

# RWHA Election Newsletter

The RWHA elections are upon us. Each year two Board Members at Large are elected. The President, Vice President and Secretary-Treasurer are elected in alternating years allowing 2 members with experience to be on the board at all times. This year we will be electing our President and our two Board Members at Large. Please review their statements carefully. If you have any questions or concerns feel free to contact any nominee. Review what they've done for Red Wattles and the RWHA in order to promote and protect them and to assist our membership. Their contact information will be provided. The future direction of the RWHA and our breed is important to all of us and your Board of Directors work for you and our breed. They must be un-biased and never base their decisions on personal opinions. They must be willing to spend time for research. They must work well with others but also have the ability to make hard decisions based on what's best for Red Wattles and our membership. They must have the insight and the devotion to guide the breed and the RWHA into the future by promoting, preserving and protecting the breed. Voting is one of your privileges as a RWHA member and may be one of the most important ones you can use. We urge you to participate. We've made it as easy as possible by enclosing a preprinted ballot already stamped. Study your choices, check the boxes, sign and put it in the mail. The ballots will be monitored by The Livestock Conservancy (TLC). They are a non-biased well respected organization. Your newly elected officers will take their place November 1, 2015. Ballots must be received no later than the close of Oct. 16<sup>th</sup>, 2015. Ballots received after that day will not be counted.

## Nominees

### **Office of President: Jenifer Kraus**

My name is Jenifer Kraus and I'm running for president. My husband Charlie and I own a commercial crop and cattle farm in Hays, KS. We've had Red Wattles for over 5 years. My husband is the one that got my curiosity up about Red Wattles. One thing that drew me to them was their gentleness. The thing my husband liked was their low maintenance nature and their ability to graze and forage for themselves. We were looking for another species to run with our rotationally-grazed grass-finished steers.

Our approach to livestock has always been low-input. We've taken this approach as we have learned to raise hogs. I've learned to visually evaluate Red Wattles for breed trait conformation as well as structural and reproductive soundness. With all our livestock, we've learned by experience not to waste our time with animals that are not the right type or that cannot perform.

We believe that Red Wattles offer a good alternative for people wanting to raise easy-keeping pigs as a hobby as well as commercial producers wanting to raise hogs in a free-range or grazing environment. We're often surprised how few people have ever heard of Red Wattle hogs.

I want to take every opportunity to promote the breed and educate people who are looking for an alternative breed. I believe Red Wattle hog numbers will increase as more people learn more about how they can fit into their swine program.

I also spearheaded the RWHA DNA program which will record parental genetics for red wattles and benefit the breed and RWHA members in the future. All 19 of my breeding hogs have their DNA on file with UC Davis and are recorded with the RWHA.

My only regret is that I did not find Red Wattles earlier in my life.

**Jenifer Kraus: 785-628-3074. [jkraus@ruraltel.net](mailto:jkraus@ruraltel.net)**

### **Office of Board Member at Large: Walt Wickham**

I would like to be considered for a second term as a Red Wattle Hog Association board member at large. My family, (wife Jane and 5 children) bought our first Red Wattle hogs in 2009. Since then our herd has grown from 1 boar and 2 gilts to over 100 breeders and feeders. Needless to say, we love our Red Wattles! We also raise a couple of steers, goats, chickens and honey bees on our 40 acre farm in Eastern Iowa.

In my off-farm job, I serve as the director of a county conservation board in Iowa. This has given me experience in listening to people and problem solving. As a current member of the RWHA board of directors, I try to listen to all sides of an issue and then make decisions based on two things, what is best for the breed and what is best for the membership. The RWHA has done a lot of positive things in the last year. With your support, I would like to be a part of the board for the next year. Thank you!

**Walt Wickham: 563-652-9989 [wickhamfarm@gmail.com](mailto:wickhamfarm@gmail.com)**

### **Office of Board Member at Large: Dale Stevens**

My name is Dale Stevens. My wife and I (Tina Stevens) own and operate "Sand Ridge Farm" located in Lucedale Mississippi. In November 2013, while on the computer browsing the internet, I came across information about a heritage breed of hog called the Red Wattle. I was somewhat taken with what I was reading and given the fact that I had always had a desire to raise hogs; I set out on a quest to find and purchase some of these hogs. In the beginning my wife was somewhat skeptical about the whole idea and wanted me to take it slow and not get in too deep to start with. Me, being the type of person that if I am going to do something, I pretty much jump into it with both feet. I spoke with a lot of members in the Red Wattle Hog Association (RWHA) that helped me better understand what I needed to do, and a lot of things I didn't need to. Everyone that I spoke with was always willing to take the time to talk "PIG" with me and for that I am most appreciative.

So, today 21 months later, after traveling many miles and across many states we now have seven sows and a boar and are looking to expand further in the near future. We have approximately 60 pigs on our pastures that range from a week old to eight months old. I feel I have a better understanding of the breed and a strong desire to see the breed move forward in the best way possible for the breed, and the members of the RWHA.

I would like to take the opportunity to ask for your support for the office of Board Member at Large in the upcoming election. While I still have a lot to learn about the Red Wattle hog, my goal as a board member will be to contribute to the breed and the RWHA to the best of my ability by making open minded, nonbiased, and informed decisions on any issues that may come before the board.

Thanks once again for your support.

**Dale Stevens: 601-766-3578      [sandridgefarms@att.net](mailto:sandridgefarms@att.net)**

### **Office of Board Member at Large: Neil Perin**

My name is Neil Perin. I have been breeding Red Wattle Hogs for over 6 years now. Doing everything from breeding to sell breeders which I have always been very selective about who to register, even waiting over a year and 12 litters before registering my first. I also sell feeders to locals, as well as both whole sale to restaurants grocery stores and consumers freezers, and cuts off the farm and at local farmers markets. I have been invited to speak at several lectures and seminars regarding my red wattles and knowledge, and have attended several ALBC and other conventions to take classes on "Running a Registry", "Inbreeding v Linebreeding", "How to select quality Stock", "Hog Semen harvesting/storage/and Artificial Insemination".

I have been on the board previously and was sought out and asked at the time to be, and am familiar with the operations and responsibilities of the board. I am a full time farmer and my Red Wattles are my main product my farm and get my full time attention.

I am very passionate and invested in the breed and want and will work for nothing less than the progression and achievement of greatness within the breed which it has been known throughout history for. I am big on gathering DNA samples to help build a history and database for the breed to assist in all areas of the registry, as well as working with breeders on a case by case basis to help insure their success in working with these fine animals. I believe in finding and helping utilize the best animals and the best breeders in order to do this and to help assist new breeders into our membership and breed. I feel my experience and knowledge from both hands on and learned, coupled with my youth and the original and fresh ideas and perspective that come with it is a desperately needed aspect in this or any board to ensure a diversity of board members. I look forward to serving you all on the board once again and helping continue to make this breed the greatest its ever been!

**Neil Perin: 614-378-2041      [arcadianacres@gmail.com](mailto:arcadianacres@gmail.com)**

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The RWHA website, [redwattleproject.org](http://redwattleproject.org), now has a new tutorial for educational use. From the homepage, click on the tutorial tab at the top and review. It's still in its infancy and a tool that we hope will continue to grow and change over time and will be helpful for everyone for many years. Help us to help you and our membership by contributing pictures and information. We need close ups of the good, bad, strange, odd, ugly, defects, injuries and illnesses. We all know we will see these things if we're with hogs for a longer period of time. You may know greatness or defects when you see it but others may not and we all need to work together to assure our hog is successful. Actual pictures are more helpful than written descriptions. You can send your pictures to me either by snail mail at 41 Jones Rd. Horse Cave, Ky. 42749 or email at [redwattles@hotmail.com](mailto:redwattles@hotmail.com). We all need to be armed with a good education and it takes a team to succeed.

If you haven't visited the RWHA face book site you're overlooking a valuable tool to assist yourself and to also get to know other Red Wattle breeders. It can be found by going to Google and typing in Red Wattle Hog Association facebook. The site is moderated by Jenifer Kraus and Kathy Bottorff. It's a good comfortable informative place to ask questions, learn, share, network, market and become friends with other breeders. We hope to see you there. The group is closed to keep out spammers who could wreck our site but all it takes is a click to ask to join.

Current Board Member at Large, Walt Wickham is heading up a new program for the RWHA geared toward producing pork. He's working closely with website and computer specialists to develop a website specifically for Red Wattle pork, from the beginning all the way to good eating in the end. The site will be part of the RWHA but will be a separate website. RWHA pork producers, their farm and contact information can be listed that will drive future customers to each of us. Walt is in need of pictures too. He needs pictures of uncooked meat, cooked meat, pork dishes and recipes. Anything connected to pork. Working together we can make this a great thing for all of us. It's a fantastic marketing and educational tool and I hope everyone contributes and participates. Walt and the RWHA can't do all this alone. We need your help.

Nominee Board Member at Large Dale Stevens has been busy growing and producing outstanding Red Wattle pork and is now a major supplier for several high end restaurants around southern Mississippi and Louisiana. Dale and wife Tina have hosted several events at their farm with guests including well known chefs and food magazine writers. On October 4<sup>th</sup> they will be guest speakers at a special dining event featuring Red Wattle pork from their farm, Sand Ridge Farm. The event is called "**PIG**", and is hosted by **Vestige** and **The Green House on Porter** restaurants.

Dale has worked closely with inspectors, agencies, USDA, various government officials, and chefs to determine what's best for Red Wattles to have happy healthy lives on his farm and to produce quality outstanding pork for the public.

If you're involved in something special that highlights Red Wattles please let us know so we all can share and celebrate with you.

The RWHA is encouraging all breeders and members to have their registered breeding stock DNA on file. Many animal associations require DNA on file so this is quickly becoming the way of the future and we don't want to be left behind. The RWHA uses UC Davis for our testing and recording. The tests normally are \$40.00 each but with a discount from UC Davis and the help of the RWHA the tests will cost \$15.00 each thru the end of 2015. If enough tests are requested we hope to continue with that cost into the next year. The process is easy and once your information is on file you won't have to input it again except for the hog name and registration number. If you need assistance please contact any board member. Type **My VGL** into google. Click on **Login**. It will guide you thru the procedure. Be sure to first put in the RWHA affiliation code – **redwattlehog** - to get the discount. Do this before you complete anything else or the discount doesn't work. UC Davis will give a \$10.00 discount. You will pay \$30.00 upfront. The RWHA will reimburse you half the cost of each \$30.00 test done. The results are usually within 6 to 10 days. UC Davis will notify the RWHA of each test completed and the RWHA will immediately reimburse you.

Having your hogs DNA not only helps you and the breed by having recorded genetics. It can also help you in your marketing strategies. It would be an added bonus to anyone searching for new hogs to either add to their herds, or a breeder starting out new.

Please review your records and let us know if you have registered Red Wattles that are no longer in production. It's an important responsibility of all of us to maintain correct records. The only way the RWHA knows if a hog is out of production is by you notifying us. The breed status such as endangered or critically endangered is determined by the registered population. If we have hogs listed in our registry that are deceased or out of production but not listed as so, it increases the numbers and could possibly move Red Wattles from one status to another. The status of our population is important and a lot of very important decisions and directions are based on it.

We've had interviews with some of our older or previous members who go back to the 1970's, 1980's and 1990's. I'm working on compiling all the information they've provided and hope to bring it to everyone soon. This is something you can do too. Pick up the phone and call them. They're very happy to talk "pig" with you and they have tons of helpful information. Many of them are out of the business now due to their age and health but they still enjoy sharing their knowledge and stories.