

Red Wattle Hog Association

Elections

The year has gone by quickly and it doesn't seem like it should be but it's time again to be working on our RWHA Board of Directors election. There are five positions. President, Vice President and Secretary/Treasurer each hold office positions for 3 years, each one rotating out in alternate years so there are at least 2 people with experience still remaining on the board each year. The RWHA also has 2 Board Members at Large who hold 1 year positions. Every position has the opportunity to run for office again.

This year the position of Secretary/Treasurer will be open for a 3 year term. Our 2 Board Members at Large positions are also open for 1 year terms.

Board of Director positions require dedication to the Red Wattle breed and their success as a heritage hog and to abide by the By-Laws and Rules of the RWHA. All positions require discretion and confidentiality. All board members must be willing to assist others, to research, to answer questions, to work with other organizations, to contribute to the RWHA face book site, and to work well with others. There are various duties that can change depending on what's needed at the time.

If you're interested in holding an office you must submit a brief summary or essay about yourself that will be copied to our next newsletter for all members to learn about you and make their informed decision. You need to include how long you've had Red Wattle hogs and what your experience is with them and hogs in general. What are your goals and what do you see as the future for Red Wattles and the RWHA. Briefly, what life experiences you can bring to the RWHA to help lead and make progress in the future in a positive manner while also keeping the major principles of preserving and protecting the breed.

Your summary or essay should be received by the Secretary/Treasurer no later than September 15. You may email to: redwattles@hotmail.com or snail mail to: Kathy Bottorff, 41 Jones Rd. Horse Cave, KY 42749.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact any board member.

DNA

The RWHA mailed out cards in March explaining our new DNA push. It's FREE! And It only takes a few minutes of your time. Every member is entitled to 2 FREE DNA tests thru U.C. Davis. The only requirements are you must be a member and the hogs tested must be registered. They can be either male or female. The directions can be found on the RWHA website in the Tutorial. No scary blood drawing or special equipment. It's a simple hair pulling project, putting the hair in a paper envelope and mailing them off. Easy and FREE! It's another way you as members can help Red Wattles now and in the future. Normally these tests cost \$40.00 each but you'll get yours FREE! UC Davis will not charge the RWHA directly so you'll need to pay up front but as soon as we're notified the RWHA sends out reimbursement to you in the mail. The test usually takes 6-9 days for the results.

The Livestock Conservancy and USDA have also teamed up for a DNA project. (That's how important DNA is.) Their project is along the lines of seed savers, gathering and storing seed from around the world in case of a catastrophic occurrence. It could be something like a disease that wipes out an entire population of plants or animals. (African Swine Fever could do this now and there is no cure). The Livestock Conservancy is assisting USDA in gathering DNA samples to safeguard for the future. What they need are the notches that are discarded when you notch years. This material will be saved for the possibility of needing it in the future. (Think Jurassic Park). The process is very easy. You'll be sent a container for the notches and necessary mailing material to send back to them. They'll need the farrowing date and number of sows. Please contact Charlene Couch at: ccouch@livestockconservancy.org. You can also call her at: 919-264-1924. She'll be happy to get it all set up for you. Plan a little ahead so you'll have the material when you're ready to notch. This program is entirely FREE to you and takes only a few minutes of your time. Your genetics could possibly save swine and make you an important part of world history.

Co-efficiency COI's Genetic Relationships

COI's, or co-efficiencies are an important part of genetics and breeding plans. However most times there is no right or wrong until you see results, which are full grown and performing offspring. Some people don't mind or they prefer close genetic because they like their results and some people prefer a wider margin or diverse genetics. In either case it's important to monitor and inspect all your hogs for breed standards and their performance. What's not important is to get hung up on names. We know in our past we had great and knowledgeable breeders who produced outstanding hogs but we also know there are several generations between them now in most cases, and many of those generations went thru several breeders and other diverse genetics. Just like our breeders in the past, you must educate yourself to produce great hogs. You must provide good living conditions and you must be knowledgeable on breed standards. You must know what it takes to produce outstanding hogs. Your education is what will get you there and help you to also develop a great reputation.

Honorary Members

You may not know that the RWHA has 5 current honorary members. These members have contributed greatly in the existence of the RWHA, promoting Red Wattles and sharing their experience and knowledge with others. As honorary members they receive free membership and updates of all the happenings with the RWHA. We respect their input and devotion to Red Wattles and we're very fortunate to have them on our member roster. Not by importance but in alphabetical order are: Sally and Jesse Adams, Clyde Grover, Bud Nichols, Larry and Madonna Sorell and Josh Wendland. Listen and learn from these people. They know their stuff. Other great breeders who we have lost are Robert Prentice, Cecil Edgar and Elvis Kirch. Clyde Grover and Josh Wendland are 2 of the current RWHA founders and without their hard work and dedication our RWHA might not exist. Josh Wendland is also designated a Master Breeder with The Livestock Conservancy. That's a level that very few ever achieve.

Way Out West

The RWHA has begun a project to transport registered or will be registered Red Wattles out west. We have many people interested however there are very few hogs in our western states and it's compounded by a lack of genetic diversity. Our goal is to bring breeders and buyers together and form a transport plan hopefully making stops out west in one or two areas to bring registered hogs and new owners together. Both breeders and buyers may still have to travel some but it sure won't be like traveling across country and back.

Our time frame is Spring 2021 to allow time for all arrangements to be made and to plan for litters. If you're interested in this project either as a seller or buyer please contact any board member so we can compile our lists and bring everyone together. We need to start now so please don't wait.

Piglets must be registration age. 2 months or 8 weeks of age or older. All registration paperwork must be completed prior to pickup or delivery. Because state lines will be crossed and to assure the health of the pigs/hogs, they must have veterinary paperwork completed. It is the responsibility of the buyer and seller to make arrangements for payment and the RWHA will be held harmless. The RWHA will do everything possible to assure the pigs/hogs are transported and delivered in a safe and healthy manner however they will be held harmless should anything unfortunate occur.

All states are different in their veterinary requirements so the RWHA needs time to plan routes for pick up and deliveries and sellers will need to verify with their veterinaries what requirements are needed along the route in each state. Because it will depend on who wants hogs, we don't know our routes yet.

Spring 2021 seems a long way off but time is important for this venture. There are lots of logistics to make this project work. If you're interested in either providing piglets or hogs, or interested in receiving them, please contact a board member soon so we can bring buyers and sellers together and make the necessary plans and routes.

Official Registrations

Your official embossed registrations are important documents and should be placed or stored in a secure place. A binder or a drawer designated for your Red Wattle records would be ideal. If you sell a registered Red Wattle you need the official embossed registration to make the transfer to the new owner. You'll also need to give a copy to the new owner. The registry office will not transfer a registered hog unless or until the official embossed registration is returned and completed with the new purchasers' information.

There are many clever con-artists in the public and this is one way the RWHA can assure our buyers, sellers and members that the RWHA has done everything possible to protect them.

What Are Heritage Breeds?

Heritage breeds are traditional livestock breeds that were raised by our forefathers. These are the breeds of a bygone era, before industrial agriculture became a mainstream practice. These breeds were carefully selected and bred over time to develop traits that made them well-adapted to the local environment and they thrived under farming practices and cultural conditions that are very different from those found in modern agriculture.

Heritage animals once roamed the pastures of America's pastoral landscape, but today these breeds are in danger of extinction. Modern agriculture has changed, causing many of these breeds to fall out of favor. Heritage breeds store a wealth of genetic resources that are important for our future and the future of our agricultural food system.

Did you know? Water

Water is essential to adjust body temperature.

It's essential for movement of nutrients into body tissues, waste removal, milk production, growth and reproduction.

80% of newborn weight is water.

53% weight of a market hog is water.

A hog can lose almost all its fat and half its protein and still live, but it can-not survive if it loses 1/10 (one tenth) of its water.

Access to plentiful water is necessary at all times and in all seasons, climates or conditions.

Mastitis

Mastitis is an infection of the mammary glands that can occur any time during lactation but more often begins right after farrowing or a day or two after weaning. It occurs when bacteria enters the mammary gland(s) either from environmental factors or by piglets teeth while nursing. It can affect one gland or several depending on transmission and severity.

For additional information see the TEATS chapter in the RWHA website Tutorial.

There are 3 types of bacteria that cause mastitis.

Coliform Mastitis- Indicated by reduced milk production, a sick sow and unthrifty piglets. This bacteria can spread thru the herd by the elimination of body waste and produces a contaminated environment for all.

Staphylococcal and Streptococcal Mastitis- These forms are usually less severe and is normally confined to an individual sow. The bacteria usually enters thru the skin or orifices. It may be present but dormant to only flare up when farrowing. This type is the one most breeders will see if mastitis develops.

Miscellaneous Bacteria- As the name implies there are no particular bacteria that may cause this mastitis, there are several. They are rare and can be extremely serious and possibly cause death by toxemia. These bacteria are antibiotic resistant.

Causes

Most commonly caused by poor hygiene. Can also come from contaminated drinking water. Also flare ups from dormant bacteria already in the sows system that show up during farrowing.

Signs

Not eating, lethargic. Eyes may be reddened. Temperature. Normal temperature for hogs is around 101 degrees. Teats may be swollen, reddened or discolored, painful, warm or hot to the touch, or lumpy. Sow may lay on her belly more often. There may be less milk production and piglets unable to nurse. Sow may exhibit some or all of these symptoms.

Prevention

The best prevention is to clean and disinfect living, farrowing and eating areas often. It's difficult to do or even imagine when you have hogs but there are a few things you can do.

Clean up and disinfect all areas. Remove old bedding materials and supply fresh. Fresh straw is preferred rather than wood chips or shavings. Keep eating, living and farrowing areas dry. Wet or moisture is a perfect living condition for germs.

You probably think this is crazy or impossible. Rain, snow, mud, dug out mud holes, spilled food, body waste. It's always horrible and impossible to clean. You can be right but there are a few things you can do. Given enough room and without overcrowding, hogs eliminate their body waste away from their living and eating areas. Body waste can be contaminated with bacteria and/or be a prime incubation and growing area for it. Give your hogs enough room even if downsizing the amount must be done. If you farrow in shelters or barns clean out old bedding and replace with fresh prior to using the area again. Keep the area dry. Small nicks and cuts from nursing piglets can be an entry point for bacteria to the nursing sow.

As always you should disinfect the eating, living or gathering areas and farrowing areas. A cheap \$5.00 gallon sprayer and a little bit of bleach and water is all it takes. 1 part bleach to 9 parts water. Spray the areas down about every 2 weeks. You don't have to make mud, a mist is fine and will only take a few minutes of your time. Spray down farrowing areas after you remove the old bedding and before you add fresh. Develop a routine. Doing this is not difficult, time consuming or expensive and could save you money, headache and heartache in the future. Spraying down with a bleach solution is recommended to help with many infections and not only to help prevent mastitis. You could be saving yourself and your herd in more ways than you think.

Treatment

Sometimes even with good prevention methods a sow may develop mastitis. It can be very serious and even cause death. Plus you'll have a litter of new piglets to raise on your own. Mastitis moves quickly so treatment should not be put off. Only treat with antibiotics if you have experience and know what you're doing. Otherwise please contact a veterinarian for medication. Normally home remedies do not work well or timely for mastitis. You need something stronger and faster acting.

The effected teat(s) probably will become damaged and may be blind for future nursing litters. Each sow can be different and it also depends on the level of infection and damage done. They may also harbor dormant bacteria, just waiting for the next farrowing so they can strike again. Be sure to complete the round of antibiotics even if the sow is feeling better.

Mastitis is not something to mess around with. Do your best to prevent it from happening but if it does, get prompt treatment. You have the sow and future litters, and you have the current litter to raise possibly on your own. It's not something you want to deal with if it can be prevented.

Fetal Absorption

(And other conception, fetal and farrowing concerns)

Do you ever just know your gilt or sow got bred only to see her cycle again 18 to 21 days later. No sign of aborting or miscarriage? Or your sows normal litter count is lower than usual. This may help you understand. It sounds trite or small minded but we all know, “Stuff Happens”, and we may never know why. Of course there are reasons but the breeding/farrowing time of swine is short in comparison, the productive lifespan of swine is also considerably shorter, they have more per birthing than many other species, and professional testing for answers is very expensive. For those reasons and a few others, it’s usually recommended to accept some problematic issues and move on but always learn from them. Check everything that happened prior to breeding and during pregnancy and farrowing and make sure conditions are as favorable as possible and try again. Also whatever happened, don’t always put the blame on the sow. We hear that a lot and sometimes that’s the case but not always. Your boar may have been spent or near the end of his viable healthy sperm count without getting a rest. Maybe she was bred but the fetus wasn’t viable or survivable due to malformed or unhealthy sperm or ovum. There could also be too much size difference in the gilt/sow and boar and he missed his mark. See [Reproductive System](#) under the [Breeding](#) chapter in our Tutorial. Notice the bladder is very near and off the cervix. With size difference very often the bladder is entered rather than the cervix. There are several reasons for failed breeding that can be attributed to the sow or the boar and you can learn more about them by reviewing the [Breeding](#) and [Farrowing](#) chapters in our Tutorial on the RWA website.

If she became bred but something wasn’t just right, she can absorb the fetuses from conception day thru to around day 38. All charts vary some, giving or taking away a few days. She may absorb one, several or all. Disappeared and not known to exist. Don’t always assume the sow or boar is not fertile. This happens more often than we realize. After about 38 days fetal bone is being formed and they can not be absorbed. This can result in fetus’ that are not fully formed at farrowing, and maybe at various stages of growth.

Those fetus should not be confused with Parvo deaths which can also present at different stages of growth. Often referred to as mummified. (read about [Porcine Parvo Virus](#) in our Tutorial). It’s important to know the difference. Parvo should be treated.

Fully formed but stillborn could be a result of something going wrong at conception but the fetus was able to survive in utero longer. Stillborn could also be the result of a twisted umbilical cord cutting off oxygen and/or blood flow during farrowing, or many other explanations

Thankfully Red Wattles are great breeders and mothers and rarely have problems. However, “Stuff Happens”, and we all need to be aware of them and possibly why and to know how to make corrections if possible in the future.

Remember Mother Nature. If something isn't quite right, nature usually takes care of it. Your sow or gilt will cycle again earlier and hopefully have a successful litter next time. This is how Mother Nature has equipped all animals. Survival of the fittest.

It's important to examine the WHOLE picture or history and possibly come to a conclusion by process of elimination.

