category, but have exceeded Watch category numbers, and still need monitoring.



THE LIVESTOCK
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NORTH AMERICAN BREEDS

DONKEYS



American Mammoth Jackstock (C)

¹ Each of these breeds has an independent, stand-alone registry and conservation program. Each has also contributed to the Colonial Spanish breed.

² Includes several different registries, each with somewhat different goals (SMR, SSMA, SBHA, AIHR, HOA). Under this umbrella some strains have independent conservation programs and are noted individually.



HORSES

American Cream (C)

Banker¹ (C)

Canadian (C)

Colonial Spanish² * (C)

Florida Cracker¹ (C)

Galiceno¹ (C)

Marsh Tacky¹ (C)

Newfoundland Pony (C)

Puerto Rican Paso Fino (T)

Rocky Mountain/

Mountain Pleasure (T)

Belgian (R)

*Colonial Spanish Strains:

Baca-Chica (C)

Choctaw (C)

Santa Cruz (C)

Sulphur (C)

Wilbur-Cruce (C)

BREEDS IMPORTED BEFORE 1900



HORSES

Cleveland Bay (C)

Hackney Horse (C)

Shire (C)

Suffolk (C)

Clydesdale (T)

BREEDS IMPORTED AFTER 1900

DONKEYS



Poitou (C)

Miniature Donkey (W)



HORSES

Caspian (C)

Dales Pony (C)

Dartmoor (C)

Exmoor (C)

Fell Pony (C)

Highland Pony (C)

Akhal-Teke (T)

Gotland (T)

Irish Draught (T)

Lipizzan (T)

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renaissance both in the private sector and mail-order hatcheries.

Chicken breeds graduating from the CPL this year include **Australorp**, **Rhode Island Red**, **Plymouth Rock**, and **Brahma**. The first three are important dual-purpose birds that have become popular choices for small flock owners interested in both eggs and meat. Brahmas stand out for their extreme size and gentle nature, making them an appealing breed for many bird enthusiasts.

Australorp chickens now boast more than 28,000 birds in the U.S. Developed in Australia as champion egg layers, they are a great choice for beginning poultry owners. Australorps are easy keepers which means you can harvest more eggs on less feed. Their easy-going temperament also makes them popular with families. Australorps have been recognized by the APA since 1929 and are popular for youth projects.

Rhode Island Red and **Plymouth Rock** chickens have enjoyed long popularity since their creation in the U.S. in the 1800s. Both varieties have experienced a resurgence in the past 20 years because they have returned to their productive roots. Today, these heritage breeds figure strongly in the pastured poultry movement. Exhibition breeders have supplemented their income with sales of non-show birds to production breeders.



Australorp - Graduate



Brahma - Graduate

These dual-purpose chickens are perfect for family use. They lay sufficient eggs throughout the year to keep the pantry replenished, and are just the right size for table birds.

Brahma chickens are also graduating thanks to increasing popularity around the world. These gentle giants are known as the "King of All Poultry" and are appreciated for their great size and strength. This breed, together with the Cochin, fueled what became known as "Hen Fever," a national obsession for poultry that hit both America and England around 1850. Standing up to 30" tall, today's females average 10 lbs. while males weigh about 12 lbs. This hardy breed is a superior winter layer and thrives in moist, cool climates.

Other moves for chicken breeds include **Buttercup**, **Campine**, **Houdan**, **Sultan**, and **Yokohama** improving from Critical to Threatened. Movement in a positive direction is always welcome! The Livestock Conservancy is also pleased to report renewed interest in **Sebright** chickens, which improved from Critical to Watch this year with more than 1,000 breeding birds.

Moving from Threatened to Watch are **Andalusian**, **Buckeye**, **Cornish**, **Crèvecoeur**, **Minorca**, **Old English Game**, **Rhode Island White**, and **Spitzhauben** chickens. Improving from Watch to Recovering are **Delaware**, **Jersey Giant**, and **Polish** chickens.

Three bantam chicken breeds join the CPL because the 2021 Murray McMurray Poultry Census revealed declining populations in both the U.S. and the countries of origin. The **Belgian Bearded D'Uccle**, **Booted Bantam**, and **Japanese Bantam** are showstoppers with no standard-sized counterparts. Many breeders enjoy bantams for their smaller size, which allows for less coop space and a lower feed bill. Plus, bantams are often excellent layers. Two of their small eggs are equal to about one extra large chicken egg, with a slightly higher proportion of yolk to egg white. You can learn more about these new CPL breeds at livestockconservancy.org/heritage-breeds/poultry-breeds/.

A wide variety of chicken breeds are available to meet the needs and interests of poultry breeders, farms of all sizes, and backyard keepers. It is encouraging to see so many heritage breeds growing in popularity, securing genetic resources for years to come.

Three varieties of turkeys have benefited from small farms and even larger operations raising pastured turkeys for the holiday market. Many of these farms are purchasing turkey poults from mail-order hatcheries, and at least one larger pastured operation is making a real difference for heritage turkeys by maintaining their own breeding stock. **Black**, **Royal Palm**, and **Slate** turkeys improve from Threatened to Watch in 2023.



Buttercup - Threatened

2023 CONSERVATION PRIORITY POULTRY BREEDS

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

Threatened (T) Fewer than 1,000 breeding birds in the U.S., with seven or fewer primary breeding flocks, and an estimated global population less than 5,000.

Watch (W) Fewer than 5,000 breeding birds in the U.S., with ten or fewer primary breeding flocks, and an estimated global population less than 10,000.

Also included are breeds that present genetic or numerical concerns or have a limited geographic distribution.

Recovering (R) Breeds once listed in another category, but have exceeded Watch category numbers, and still need monitoring.



**THE LIVESTOCK
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NORTH AMERICAN BREEDS

CHICKENS



Cubalaya (C)
Holland (C)
Java (C)
New Hampshire (T)
Buckeye (W)
Chantecler (W)
Dominique (W)
Rhode Island White (W)
Delaware (R)
Jersey Giant (R)



DUCKS

Australian Spotted (C)
Ancona (W)
Cayuga (W)



GEESE

Cotton Patch (T)
Pilgrim (T)
American Buff (W)



TURKEYS

Beltville Small White (T)
White Holland (T)
Black (W)
Bourbon Red (W)
Bronze (W)
Narragansett (W)
Royal Palm (W)
Slate (W)
All Other Varieties* (W)

*Varieties that are distinct, but not APA recognized include Chocolate, Jersey Buff, Lavender, Midget White, and other distinct color varieties. Does not include broad-breasted varieties because they are not endangered.

Breed identity in poultry is challenging. Breeders of all kinds, including exhibition, production, and hatchery, are diligent in breeding standard-bred birds. Other breeders sometimes resort to crossbreeding to achieve their goals and promote their birds as standard-bred. The Livestock Conservancy is unable to validate each breeding program, but buyers are encouraged to ask if birds are purebred and meet breed standards.

BREEDS IMPORTED BEFORE 1900

CHICKENS



Booted Bantam (C)
La Flèche (C)
Malay (C)
Redcap (C)
White-Faced
Black Spanish (C)
Campine (T)
Dorking (T)
Hamburg (T)
Houdan (T)

Langshan (T)
Modern Game (T)
Sultan (T)
Sumatra (T)
Ancona (W)
Andalusian (W)
Belgian Bearded d'Uccle (W)
Cornish (W)
Crévecœur (W)
Minorca (W)
Sebright (W)

COCHIN

(R)
Leghorn -
Non-Industrial (R)
Polish (R)



DUCKS

Aylesbury (C)
Buff or Orpington (W)
Rouen - Non-Industrial (W)



GEESE

Pomeranian (C)
Sebastopol (T)
African (W)
Chinese (W)
Toulouse - Dewlap (W)

BREEDS IMPORTED AFTER 1900

CHICKENS



Aseel (C)
Catalana (C)
Shamo (C)
Buttercup (T)
Icelandic (T)
Japanese Bantam (T)
Lakenvelder (T)
Nankin (T)
Russian Orloff (T)

Yokohama (T)
Faverolles (W)
Old English Game (W)
Phoenix (W)
Spitzhauben (W)
Sussex (R)



DUCKS

Dutch Hookbill (C)
Magpie (T)
Saxony (T)
Campbell (W)
Silver Appleyard (W)
Swedish (W)
Welsh Harlequin (W)
Runner or
Indian Runner (R)



GEESE

Roman (C)
Shetland (C)
Steinbacher (C)

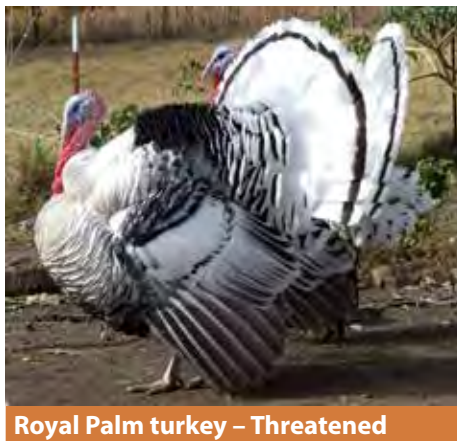
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All heritage turkey varieties are well suited for pastured production. They mate naturally and have healthy immune systems. Breeding birds also have long, productive life spans. Hens are commonly productive for five to seven years while toms can service a flock for up to five years. Farmers can choose the right variety for their production goals based on size, color, and availability in their region.

COOPERATION

Each year hundreds of livestock breeders, breed associations, and global conservation partners contribute information about more than 200 individual breeds to The Livestock Conservancy. This data about each breed's status, risks, and opportunities is weighed carefully to rank their risk of extinction. The Conservation Priority List is the annual product of that rich context of information and drives specific conservation programs. Stock selections across America often start by reviewing the CPL.

Past conservation efforts that arose from information provided by partners include the importation of semen for **Large Black** and **Gloucestershire Old**



Spots pigs in 2015. The 2019 Poultry Summit and detailed censuses of **Poitou** donkeys and **Gulf Coast** sheep in 2021 also resulted from CPL preparation. Even the establishment of The Livestock Conservancy's pedigree registration services in recent years is directly due to monitoring the populations of vulnerable heritage breeds.

Thank you to all the individuals and organizations who steward rare breeds. Your work to register their pedigrees, support their breeders, and partner with The Livestock Conservancy to monitor and promote each of the breeds on

SUPPORT CONSERVATION

Want to support heritage breed conservation? Consider adding a rare breed to your farm or homestead. First consider your production goals, housing, pasture access, egg needs, and climate to find the right breed for you.

Expert: **Australian Spotted** ducks, **Old English Game** chickens

Intermediate: **Corriente** cattle, **Buff** ducks, **Buttercup** chickens, **Royal Palm** turkeys

Beginner: **Silver Appleyard** ducks, **Campine** chickens, **Rhode Island White** chickens, **Black** turkeys

the CPL makes a difference. We also appreciate the generous support of Manna Pro for sponsoring this year's List. Working together, not a single breed listed on the CPL has been lost to extinction in more than four decades.

How can you help move the needle to sustain your favorite rare breed? ■

CPL PARAMETERS

Livestock and poultry breeds on the Conservation Priority List conform to specific genetic and numerical parameters. Breeds that originate in the United States (native breeds) are especially important for conservation because they rarely exist outside the U.S. Native breeds and those in America for more than 100 years are included on the CPL largely based on a continuous presence in the U.S., as well as census numbers.

Breeds with a shorter history in America and breeds created in the 20th century undergo a more complex evaluation. The primary goal is to include breeds that contribute significantly to global conservation, and breeds that could not be re-created because the foundation stock no longer exists.

Importation has brought many new breeds to America's shores in the past century. In most cases, the ideal situation is for imported breeds such as Icelandic sheep or Andalusian horses to be conserved in their country of origin.

In other cases such as Arapawa goats, the U.S. animals represent a significant portion of a globally endangered population.

Parameters for inclusion on the CPL are summarized as follows:

1. The breed is from one of the following seven traditional U.S. livestock species: cattle, donkeys, goats, horses, pigs, rabbits, and sheep. Rabbit and poultry parameters are defined separately.

2. The breed census satisfies numerical guidelines.

3. The breed is a true genetic breed; when mated together, it reproduces the breed type.

4. The breed has had an established and continuous breeding population in the United States since 1925. If the breed was imported or developed since 1925, it may be included on the CPL if:

- The foundation stock is no longer available
- It meets global numerical guidelines
- At least three breeding lines are present in the U.S.
- At least twenty breeding females are present in the U.S.

- At least five breeders reside in different locations in the U.S.
- An association of breeders is organized in the U.S.
- The U.S. population is contributing to the breed's survival internationally through:
 - being reciprocal to other international populations. The registry must be sanctioned by the mother organization so as not to be a dead-end for the breed; breeding stock must be licensed according to the rules of the mother organization
 - an important and numerous population when compared to other countries
 - the non-U.S. populations of the breed being at risk geographically or politically

Additional details may be found on the website at <https://livestockconservancy.org/heritage-breeds/parameters-conservation-priority-list/>.



Narragansett Pacer horse – Extinct



Rocky Mountain horse – Threatened

EXTINCTION AND EVOLUTION

By Judy Brummer and Jeannette Beranger

The American history of the **Rocky Mountain** horse breed began when gaited horses, Spanish Jennets, Scottish Galloways, and Irish Hobbies were brought by the earliest settlers to “the New World” in an area that later became Rhode Island. For many years, the lineage of all gaited American equine breeds was intertwined through these common ancestors.

The first truly American equine breed was the Narragansett Pacer, developed in 1676. This breed was prized for its smooth gait, speed, and calm behavior at a time when riding horseback over ground often impassable by carriage or wagon was the only mode of transportation. These horses were often called “saddlers” or “saddle horses.” They averaged 14 hands tall and were often chestnut-colored. The author James Fenimore Cooper said, “They have handsome foreheads, the head clean, the neck long, the arms and legs thin and tapered.”

Rhode Island was the center of the American horse world at this time, with up to 1,000 horses located on individual farms throughout the Narragansett Bay region. Both George Washington and Paul Revere reportedly owned Narragansett Pacers.

During the 1800s, most of the best Narragansett Pacer breeding stock was

exported to Canada and the West Indies, decimating the American population. The small number of purebreds that remained were crossed with other breeds and purebred animals eventually disappeared. Unfortunately, this “first American breed of gaited horses” became extinct toward the end of the 19th century due to cross-breeding and the poor management of important foundation stock.

No stud books or early records have been found to document the origins, evolution, or demise of this breed. Though valued highly by their owners, without well-organized breed management the Narragansett Pacer survived only about 200 years. There are lessons here for those who would hope to maintain a small but well-defined heritage breed for generations. Good management of the herd is very important to the long-term well-being of the breed.

During the late 1700s and early 1800s, colonists migrated west from Virginia through the Cumberland Gap into the land that would become Kentucky and Tennessee. The route became a natural thoroughfare and is sometimes called “the notch America squeezed through.” The horses they brought were valued team members in the development of the United States. Many different types of horses including several gaited breeds

carried the colonists into the new western frontier and eventually came to exist side by side throughout what would become Eastern Kentucky.

Horses were needed for the transportation of people and the movement of goods, both locally and westward. They were also needed for pulling and powering agricultural machinery to provide food for other livestock and the ever-increasing American population. Until the internal

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Providence, Rhode Island, horse buyer's ad from 1764.

combustion engine was widely available in the 20th century, horses were a necessary partner in almost everyone's daily life. Raising and trading horses became an important industry.

The American gaited horses continued to evolve in this area. Narragansett Pacers that still existed were probably brought to the Appalachian mountains. Canadian Pacers, offspring of Narragansett Pacer stallions crossed with French mares, also arrived in the Eastern Kentucky region with their owners from the North. Thoroughbreds imported from England and descendants of Justin Morgan's Figure joined horses with Spanish origins from the shores and islands of Virginia and the Carolinas. Offspring traceable to all these lines was probably found in the horses that came to the area before 1792.

By 1800, 92 percent of all taxpayers in Kentucky were horse owners. The average owner had three horses while a farmer might own from 10 to 50. Horse breeders often chose to mate their stock based on notable and visible characteristics of the horses or their personal needs at the time. This approach was more common than choosing to mate animals because they were descended from a certain lineage or background.

This cross-breeding eventually evolved into a unique landrace breed of horses in the Appalachian region of Eastern Kentucky. A landrace develops when a group of animals are bred in a local area. Adaptation to the local physical environment and the common needs of individual breeders in that region define the evolving characteristics of the landrace.

With the Narragansett Pacer's influence, it isn't surprising to learn these horses of Eastern Kentucky were often referred to as "saddlers" or "saddle horses," almost a tribute to the lost first breed of American gaited horses. This is where some of the ancestors of the **Rocky Mountain** horse were first known.



Photo courtesy of Judy Brummer

Rocky Mountain horse – Threatened

They were versatile horses used under saddle and in harness, assisting their owners in every aspect of frontier life. And they were bred to serve the daily needs of their owners and produce offspring desirable by others with similar needs. There were almost no American livestock registries or breed organizations in existence at that time.

According to legend, an unusually colored gaited colt was brought from the Rocky Mountain region of the western frontier to Log Lick, Kentucky, around 1890. The animal became known as the "Rocky Mountain Stallion." This tale might seem far-fetched unless you have read personal accounts from that era; Google the Hussey manuscripts for more information about these adventures.

Valued for his unique characteristics, the Rocky Mountain Stallion was undoubtedly bred to descendants of Narragansett Pacer, Canadian Pacer, Pacer-Thoroughbred crosses, and other "saddle horse" mares. The results were calm, well-gaited, easy keepers. The horses were hardy, speedy, comfortable to ride, and good in harness. They had a good work ethic, could safely and easily traverse the hills and valleys of this Appalachian region, and shared in all aspects of the demanding rural lifestyles of their owners.

A record of the taxes paid on a "**Rocky Mountain Horse**" in the late 1800s has been documented in West Virginia. These horses were being called by this distinct name long before the Rocky Mountain Horse Association™ registry was established in 1986 to record individual animals, preserve their pedigrees, and ensure their future.

Unfortunately, the same steps were not taken in the 200 years the Narragansett Pacer breed existed resulting in their eventual extinction. Yet, many of those bloodlines undoubtedly contributed to the evolution of **Rocky Mountain** horses, a second landrace breed listed as Threatened on the Conservation Priority List. The mission of The Livestock Conservancy is to protect America's endangered livestock and poultry breeds from extinction. Thousands of members and animal stewards help ensure we do not repeat the mistakes of history. ■

This article is adapted from a series of articles first published in the *Rocky Mountain Horse* magazine.



DOES ANY BREED NEED MULTIPLE ASSOCIATIONS?

By D. P. Sponenberg

Breed associations and registries have overlapping responsibilities important for breed conservation. If these are not well managed, they can become an impediment to breed survival. Associations and registries exist to serve their breed, rather than the other way around.

Breeds serve as predictable genetic resources for matching to farm purpose and system. Associations and registries ideally play a leading role in maintaining this important function. Their practices should foster breed integrity while safeguarding the overall type and function of animals.

Genetic integrity and breed purity play out differently in different types of breeds. In standardized breeds, the issue is usually fairly straightforward. These breeds assure purity by limiting registration to animals with two registered parents, although some allow grading up to registered status. Ideally, genetics and distinctiveness are protected without diluting breed character.

Landraces, or local breeds, have a much shorter history of registration than standardized breeds. They tend to exhibit more phenotypic variability and less conformity to a restrictive breed standard.

So, breed organizations must decide which animals to include in the breed.

A thorough breed description or matrix of traits can help answer this question, rarely encountered in standardized breeds. Animals somewhat peripheral to the landrace may be controversial; some breeders want them included, and others want them excluded. These questions often lead to splits among breeders resulting in multiple registries with different rules.

Ensuring breed purity does not oppose the role of associations and registries in maintaining a breed's genetic diversity. Within the parameters that keep a breed true to its purpose, associations should encourage breeders to select for characteristics that fit their situation. Each herd then has a unique role in the overall diversity within the breed, while still ensuring every member of a breed is more like other breed members than any other breed resource.

International breeds have yet other important issues that affect registry function. Registries for breeds with international populations should allow reciprocal recognition of animals to allow international movement of animals or germplasm. The registry in the home

country often sets the tone for reciprocity. Their actions are not always far-sighted, but they are the fount from which the entire breed springs. Actions that lead to reciprocity should be encouraged.

Beyond the biological factors of breed maintenance, practical and political aspects also need to be considered. They can defeat breed maintenance by alienating and excluding breeders.

Registry rules need to be appropriate and logical. These vary from breed to breed. For example, DNA validation of pedigrees is unrealistic for most sheep or goats, simply because the cost can be a significant portion of the animal's commercial value. DNA validation may drive breeders away from registering their animals, and those animals may be lost to the breed's future. In contrast, most horses have a value that easily warrants DNA validation of pedigree. This is one example of a requirement that sounds good but fails in a practical sense depending on the breed.

Another example is requiring photographs of animals. For some breeds this makes sense; for others, such as range-raised animals, it is unrealistic. Rules need to be practical so breeders eagerly participate.

Registry function is also important. Delayed turnaround of registrations is a common source of frustration for breeders. This can lead to splits within registries, simply out of desperation to get animals validated as members of the breed.

Political aspects can also challenge registries and associations. Factions can develop around procedures, rules, or individual animals. Sometimes one faction is clearly right, and one wrong. More often, the issues are subjective and either approach could work adequately for breed security. When money and a desire for control become involved, situations deteriorate rapidly. There are very few exceptions to the rule that political splits damage breed security.

In general, breeds are best served by single associations and single registries. Nevertheless, many breeds are represented by multiple organizations and registries. The tendency to split is common, logical to many people, and should be considered carefully. In general, things that split breeders into different camps are bad while things that unite breeders are usually good.

To evaluate the legitimacy of multiple organizations for a single breed, the following questions might help:

Are the organizations in question safeguarding the breed resource?

The 25 or so breed associations for Colonial Spanish Horses have each defined the breed slightly differently,

including certain foundation horses and excluding others. While the splitting may be a bit excessive, a closer look reveals few are concerned with exactly the same genetic pool. It is equally true that finding common ground might have been possible and would not have split breeders and the breed quite so much. Working together would expand the potential for effectively promoting the breed.

Is the registry reciprocal with other registries for the same breed?

This question is especially important for international breeds. Will the "home country registry" accept registered animals from outside that country? When breeds are represented by more than one registry domestically, the best registries have a pathway for adding animals from the other registry that meet their criteria. Reciprocity allows breeders to take advantage of more genetic diversity within the breed.

Are the procedures and costs appropriate for the value of the animal?

This is a subjective, but important, assessment. Disagreements over rules, procedures, and fees have often led to splits, resulting in multiple registries serving an identical genetic resource. This does not serve the breed well.

Is the basis for a split political or personal?

If the answer is "yes," then multiple registries are nearly always a detriment to the breed. Breeders should band together to heal the rift.

Fundamental principles of collaboration can go far in preventing splits. Finding ways to resolve political, personal, market, and procedural disagreements is critical to strong registries and associations.

Members and leaders of goodwill ensure active listening and find common ground among those who harbor differences of opinion. Some disagreements need outside help to resolve; seeking such help is the mark of a dedicated organization. Structural changes can address many of the disagreements between breeders. Changes can assure a single organization succeeds in tracking segments of importance to specific breeders.

In the end, breeds are best served by a single breed association or registry that serves all breeders. ■



Photo courtesy of Haenlein family

IN MEMORIAM

George Frederick Wilhelm Haenlein was professor emeritus at the University of Delaware (U of D) Department of Animal and Food Sciences. Haenlein taught dairy courses in cattle production, judging, and selection, as well as genetics, reproduction, and dairy goat production. He was also an accredited livestock judge, supervised the U of D dairy herd, and was the Delaware State Dairy Extension Specialist, publishing several hundred extension papers throughout his distinguished career.

His research focused on nutrition and the factors affecting milk composition, featuring work with 3,000 **Guernsey** cows. A prolific author, Haenlein published four dairy books, multiple chapters, and more than 150 refereed research papers. He served as the founding editor-in-chief of the *Small Ruminant Research Journal* and reviewed manuscripts for other scientific publications. He presented on cattle, goats, and sheep in 17 countries and helped the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) with livestock improvement programs in 10 countries.

Professor Haenlein received the Distinguished Service Award from the American Dairy Science Association. He died April 8, 2023.

WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST LIFE MEMBERS

The Livestock Conservancy thanks the following individuals who recently chose to support conservation programs by becoming Life Members:

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Horseshoe Bay, TX

Pam Hand & Will Hueston
Free Union, VA

Cynthia Moore-Bross
Grand Saline, TX

Susan Sponenberg
Houston, TX

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

MUCH ADO ABOUT MUTTON

Mutton is the meat of an older sheep. While highly valued around the globe, mutton is one of the most maligned meats in the English-speaking world. Bob Kennard does a beautiful job explaining why in his book *Much Ado About Mutton*, available for purchase in our online store. For example, before WWII if someone in England wanted to treat their dinner guests to a fine meal, mutton would have been served. During the war, ill-prepared canned mutton was fed to many European and American troops; the off-flavors led to a reputation that persists to this day.

Livestock Conservancy ambassador Chef Sohui Kim wants to change the conversation about mutton at her new Brooklyn, NY restaurant. During the Victorian Age, Kim's Gage & Tollner restaurant was famous for mutton. Today, Chef Kim wants to bring it back to the table, and she launched her effort with a special benefit event for the Conservancy.

The featured mutton came from a **Cotswold** ram provided by Livestock Conservancy members Max and Christine Crossman of Ewetopia Farm in Whitehall, NY. With a hanging weight of 160 lbs, its ample meat thrilled the 50 guests with mutton delicacies. Gage and Tollner's superb staff incorporated mutton into each course of a dinner



Livestock Conservancy Ambassador Isabella Rossellini welcomed guests to Ambassador Chef Sohui Kim's Gage & Tollner restaurant.

featuring Scotch Broth, Mutton Ragu Cavatelli, Roasted Mutton Saddle, and Minced Fruit Pies.

Special guest host Livestock Conservancy Ambassador Isabella Rossellini shared the story of mutton, the importance of rare breeds for biodiversity, and the work of The

Livestock Conservancy. Gage and Tollner generously donated over \$4,000 in profits to the Conservancy's conservation programs, and they are eager to host similar events in the future. Our sincere thanks to all including Bob Kennard for lending the title of his book to the event.

If you are interested in experiencing magnificent mutton, contact a local shepherd through the Conservancy's *Directory: Rare Breeds and Products Resource Guide*. We'd love to hear about your culinary adventure. ■



A Cotswold ram provided mutton for four courses including a Roasted Mutton Saddle.



WISDOM FROM RARE HARE BARN: MORE THAN JUST RABBITS

All photos courtesy of Eric and Callene Rapp



American rabbit - Watch

By Cathy R. Payne

Eric and Callene Rapp have a long history of animal management, practical farming experience, and leadership in the field of heritage livestock that spans three decades. They have worked together shoulder-to-shoulder in a way that would challenge many couples.

The couple met at a hog operation in northern Missouri that had 75,000 breeding sows. Callene was the operation's first female farrowing manager. Eric was recruited to implement standards above the typical industry standard to improve survival rates and reduce loss. Some of his more "radical" ideas were supported by Temple Grandin when she was hired to inspect the operation's practices and

provide suggestions regarding humane treatment methods.

Three years after their first meeting, Callene and Eric married and started their first farm, Rock Creek Paints, in Missouri. Within two years they moved closer to Eric's family in Kansas. Three months later, Callene got a job as a zoo keeper in the children's farm at the Sedgwick County Zoo in Wichita. In 1999 she was promoted to manager of the children's farm, a supervisory position she maintains currently.

Although Callene had a degree in Animal Science and Eric had taken some veterinary courses, neither had any awareness of heritage livestock until they were exposed to them through the zoo. Once they realized breeds needed saving, they embraced that goal and dived in head-first. Not only did they raise heritage animals and join The Livestock Conservancy, but they became leaders. Eric and Callene became active in the annual conferences and served on the Board of Directors. Each of them served two terms between 2003 and 2012. Callene served as president of the board for one of her terms.

The Rare Hare Barn currently raises **American Chinchilla** and **American Blue** rabbits, both North American breeds. Eric is most fond of **American Chinchillas**, but Callene appreciates the sleek beauty and docile temperament of the **American Blue** rabbits.

Eric discovered that, in the rabbit industry, people don't want to pay for the value of good breeding stock. To get the best stock, it's important to cull hard and select toward the Standard of Perfection for the breed. The feed needed to keep rabbits to grow out and select from to sell two does and a buck requires a huge amount of money.

"We tell them 'You need to buy two bucks and three to four does that are unrelated,'" Eric explained. "A lot of this heritage stuff requires education." This is not just idle advice – in 2018, the Rapps published the book *Raising Rabbits for Meat* to help those wishing to pursue this path. (The book is available for purchase in the Conservancy's online store.)

Callene became enamored with **Pineywoods** cattle when she and Eric visited the Kerr Center in Oklahoma as part of a Livestock Conservancy board meeting. In 2008 they obtained the last living polled bull from the Palmer-Dunn bloodline and seven horned heifers from the Conway strain. According to the Rare Hare Barn website, fifteen years later they still have five of their original heifers, and the **Pineywoods** breed has moved from Critical to Threatened on The Livestock Conservancy's Conservation Priority List.

To assist homesteaders and small farmers get started with cattle, Eric and Callene wrote *Homestead Cows: The Complete Guide to Raising Healthy, Happy Cattle*, published in 2021. (This book is also available in our online store.)

The **Arapawa** goats are a dual-purpose breed from New Zealand. When asked how they got involved with this breed, Callene chimed up, "That's my fault. It started at the zoo. Plymouth Plantation in Massachusetts imported the **Arapawa** from New Zealand because they fit the type of goats that would have been in Plymouth in the 1600s. As they bred



Eric and Callene Rapp



Arapawa goats – Critical

them and increased their numbers, they looked for places to have satellite herds. They contacted the Sedgwick County Zoo. Eric and I got a pair in 2001, even though we swore that we'd never have goats here." Eric lamented, "Fencing in a goat is like fencing in water." Their current number of goats includes fourteen does and seven bucks.

Callene explained that similar to most dual-purpose breeds, the **Arapawa** do not excel at either purpose. They are not as meaty as a meat breed such as Boer goats or as good a milker as a dairy breed such as the La Mancha. Eric added, "There are so few of them out there that nobody knows how much feed they require to produce meat." They are hoping to get the goats to a chef to evaluate the culinary qualities of the meat. Callene lamented that they are so critically rare that people want them because they are rare, without understanding what conservation breeding is all about. They struggle with placing stock because it is difficult to determine which buyers will follow through with the efforts involved in conservation management. Customers must be vetted before placement.

"Heritage breeds need a job," Eric explained. "In the case of the rabbits, we had all these culls. We processed 18,000 fryers in ten years, and we sold 2,000 to 3,000 does and bucks as breeders. We got the fryers into restaurants." Their philosophy is that to keep preserving a heritage breed, it must pay for itself and sustain the herds genetically.

In addition to having sound breeding stock, somebody has to keep records of both selection and cost inputs. Frank Reese, a master poultry breeder, advised them to "watch where the money is." Eric stated, "The rabbit doesn't sell itself."

Small producers of heritage breeds need good records to know what each animal costs to raise, what inputs cost, and the number of animals sold. To be a sustainable farm, it must bring in more than it puts out. Record-keeping and bookkeeping are essential. So is marketing.

Callene made countless cold calls to restaurants before finding their first customer, and marketing skills are essential for small-scale, sustainable farmers. There is no avoiding the hard work, infrastruc-

ture, and time investment needed. The Rapps started with one rabbit barn and worked their way up to a dozen.

The Rapps manage their heritage breeds intending to stay calm when handling the stock and to keep the animals calm as well. This not only reduces stress for both humans and livestock but allows the handlers to complete their tasks more readily.

"I can move the cows into the chute by myself by just being calm," Callene asserted. "They're used to it. Our squeeze chute is right where they have to walk to get a drink of water, so it's familiar to them. The load-up chute is also in that area."

Eric added, "When there are cows in the squeeze chute, we don't let them exit through the headgate. We let them stand and go out the side. That way when you go to put them in it, they don't think they can just run through it. This means less injuries to people, too."

The Rapps are very hands-on with all of the livestock. "We check on them frequently, so they're used to us," Callene explained. They plan ahead to anticipate potential problems, then arrange the farm to assist them in avoiding those difficulties. ■

The Livestock Conservancy is indebted to farms such as Rare Hare Barn. These are small-scale breeders who work to raise heritage breeds, mentor others through their books and screening processes, get involved with leadership, and keep an informative website at <https://www.rareharebarn.com>.



Pineywoods cattle – Threatened

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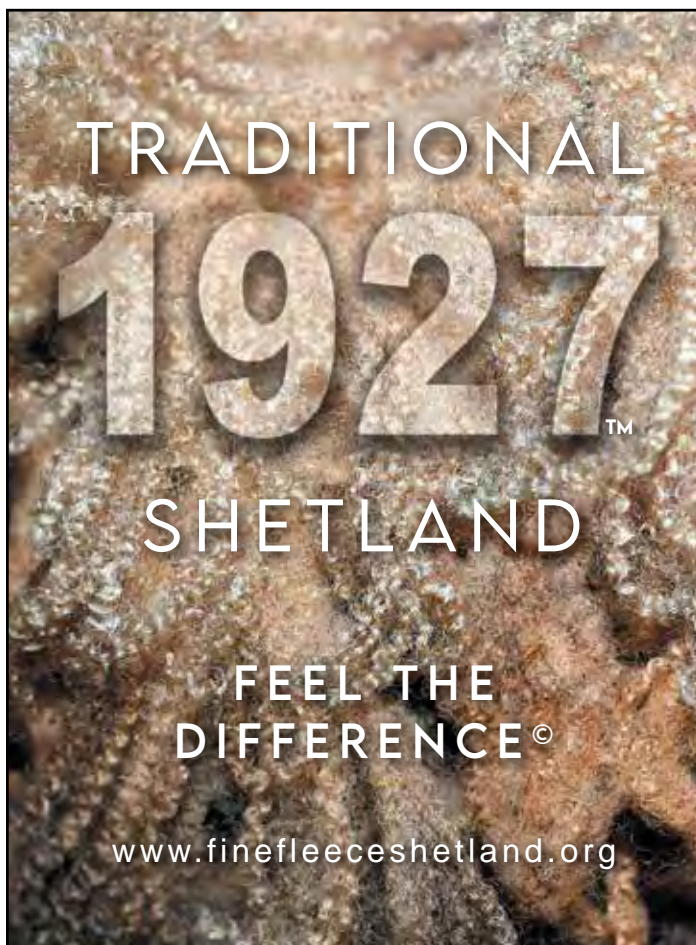
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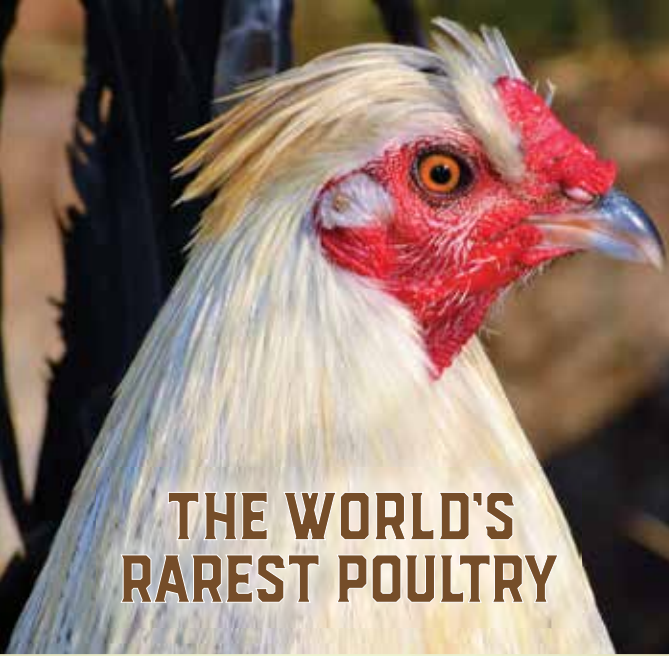
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- Jeannette Beranger, Senior Program Manager, The Livestock Conservancy
- Judy Brummer, Interim Executive Director, The Livestock Conservancy, Board Member, Rocky Mountain Horse Foundation, Board Member, Rocky Mountain Horse Association
- Jim Cheskawich, Past President, Samoyed Club of America
- Cindra Kirscher, Program Manager, The Livestock Conservancy
- Brian Larson, Former President, National Lincoln Sheep Breeders Association, Former Board Chair, The Livestock Conservancy
- Becky Mahoney, President, American Guinea Hog Association
- Kathryn Matchett, Non-profit Consultant, Kathryn Matchett and Associates
- Mari-Beth O'Neill, Vice President, Sport Services, American Kennel Club
- Jaye Ray, Program Assistant & Studbooks Registrar, The Livestock Conservancy
- Brittany Sweeney, Marketing Coordinator, NC State University, Marketing and Communications Consultant

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