

Henry's Journal

Hog With Wattles Attends Fair

By Henry Wolff Jr.

Knew the wife was going to be skeptical. Actually, she didn't say much when I told her that I'd seen a hog with wattles, which is exactly what I saw and if you don't believe me ask some of the folks who were at the Town and Country Days last weekend at Karnes City.

I'd never seen a hog with wattles before.

A chicken, and even a lizard, but this hog has little wattles hanging down from behind the jowl, appendages about three inches long behind the jawline.

Rudolph Polasek says his brother, Tommy, has about 300 head of red wattle hogs in Oklahoma.

He just brought the hog for people to look at, which he's raising to eat, says the hogs are originally from wild stock and will feed on almost anything that grows and don't have the fat that is bred into most of the domestic breeds of today. Originally from some island, the pioneers raised them and red wattles were rather plentiful at one time.

Polasek says the meat has a taste as much like veal as pork.

He was at the Town and Country Days to exhibit some of his 1-stroke engines, including two large ones from his collection of of some 50 such engines. One, an 8-hp "hit and miss" pulled six oil wells on former Gov. Coke Stevenson's place near Whitsett in the Three Rivers area.

Polasek also had on display a big 16-horse "throttle and governor" engine that dates back to about 1913 and was used in the '20s to pull a Hammerhill at one of the first feedlots in Karnes County.

The oilfield engine was used through World War II.

Polasek retired a couple of years ago from Lone Star Gas and devotes his time to his engine hobby, farming and a few cattle — "what I can buy today and sell tomorrow."



Rudolph Polasek with one of his old engines at Karnes City.

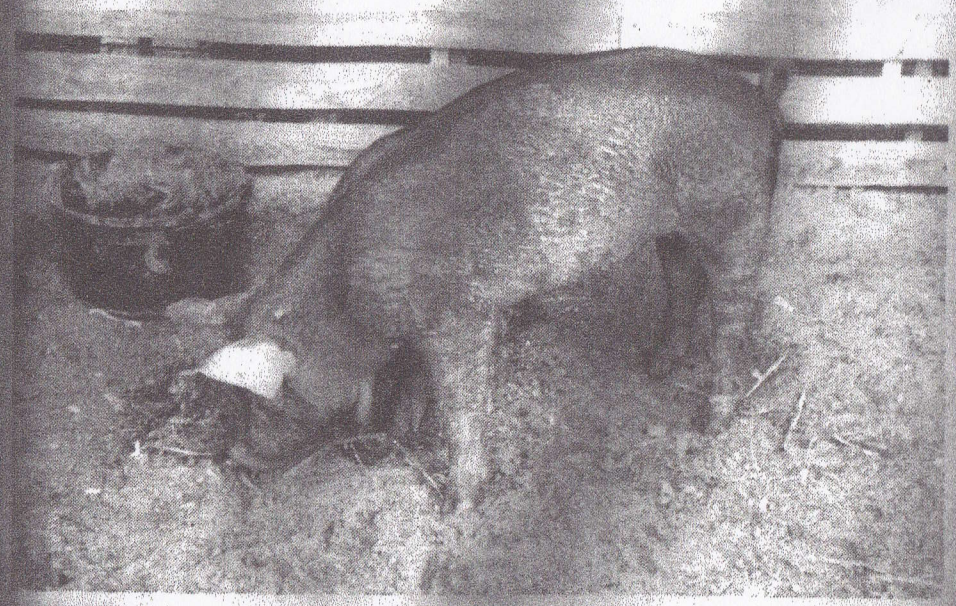
"Now, I work 16 to 18 hours a day," he laughs.

He makes field days around the country with other engine collectors, which has become quite a think, and you find everything on exhibit from the smallest one-strokes to the big steam tractors.

As for the hogs, he only raised one or two for his personal use.

The red wattle did make an unusual exhibit since most folks haven't even seen such and, in fact, I didn't run across anyone who had except for him.

"They will eat bitterweeds and grass and do better than on corn," he says.



Red wattle hogs were a familiar sight on pioneer farms.

Up until recently the hogs were considered extinct, until H.C. Wengler of Jacksonville got to looking for some, remembering them from his youth. After retiring in 1965, he spent seven years looking for them, and finally located three about 100 miles south of Houston and from these the breed has been re-established.

It's said a 2-year-old boar can reach 4 feet in height, 8 feet in length, and weigh 1,200 pounds.

"Also," Polasek says, "a sow in the wild can raise three litters of 15 to 20 piglets per year."

Know one thing for sure, a hog with wattles will attract some attention, and I even took a picture just in case the wife might get suspicious when I told her what I'd seen. I didn't want her thinking that I'd spent all my time in the Red Horse Saloon.

Probably shouldn't have tried to convince her that the hog also crowed, and wouldn't have if she'd have paid more attention to what I'd said in the first place.

Could have told her it had feathers.

"Henry's Journal, Volume 1," a 203-page book of selected columns by Henry Wolff Jr., is available only at The Advocate, 311 E. Constitution, or by mail. Hardbacks are $14.99 plus $1.09 tax for a total of $16.08; softbacks $9.99 plus $.72 for a total of $10.71. Add $1.25 per book for postage and handling and address mail orders to Henry's Journal, P.O. Box 1518, Victoria, Texas 77902.

Glad You Asked That