



Winter 2009 Newsletter

December 2009

Breeder Profile: Wendy & Jim Parker

**Don't
forget to
renew your
RWHA
Membership**

Greetings from Dallas, Oregon. My husband Jim and I, along with our two teenagers, live on a 45 acre grass based farm in the Willamette Valley. We currently have a Red Wattle herd of 28 pure-bred hogs, including 5 breeding sows, 2 breeding boars and 5 replacement gilts/boars with the rest of the hogs maturing market animals. In addition to the hogs, we also have Dexter cattle, Narragansett turkeys, Buckeye chickens and American Curly Horses. All of our animals are maintained in a pasture system on a year round basis. Keeping livestock outdoors in the rainy Pacific Northwest is an interesting experience in mud management, I can tell you. We bought our first 3 Red Wattles in the spring of

2008. I simply wanted a farm pig or two to eat the garden scraps, but Jim had just got through reading an issue of Mother Earth News that highlighted the plight of many of America's old heritage livestock breeds and he wanted to help save the wonderful old breeds. We decided on Red Wattles because we wanted a larger hog that would produce exceptional meat and also because reports of their incredible dispositions were many. Having easy to handle livestock is important to us as we do have kids involved in the daily farm work. To have both great eating and easy handling in one animal is awesome! Our primary focus is developing a local meat production/marketing system by

which we can raise the hogs in a natural, pastured setting and then sell the resulting meat to local consumers. While we are pursuing this goal, we are also on a journey to improve the quality of our stock and increase the genetic diversity of the Red Wattle Hogs in this area of the country. We currently offer meat quality piglets for sale as well as a limited number of breeding stock piglets. Additionally we sell pasture finished Purebred Red Wattle pork either by the side or by the retail piece. This is a new feature for the newsletter. If you are interested in submitting your profile, please, email your article to: redwattles@hotmail.com or RWHA, 7024 Spearsville Rd., Morgantown, IN 46160

A letter from the RWHA President

I would like to thank Josh Wendland for all of his years of service as President of the RWHA and for all the hard work he has put into saving Red Wattle Hogs. I am glad to report that Josh will stay on as Technical Advisor to the RWHA. I hope to continue the work Josh started. We've come a long way in the past few years. The number of RWHA members has more than doubled. For those of you who do not know me, my wife and I own Kiss My Grass Farm in central Indiana. Raising RW's is the focus of our farm. Along with education of consumers to help

them understand why it is important to get heritage breeds back on people's dinner plates. I want everyone to feel free to call or email me with any questions or concerns they may have. I may not know everything about RW's or raising hogs, but if I don't know I will find out and get right back to you.

Thank you to all who voted for me in the election. I will do my best to exceed your expectations.

Brian Jordan, RWHA President
812-521-1063
redwattles@hotmail.com



Happy hogs at Heritage Farms NW



RWHA Annual Meeting 2009

The meeting was held at the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy conference in Raleigh, North Carolina November 14, 2009.

Roll was taken with the following individuals present: Josh Wendland, President
Brian Jordan, Vice President
Dot Jordan, Secretary Treasurer

Anneke Jakes, representing ALBC
Marjorie Bender, representing ALBC
Nathan Melson, member
Eve Lyle, member
Jim Lyle, member
Wendy Parker, member
Jim Parker, member
Andy Maglione, member
Marylou Maglione, member
Mike Slaton, non-member, guest

The meeting was called to order by president, Josh Wendland. Minutes of the 2008 Annual meeting were read by Dot Jordan. Nathan Melson moved that minutes be accepted as read. Wendy Parker seconded. Dot Jordan, read the Treasurer's Report and called for questions. No questions were voiced. Nathan Milson motioned that the Treasurer's Report be accepted as read. Marylou Maglione seconded.

Marjorie Bender spoke about grants the ALBC has applied for to improve breed selection for the heritage hog breeds. The grants will support: DNA sampling to identify bloodlines and DNA clusters, creating husbandry workshops & marketing materials. Dot Jordan asked about the possibility of training people regionally to give seminars on breed selection. Marjorie indicated a "Webinar" may be the answer rather than training individuals.

The RW Breed Standard was

discussed next with several members voicing some confusion on what constituted a breeding quality RW.



Marjorie Bender & Anneke Jakes of the ALBC

Marjorie suggested the RWHA create a breed guideline showing in pictures and words what to look for and why. General agreement was to create a poster or webpage on redwattle.org for this purpose. It was suggested that the following people be asked to work on this project:

Jesse Adams, Nathan Melson
Josh Wendland, Clyde Grover & Bud Nichol. Discussion followed about how to preserve the knowledge of our oldest breeders before they are gone. Marjorie suggested audio/video interviews with these breeders be created. No decision was made as to who would follow up on this project.

Dot Jordan brought up the subject of RWHA T-shirts or caps per the request of Clyde Grover, who could not be present at the meeting. After some discussion it was decided the cost of t-shirts & caps would be explored by Dot Jordan who would report back to the Board of Directors. A possible marketing slogan was suggested:

"Support your pork with your

fork!"

Dot asked if anyone would be interested in an electronic version of a promotional brochure

which would allow breeders to personalize the contact information. General discussion was positive. Dot will create the brochure and make it available to the membership via email.

Discussion followed regarding the RWHA Newsletter. Dot indicated she would like more articles submitted by the membership. It was suggested that a "Question of the Season" be a regular feature with Josh Wendland fielding the questions. Nathan Melson volunteered to do some articles. Wendy Parker suggested a "Breeders Spotlight". Dot asked Wendy to do a bio on her farm to submit for the next newsletter. Wendy agreed.

Discussion followed about created a list of pork producers as opposed to a list of breeders. Josh and Marjorie indicated that work has been done to create a "Meat Map". Brian indicated he had started compiling a map of all the Red Wattle breeders. Discussion followed of how to link up members with breeding stock, feeder pigs and meat

with people looking for the same. Regional supply and demand was also discussed with networking among growers to ship meat to areas with high demand suggested. No action was taken at this time. Next Annake Jakes of the ALBC counted the ballots submitted by members via mail for the position of President of the association. Brian Jordan was elected president to serve a three year term. This affectively vacated the position of VP. Nominations were called for from the floor with Nathan Melson nominated by Jim Parker. Brian Jordan seconded. No further nomination were offered. Nathan Melson will serve a one year term.

Dot asked if it was possible for her to resign from the Board of Directors, but remain as the Secretary/ Treasurer. Marjorie Bender suggested the board talk with Chuck of the ALBC about the possibilities. This matter was tabled at this time. Nathan Melson moved that we create the position of Technical Advisor and that this position be filled by Josh Wendland. Dot Parker seconded. Those present voted unanimously to create this position with Josh Wendland to serve in this capacity. Nathan Melson moved that the meeting be adjourned. Dot Jordan seconded.



Jim & Wendy Parker

Feeders; they come in all sizes and shapes

In the last newsletter we looked at options for DIY waterers. Now lets tackle feeders.

The simplest feeder we've found is the cut down 5 gallon bucket feeder that Bud Nichol used on his place. The buckets can be had new for about \$3 or scrounge buckets from bakeries or restaurants.



These work well in the barn where space is limited. Our hogs think they are toys if we use them out on the pastures.

Then there are several more elaborate DIY feeders like this one: It is made from scrap lumber, a 55 gallon barrel and a scrounged pallet.



Nathan Melson uses feeders like this one:



He says they are big enough and sturdy enough to stay put when the hogs get to pushing at them.

There are several commercial feeders available if you have money to spend. We have the round metal variety:



And the wood and metal bin type:



We like the round metal type because it holds more and the flipper doors keep the feed dry and mice out. Unfortunately, they are getting harder to find used in our area. Most of the ones not in use were scrapped when metal was high. New ones run \$900-1500.

If you want to build a hog feeder you can find a variety of plans at:

<http://msucare.com/pubs/plans/books/swine.html>

This site also has plans for other hog related things like: a portable hog house, a loading chute, a hog shade unit, pig creeps, and a castrating cradle. You will need to sort through the plans to find those that work for your farm. Not all of the plans are geared towards hogs on pasture/dirt.

Advertise on redwattle.org/ redwattleproject.com

Now you can promote your farm on the website with a banner ad. Ads are \$30/yr for RWHA members or \$50/ yr for nonmembers. Ads are to promote farms only— no product e.g. fertilizers, wormers, buildings, etc. Ads must be "standard" banner ads either JPEG, GIF, or PNG image files, The size of the image being either 728x90 or 468x60 (pixels). The advertiser will need to design their own ad and provide the properly sized image file, plus a URL (your website or blog) to link to when the image is clicked. If you need help with the design or sizing please contact Dot Jordan: redwattles@hotmail.com.

To reserve your space email your ad to: redwattles@hotmail.com
Send fee to: RWHA, 7024 Spearsville Rd, Morgantown, IN 46160
If you prefer you can send the ad on a disk to the address above.



Dinner with Slow Foods Corvallis by Wendy Parker

Friday, November 20, 2009 was Slow Food Corvallis's "Pork, Pork, and More Pork" dinner. The premise of the dinner was to compare heritage pork and conventionally produced pork, cooked by an expert chef, side by side on the dinner plate. It was a \$35 per plate catered event with proceeds going to pay the caterer and any leftovers went to help fund their group's future trip to the Terra Madre event in Italy. Planning started in April 2009, when our farm was contacted by a local organic CSA farm about our Red Wattle piglets. Their farm runs a small but very well staffed restaurant during the spring, summer and early fall months and their chef loves good pork. Finally!!! We had a Red Wattle pig headed into a local restaurant where perhaps the breed would gain some recognition for their excellent meat, though it would be months and months till "their pig" was ready for the menu. Wanting to speed things up a bit, I asked Sally if she would have any interest in hosting a taste testing (using her chef and her restaurant) between some of our already grown Red Wattle pork and our own farm grown "non heritage pig". We had bought a Hampshire cross for finishing to hold us over until our Red Wattles came of age so we actually had both common breed pork and heritage pork that had been raised the same way, day for day and processed the same way. Things were just too busy for her at that time, so she turned the idea over to our local Slow Food group. Months passed with no word about a date or any more details, so I assumed that they had decided not to do it. Needless to say, we ate the pork!!

In mid October, I received a note letting me know that the date for the dinner (huh? what dinner? No one had talked to us for months and months about a dinner.) had been set for November 14th. Oh and did I have pork for them to use because their farm pig wasn't ready yet? (Did I mention we had been eating pork for all those months?) Oh, and also could we please come to the dinner and talk about the Red Wattle Hogs and heritage animals in general? I had just the day before made reservations for the ALBC conference in North Carolina on Novem-

ber 14th. Needless to say, a slew of phone calls and emails followed during which time it was decided that they could move the date of the dinner back a week so that at least I could attend, though Jim would still be traveling on that date. Now all we had to do was to find the pork for them to use. The chef said he would be happy to work with whatever odds and ends of Red Wattle that we had left in the freezer and that he would just go buy conventional pork, but because this was a showcase event, Jim and I wanted to be sure that they were using premium quality pork, not meat that had been frozen for several months already. Unfortunately our next round of butcher hogs would not be ready for a couple of more months, so we were a bit stumped. Stumped that is, until I looked out the kitchen window to watch our last litter of piglets romping in the field. AH HA!!! A quick phone call to the chef to ask how he would feel about working with a 12 week old piglet. He was thrilled. We'd supply him with a 12 week old Red Wattle piglet and he would go find a "pink piglet" from a more conventional grower.

I put together a PowerPoint presentation that would run on my laptop in the corner of the dining room for folks to look at both before and after dinner. I also put together a basic farm brochure about how we raise our hogs. Also, while at the ALBC conference, Dot Jordan had given me some Red Wattle Association brochures. The dinner menu was porchetta (tenderloin wrapped in pork belly and roasted in the oven) with braised red cabbage; braised pork shoulder with winter squash; summer sausage; and head cheese. Each of the dishes would be cooked separately with both the Red Wattle and the conventional pig. The exception to that was the head cheese which was billed as "Everyone in the Pot Head Cheese".

Finally everyone was encouraged to sit down and the event organizers gave a short outline of how the evening would go and I very quickly introduced myself as "The Pig Farmer".

Each of the two different types of pork was set side by side, so you could compare them easily, both visually and also

by taste. Everyone ate, talked, compared opinions, wrote down comments on the question sheets that had been provided by the organizers to help folks put into words what they were experiencing as they sampled the various dishes.

After dinner the chef talked about what differences he noticed in cooking with the heritage pig versus the convention pig. One was the freshness of the heritage pork. We had driven the pig to the butcher on Monday. He (the chef) picked up the carcass on Wednesday and dinner was on Friday. It's hard to get much fresher than that. The other thing he really noticed was that the Red Wattle had a lot more fat than the "pink pig", even at such a young age. This extra fat made for outstanding moistness in the porchetta.

From the diner's point of view, things that were noticeable to them were the outstanding texture of the Red Wattle porchetta as compared to the rubbery, tough texture of the conventional porchetta. Also people found the flavor of the summer sausage to be much better (more interesting) in the Red Wattle sample. The hands down favorite dish of the evening was the "Everyone in the Pot Head Cheese". That dish earned the chef a rousing round of applause. I have to admit, it was outstanding. I also have to admit, head cheese is not something that I would normally even consider eating, but I figured that for the sake of the event I would give it a try. I brought home leftovers of that dish. I may even try making it myself when we next butcher a hog. It was that good.

After dinner guests asked great questions about heritage breeds and about how and why they ought to be saved. We talked about various topics, including Red Wattle hogs, genetics, husbandry practices, cooking, where to buy heritage meats and so forth. It was a great night of excellent food, good conversation and good local PR for the Red Wattle Hog. It's been really neat to make personal connections with people that have a special interest in this type of food.

Submit your marketing article now for the Spring RWHA Newsletter.