



# Heritage Breeds for Today's Needs



# Who is the Livestock Conservancy?

- National non-profit (501-C3)
- Membership organization
- Focuses on genetic conservation
- Works with farmers and others around the country to preserve heritage breeds
- Established in 1977
- Headquartered in Pittsboro, NC



# Our Mission

To protect endangered livestock and poultry breeds from extinction



**Turkeys**



**Donkeys**



**Cattle**



**Goats**



**Horses**



**Sheep**



**Pigs**



**Rabbits**



**Chickens**



**Ducks**

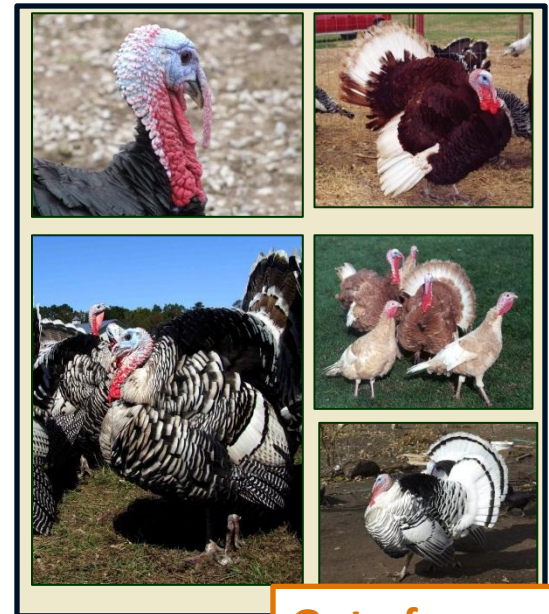


**Geese**

# Why are breeds endangered?

- Modern agriculture favors the use of a few specialized breeds.
- Breeds that don't "fit the mold" are being lost.
- Breeds that are being lost contain valuable traits and genetics that may be needed in the future.
- Breeds = **GENETIC DIVERSITY!**
- Loss of Breeds = Loss of Genetic Diversity.

One breed



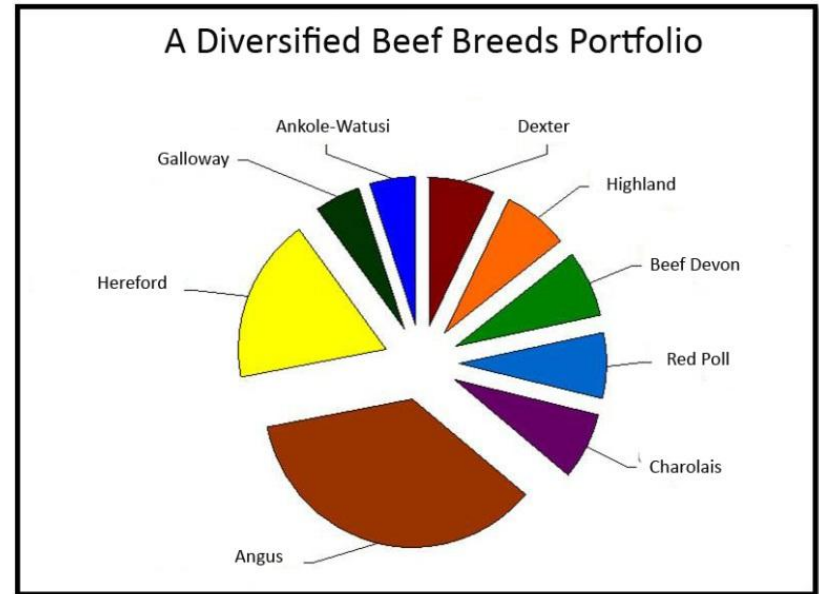
Out of many

# Why does genetic diversity matter?

**Agriculture's stock portfolio – diversifying secures our assets!**

Learning from the past:

- Irish Potato Famine (1840's)
- Panama Disease & Gros Michel Bananas (1950's)



# Are We Learning Yet?

Today's Lessons:

- Russet Burbank Potato Vulnerability
- Cavendish Bananas & Tropical Race 4 Disease



# Securing Rare Breeds



- ✓ Protects our food system;
- ✓ Ensures genetic diversity for the evolution of agriculture
- ✓ Conserves valuable genetic traits
- ✓ Captures our heritage, history, and culture
- ✓ Maintains breeds of animals that are well-suited for sustainable agriculture
- ✓ Gives small family farms a competitive edge.

# Conserving Our History



- Heritage breeds are living embodiment of America's history
- Many of the breeds that created them are gone, so if the breed were to disappear, once they are gone, they are gone forever



# Heritage Breeds Rise to Climate Challenges

Weather Extremes: Greater temperature swings, All-or-none rainfall

Hardy and adaptable breeds will rise to the challenge



# Sustaining the Land



Heritage breeds are especially suited to sustainable systems such as rotational grazing



# Natural Advantages of Heritage Breeds



- Hardy
- Good foragers
- Parasite resistance
- Good mothering skills
- Longevity
- Multipurpose breeds
- Variety in food and fiber

# Incorporating Heritage Breeds into Sustainable Systems



# Heritage Animals on Your Farm

Select breeds that are appropriate for your needs, land, and climate. Finding the right fit means less work & healthier animals.



Allowing Mother Nature to work *with* you is wiser than becoming her constant opponent.

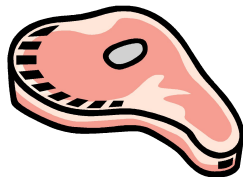
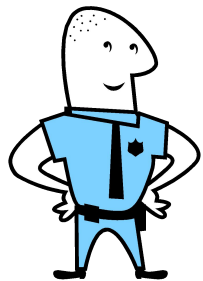
# Choosing Breeds that Fit Your Farm

## Factors to consider:

- Production needs – What do you want to do?
- Size
- Climate
- Husbandry & care
- Rarity in your area
- Temperament
- Does the breed appeal to you?



# Heritage Breeds are Multitaskers



Ossabaw Island sows

# What Kind of Enterprise

## Feeders

- Can be purchased as weanlings
- Priced lower than breeding quality
- May not be registered



*Guinea and Ossabaw piglets*

## Breeders

- Purchase older youngsters that have filled out
- Animals should be registerable\*
- Will be priced higher
- Ask for breeder guarantee



# Before buying:

## Plan for:

- Secure Pen or Pasture
- Appropriate feed
- Clean, fresh water
- Deworming
- Minerals
- Shelter
- Safety
- Veterinarian



# Not all heritage animals are good representations of their breed

- Select animals based on breed standard and productivity.
- Only the top 10% are good enough to become breeding stock.
- **Do your homework before buying!**



# How You Can Find Rare Breeds



- Livestock Conservancy:
  - Breeders directory
  - Classifieds
- Breed associations
- Network with breeders

# SECURING RARE BREEDS



# What Does it Mean to be a Rare Breed Steward?

## Pros

- Contributing to past and future
- Better fit for your farm goals
- Rich stories
- Captures customer interest
- Making a difference



## Cons

- Rare – finding breeding stock
- Genetic base is narrow
- Breeding requires more thought
- Progress takes time
- Direct marketing products
- Products are “different”

# Securing Rare Breeds

What does it take?

- Enough animals
- Enough breeders
- Knowledgeable breeders
- Careful selection practices
- Energetic promotion of products and services
- Working together



# Conservation Breeding



Goal: Maintain genetic variability  
*It's about more than finding the best bull!*

- Get educated
- Maintain bloodlines
- Use males for only one season
- Combining inbreeding and outbreeding
  - Parallel herds, spiral breeding
- Maximize contribution of females

# Selection

- Restoring lost productivity
- Balance production with adaptive traits
  - Hardiness, longevity, maternal traits, parasite resistance, heat/cold tolerance, fertility
- Cull on adaptive traits, select among remaining





# Niche Marketing

Examples from Successful  
Heritage Breeders

- Identifying new jobs for old breeds
- Capitalizing on niche marketing
- New products
- Diversified products



Etsy

# More Value from your Livestock

- Many traditional animals were multipurpose and represent free labor to the farmer
- Can you think of additional uses for your animals?
  - Clearing brush and timber
  - Guardian for other livestock
  - Sell manure to compost facilities
  - Use cow chips to produce biofuel
  - Ecotourism



# Working together

Good at breeding?

Partner with others

Or

sell more animals as  
feeders

Co-marketing

Good communication



# Should I?



## Self-Assessment

- Skills assessment
- Financial Needs / Goals
- Lifestyle & time assessment

## Research the Proposed Enterprise

- Talk to lots of people: livestock farmers, breeders of heritage animals, extension, Virginia Tech
- Research market opportunities

## Resource Evaluation

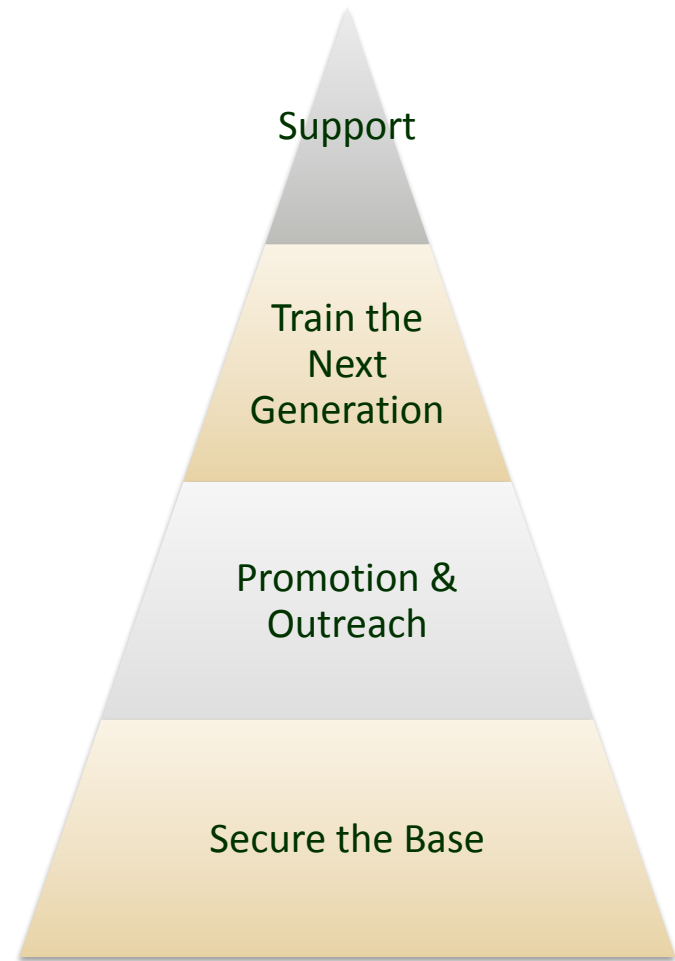
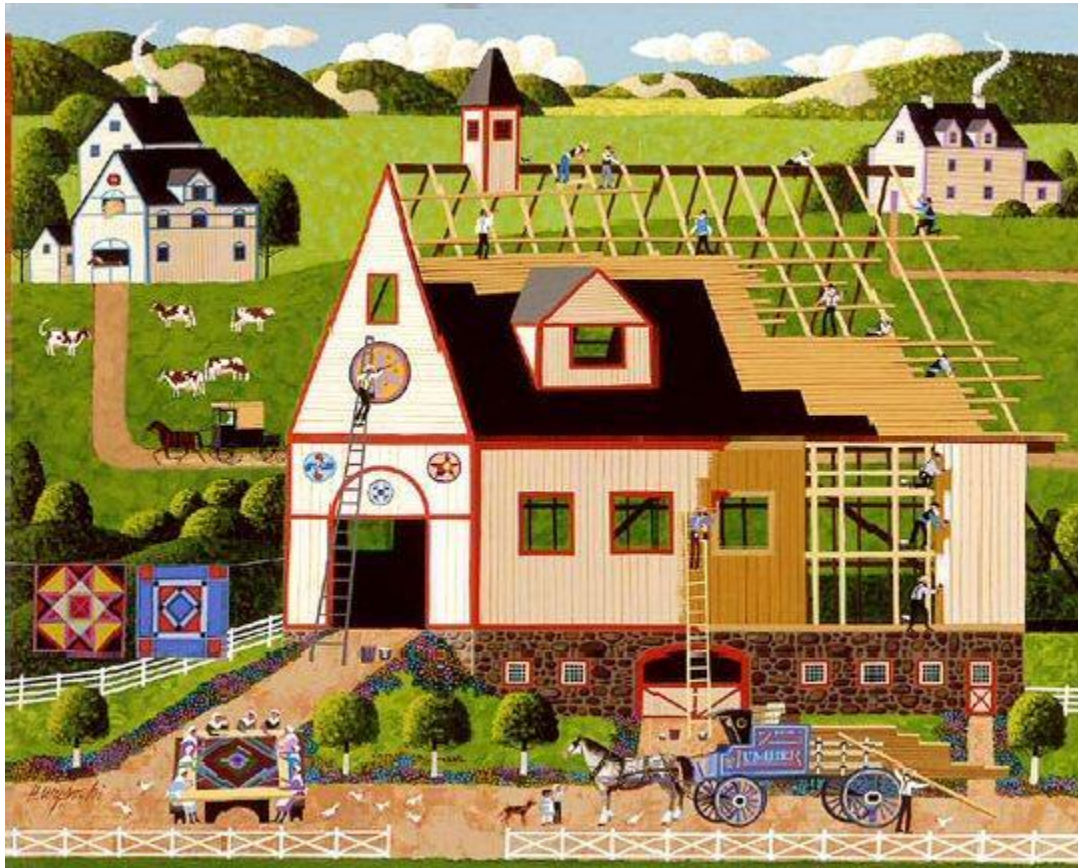
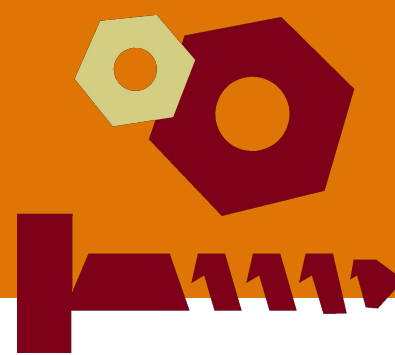
- Infrastructure
- Financial Assets

# The Livestock Conservancy's Role

- Network connections
- Technical Support
  - Deciding on breeds
  - Finding breeding stock
  - Breeding plans
  - Marketing
- Breeds Research
- Breeder education
- Promotion



# Nuts and Bolts of the Work



# Secure The Base

# Livestock Census

## Census



**Conservation Priority Poultry Breeds 2013**

**Global:** There are 200 poultry breeds in the United States, with over 100 breeds originating from 20 breeds or more and 100 breeds originating from 10 breeds or more.

**Market:** There are 100 breeds of poultry in the United States, with over 100 breeds originating from 10 breeds or more and 100 breeds originating from 10 breeds or more.

**Conservation:** Breeds of poultry are classified into categories and have conservation status. Breeds that are not in the category of 'Conservation Priority' are considered to be at risk of extinction.

Category	Breed	Conservation Status	Origin	Conservation Status	Notes
Poultry	American Game	Conservation Priority	USA	Conservation Priority	Conservation Priority
	American Game	Conservation Priority	USA	Conservation Priority	Conservation Priority
	American Game	Conservation Priority	USA	Conservation Priority	Conservation Priority
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Breed	Year	U.S. Registrations	Global Population	Source of U.S. Data
Albion-Talia	2012	500		Estimate
American Cream	2012	7		Registry
American Saddlebred	2012	1,905		Registry
Appaloosa	2010	4,912		Estimate
Araban	2010	4,529		Estimate
Belgian	2011	2,000		Registry
Boulemale	2011		<1,000	
Canadian	2011		195	
Castilian	2011	14	1,710	Registry
Cleveland Bay	2011	229		
Colonial Spanish (Banker)	2011		181	Estimate
Colonial Spanish (Belted)	2012	~20		Estimate
Colonial Spanish (Carac)	2012	~10		Estimate
Colonial Spanish (Choctaw)	2012	200-300		Estimate
Colonial Spanish (Florida Cracker)	2009	85	1,021	Registry
Colonial Spanish (Marsh Tacky)	2012	229	209	Registry
Colonial Spanish (New Mexico)	2012	~100		Estimate
Colonial Spanish (Plyor)	2012	80-100		Estimate
Colonial Spanish (Santa Cruz)	2012	45		Registry
Colonial Spanish (Sulphur)	2012	50-150		Estimate
Colonial Spanish (Wilbur-Cruce)	2009	5		Registry
Clydesdale	2011		404	
Dorset	2011	4,100	1,000,000	Registry

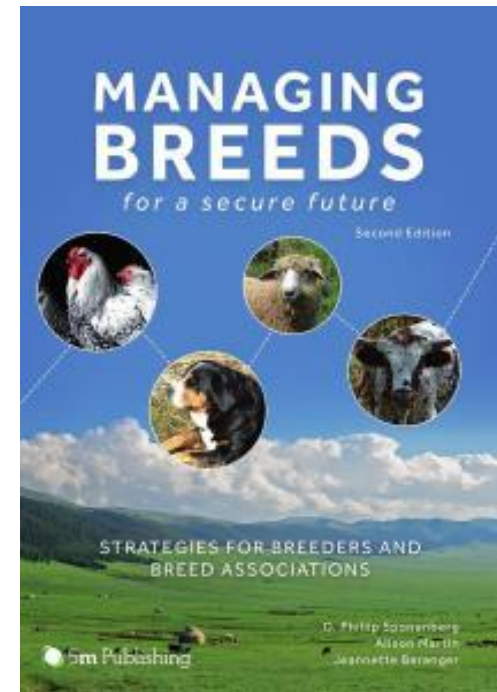


# Learning

## Member Support

### Working with Breeders

- Education on conservation breeding
- Herd-specific breeding plans
- Genetic Analysis





# Learning



Card Grading Videos  
Available on You Tube

# Learning

Elementary  
Education

## 4-H Embryology Project “Chicks in the Classroom”

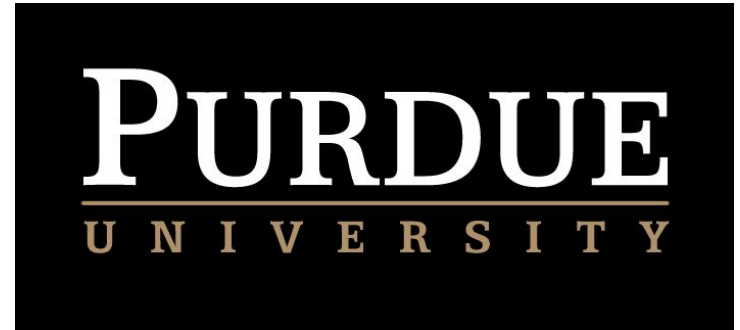
**UNC**  **TV**





# Current Project

## Heritage Swine Reproduction Study



# Current Project



**ENDANGERED  
EQUINE  
ALLIANCE™**

A LIVESTOCK CONSERVANCY INITIATIVE



- 70 breed associations and horse industry leaders
- Sharing best practices, Co-promotion, Reproductive breakthroughs
- Herdbook and genetic analysis

# Current Project

## *American Milking Devon*

Funded by: The Manton Foundation

### **Genetic Conservation**

- Herdbook analysis
- DNA
- Semen collection

### **Production & Promotion**

- Milk testing – 75 cattle!
- Survey

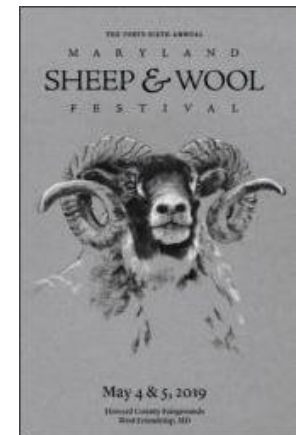


# Current Project

*Shave 'Em to Save 'Em*



**>1600 Fiber artists**  
**Rarewool.org**



# Current Project

# Microgrants

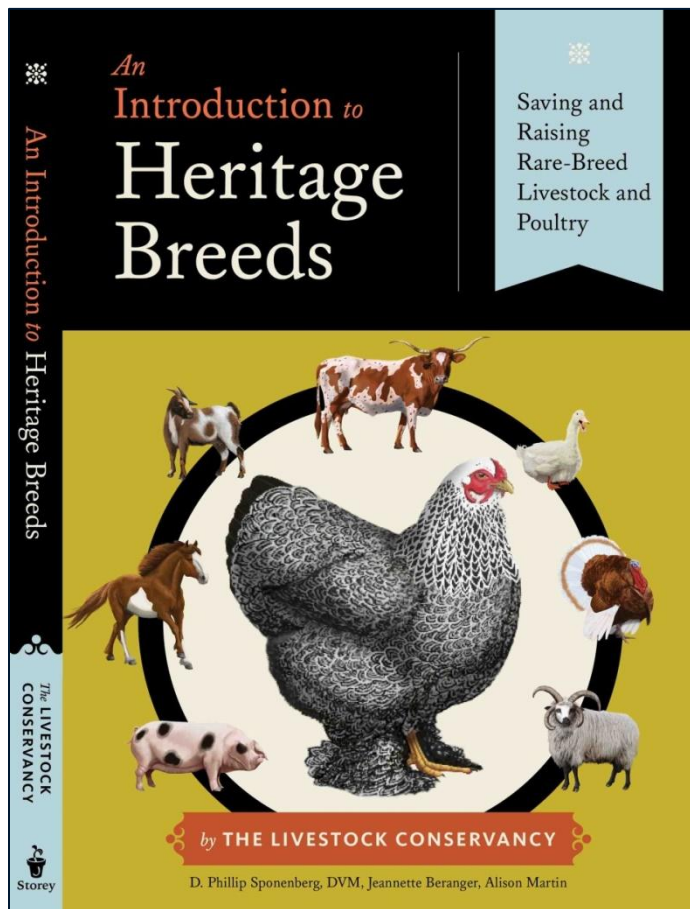


*Josh & Josiah Freier  
American Milking Devon project*

*Ashley Pierce  
Silver Fox rabbitry expansion*



# Want to Learn More?



BREED SNAPSHOT

## American Mammoth Jack Donkey

This breed, the largest among donkeys, was specially adapted for the production — raising jacks to be mated to mare horses. Their large conformation was developed specifically for the production of large draft mules.

**Homeland:** Middle and Deep South

**Traditional use:** Mule production

**Size:** Jennies, over 14 hands; jacks, over 14.2 hands

**Colors:** The historic color was black. Color is more variable now, with odd non-black colors bringing a premium.

**Other traits:** Conformation was for draft use originally. Modern day uses include more saddle use for riding.

**Other:** These animals can be very noisy, especially jacks in the breeding season. Jacks can be aggressive to other donkeys, as well as to people, but their behavior is variable.

**Conservation status:** Threatened

114

Want to do more?

Share the  
Excitement!



**INTERNATIONAL HERITAGE BREEDS WEEK**

21-27 May 2023



**#HERITAGEBREEDSWEEK**



**THE LIVESTOCK  
CONSERVANCY™**



**PO Box 477, Pittsboro, NC 27312  
(919) 542-5704**

**[www.livestockconservancy.org](http://www.livestockconservancy.org)  
[Info@livestockconservancy.org](mailto:Info@livestockconservancy.org)**

**Question  
s and  
Sharing**

# Presenter/POULTRY PRODUCER-OWNER –whisperer of

Cynthia Capers  
HENISCITY FARM

NPIP Certified

APPPA Member

Livestock Conservancy Champion

Heritage Breeder

Licensed Egg Candler (GA)

Licensed Fiber Hemp Grower

[heniscityfarm@gmail.com](mailto:heniscityfarm@gmail.com)

423.291.7001

