



Chef Ed Lee out playing around the farm. He walks the talk by visiting farms and knowing where the food products come from that he uses in his restaurants.

Red Wattle Hog Association

Newsletter Aug. 2018

Elections

It's hard to believe but this year has flown by and it's time to be thinking about our elections. The RWHA Board of Directors has 5 positions. President, Vice President, Secretary/Treasurer who each serve 3 year terms by rotation and 2 Board Members at Large who serve one year terms. This year we will be voting on our President position as well as our 2 Board Members at Large. Your Board of Directors has the responsibility of leading the RWHA, the hogs and membership into the future while striving to protect Red Wattles as a heritage hog. The By-Laws of the RWHA are to protect and propagate, meaning our goal is to keep this hog as it has always been and nature intended, and to also increase the population. All board members are expected to participate in meetings when called. Formal meetings usually are not necessary now with the use of social media, cells phones and email. Our board members also monitor and contribute to our official face book site.

Your Board of Directors has a big responsibility in maintaining the integrity of the breed. This includes utilizing the set breed standards for registration and education for our members. The purpose of any association is in keeping official records of registration. The RWHA goes above many others by also encompassing education that assists all of us to be as successful as possible. Not all hogs should be registered. The board should also strive to help educate our membership on the importance of pork products and how it works to increase the population of our breed.

If you're interested in holding office you need to submit a brief summary of yourself describing who you are, what your goals are for your herd and for Red Wattles as a whole, and your goals for the RWHA. The deadline for your summary is Sept. 19, 2018. You can snail mail to: Kathy Bottorff - 41 Jones Rd.- Horse Cave KY. 42749, or email to: redwattles@hotmail.com. Your summary will appear in our election newsletter edition with our voting ballots. If elected you will officially take office on Nov. 1, 2018. The RWHA needs participation. We hope you'll consider giving a little of your time to help.



Need to know:

- 1.) New or renewal memberships completed in 2018 will be for 2 (two) years. Membership will run thru and end on March 31, 2020 before renewals will be needed. At this time this is a one- time benefit from the RWHA.
- 2.) The Red Wattle google map on the website is in the process of being updated. Once completed it will work in conjunction with our official membership also listed on the website. If you're a RWHA member you will appear on the map with the information you give on your application.
Please be patient. It's going to be a great feature but it'll take time and there may be kinks to work out.
- 3.) The RWHA will no longer accept tattoos as a form of identification. Tattoo ink is not permanent or easily readable on hogs. Identification for registration must be either by ear notch, tag, or microchip.
- 4.) The RWHA offers 2 (two) free DNA tests done per year. One registered boar and one registered sow or gilt. The testing is completed and stored at UC Davis and the information is also applied to the hog information on our website. DNA has proven to be extremely useful in breeding practices. Helpful information may also be found on our website under the Tutorial tab and scrolling down to the DNA chapter. If you need assistance or have questions please contact any board member.
- 5.) The RWHA will pay expenses for any member who attends and represents Red Wattles and the RWHA at farm animal conferences, exhibitions or educational centers and meetings. Gas, food, lodging, promotional items, booth rental and set ups will be covered. Contact any board member for additional information if interested.
- 6.) The RWHA will reimburse regional meeting expenses with Red Wattle owners and breeders up to \$250.00 annually. Get your local breeders together and have a meeting. You know better what works for you or what you need than anyone else. Contact any board member for additional information. Your region can be found online in our 2014 Spring/summer newsletter.
- 7.) All RWHA members are welcome and encouraged to use the RWHA official Face Book site. Google- Red Wattle Hog Association face book to find, then bookmark or save in your favorites. Red Wattle breeders share, learn and teach there and it's a family friendly site. Our members will also learn of RWHA happenings much quicker than waiting for our newsletters.
- 8.) To know where our breed stands on the "rarity" list it's important to know our population- which is counted by animals currently registered. This is important to know. The RWHA and its members can make adjustments to help the population if needed. It's equally important to know the registered hogs that are no longer producing, due to retirement, injury, illness or death. Please go thru your records and if you've had registered hogs that are no longer breeding for registration for any reason, notify the RWHA. You can call, email, snail mail, or send a message. No hog is ever removed from the registry. The hog will be recorded as deceased or out of production and will not be counted in the overall registration numbers. It only takes a few minutes so please do your part to help.



Cupped ears. Want to know more about them? Visit the RWHA tutorial and look for the Ear Chapter. You'll most likely see them in your herd so why not learn about them.

Selection for Production or for Show Can Change Breeds

Breeds come to us through a variety of pathways. Most breeds were developed to suit varied purposes and environments, which shaped them into the wonderful array of breeds we have today. As breeds, especially rare breeds, become the target of more interest, most breeders want to select for either mainstream production or show. Either sort of selection changes the breed, and the changes can either be good or can be a challenge. Selection goals need to be chosen carefully and wisely!

Selecting for production sounds innocent enough, but how to measure that production is of key importance. In temperate environments setting priorities is pretty easy, because animal survival is not all that challenging. The more challenging the environment, the more necessary it is to place emphasis on survival as a target of selection. In the most challenging environments, animal survival is right at the top of the list for selection goals, with any production secondary to that.

Production can be measured in different ways. If production (meat, milk, eggs) is “per individual animal” the usual result is large, rapidly growing, or heavily producing animals. If production is “per unit of land area” the result can be more moderate size, great fertility, and longevity. In some situations the outcome of selection for fertility and longevity can yield smaller individual animals, but greater production per unit of area. This is a subtle sort of production, and is difficult to capture if one breed is compared against another strictly on early productivity.

When selection for production or show become intense, the result is change in the underlying genetic variability of a population. This needs to be done wisely, because selection goals can change over time and in some situations can reverse. Changes require modification of goals, measurements, and selection practices. As a breed moves through temporary fads in either production goals or show ring traits, it loses variation. Eventually it can lose enough underlying variation that future response to selection is hampered. That then dooms the breed to becoming irrelevant and cast aside.

While showing can be productive and constructive, it often fails in both of these goals. Showing is an effort to predict overall merit, and this can be difficult to assess from a visual appraisal. For example, my students periodically come out to do ultrasound examinations of my own goat herd. Invariably they will manage to have two does side by side. One will be big, smooth, and lucky to raise a single kid. The other will be rough, moderate in size, and consistently producing twins or triplets.

Asked “Which goat is better? They usually respond that the larger one is. A herd of the smaller, rougher sort would out-produce those bigger ones every time!

Selection responds to goals, and goals therefore need to be set carefully. Breeders can shape and change breeds dramatically in just a few generations, so fads like blue eyes or specific color patterns really do need to take a back seat to issues like adaptation, productivity, and general utility. And don’t forget temperament, which is highly heritable and either a source of joy or dismay!

Reproduced here with the permission of Dr. Sponenberg.

As we’ve learned from Dr. Sponenberg’s article, any living thing adapts and adjusts to its environment as well as to human intervention. This is why the RWHA breed standards are relaxed. We have the basics but we’re also diverse. and we also strive to keep our hogs as nature made them where ever they live. We know Red Wattles look, grow, and may produce differently across the country while at the same time be outstanding representations of Red Wattles in a particular area. We also learn that breeding for “pretty” or Blue Ribbons does not always produce the type animals that will survive and thrive for the betterment of the breed. The breed changes and unfortunately we’re seeing the results with a lot of swine breeds. They’re having conception, farrowing and mothering difficulties, as well as severe structural problems.

We do not want to single any particular breed(s) out, however please do a little google research and look at pictures of other heritage hog breeds. Many are totally different from their ancestors. Their backs are now flatter, the tail set is much higher, the legs are shorter, their hips and shoulders are more pronounced and they have the appearance of being firm and muscular.

Human intervention has created this for show hogs that have the possibility of bringing in large sums of money by way of selling the genetics that produced the hog. Al thru semen sales, and genetics thru the pedigree. Muscular also means less fat, leaner pork that some of the public demands for their tables, but the sacrifice is in taste and quality and sometimes even our health depending on how the hog was raised.

Is the change better? It depends on how you look at it. The breeders changed their practices to produce what the public wanted. Blue Ribbons and less fat on the plate, thus giving the producer additional money in the bank.

However the hogs are not what they use to be. As Nature made them through time to survive and thrive. Many of those breeders are now experiencing structure, breeding and farrowing problems.

Those legs should be built to carry the weight, the tail set indicates where internal organs are positioned, (especially for breeding and farrowing). With few exceptions, successful breeding and farrowing should come natural with no human interference. Many of these hogs are also experiencing structure problems, ie: hip, shoulder and leg problems. When internal organs are not positioned optimally for the hog, it also throws off the muscular, bone and cartilage structures.

With the help of The Livestock Conservancy, the promotion of many famous chefs, and the changing American diet, true heritage breeds are becoming better known and in some cases demanded for consumption. The process is slow. It's ingrained on our brains that animal fat is harmful. The devil for our arteries. The public is learning that hogs raised on pastures have more healthy fats. Omega 3's. Not found so much on the grocery store shelves provided by large CAFO's. Fat provides most of the flavor and once the brain kicks in that the fat is not so bad for us and the pork tastes wonderful, they're hooked.

With the help of many experts including The Livestock Conservancy, the RWHA developed our breed standards. They are relaxed enough that the breeder can breed toward what they like to see in their own herd, however there must be some fixed guidelines for maintaining the true breed. The focus of the RWHA is to keep this breed as a true heritage hog with all the great qualities that nature has given them, without outside interference or fads other than what's necessary to raise and keep them.

Sometimes blue ribbons do more harm and being pretty is not always the best animal or best representation of being bred to survive and thrive.

Tutorial

Our website tutorial is slowly growing. It's meant to be an easy and quick go-to place for assistance or to learn. We hope you use it and that's its useful for you. If you have any topics you'd like to know more about please let us know. The hernia document will be placed there shortly and there are several other subjects that may be of interest to you.

Hernia

There are three types of hernias. Umbilical, Scrotal and Inguinal. For now there doesn't seem to be one particular cause for them, but more likely a combination of genetic and environmental factors. There's been many genetic tests in countries around the world and it doesn't seem to affect any particular breed or set of genetics more than others. Currently the belief is that they randomly occur when situations are "just right".

Umbilical hernias are more commonly seen than the other two types. They occur when the abdominal wall fails to heal properly after birth. This break or separation in muscle tissue allows the intestines to protrude thru the weakened muscle. Treatment such as iodine dipping or spraying or clipping the cord does not prevent hernias and may actually increase incidence if the cord is not handled properly. Umbilical hernias appear more in males but do show up in females. What is currently known to be causes are:

- Possible genetic defectbut cannot be confirmed at this time.
- Environmental connection such as bacterial infection. The most common bacteria found on umbilical stumps are: E Coli, Staphylococcus, and Enterococcus but there are many more.
- Abnormal stretching of umbilical cord during farrowing.

The abdominal muscles are still fragile so you may notice the following hernia causes as well.

- Piglets also huddle together and sometimes weight and pressure from those on top will create a hernia to those on the bottom.
- Occasionally hernias will develop from wrestling or blows to the abdominal area from playing.

Scrotal hernias occur in males and are thought to be caused by the internal inguinal ring not closing properly allowing the intestines to drop into the scrotum. Scrotal hernias more commonly occur on the left side but can be both sides. Surgical treatment is often successful if performed early.

Inguinal hernias occur primarily in males but do appear in females. The cause is thought to be the same as for Umbilical hernias with a weakened or unclosed muscle allowing the intestines to spill through or protrude. Treatment would be the same as with Umbilical hernias.

Other physical anomalies you may see that can be associated with hernias.

Intersexuality or intersexes in females appears to be genetically carried by boars and can present themselves in various degrees. Often but not always, an inguinal or scrotal hernia will be noticed in which the testes are captured within the body however there is no scrotum or the testes cannot drop into the scrotum. The hog may have the appearance of a gilt and may have fallopian tubes and uterus' in different stages of development. The hog may even cycle and become bred however they rarely carry to term. The hog may also present with boar-like traits while maturing since the testes are present and producing male hormones. Processing is recommended prior to maturity due to the possibility of boar taint. Intersexuality is rare but it does happen.

Cryptorchidism is when one or both testes fail to descend into the scrotum. Sometimes one or both may drop at a later date but not always. The breeder must know that the boar can be fertile for reproduction once mature and can also produce boar taint when processing. Cryptorchidism is rare but not as rare as intersexuality.

In most cases surgery for repair can be successful but veterinary services are expensive. There are always exceptions but it's recommended to watch and allow the piglet to mature to processing weight unless it develops complications such as off feed, bloating, illness, temperature, lethargic or in pain. It is not wise to breed hogs with hernias due the possibility of genetic influence. A gilt with a hernia may develop serious complications or even death due to the weight of the litter, competition for space in the abdominal cavity, and/or contractions from farrowing.

All hernias occur due to a weak spot or defect in muscle. The weak muscle may have both genetic and environmental influences or causes.

Hernias usually don't affect the hog other than being unsightly. It's recommended to watch the hog for signs of illness or pain. In this case the intestines could become blocked or twisted and immediate action is necessary, usually meaning to put the hog down. In the majority of cases even with exceptionally large hernias the hog lives to butcher weight without incident. Your work toward prevention should include keeping good records of your sows, boars and litters and documenting any health concerns to notice patterns for the future. Keep bedding and farrowing areas as fresh and clean as possible to help prevent umbilical infection and hernia --and by not assisting in the farrowing process unless the sow or piglets are in danger. 1.) Your being there may create unnecessary stress to your sow. 2.) Millions of healthy piglets have been born without introducing medications, pulling piglets, iodine or umbilical clips. The umbilical cord normally breaks during or right after birth but any pulling, lifting or handling to remove the piglet to dry off, check over, or place on a teat may put stress on the umbilical area or a still attached cord. Self- movement of the piglet from birth to a teat is helpful in expanding the lungs and use of muscles. The umbilical area usually heals within an average of 18 days.

Like many other health or medical situations in the swine world, STUFF HAPPENS. There has to be reasons but for now some are unknown. Probably sometime in your journey with hogs you will experience a hernia or even a few, and other unexplainable things as well. To be a good steward every breeder should be pro-active. Know your hogs. They're all different and it's much easier to be alerted to problems if you know them and their behaviors. Keep living and sleeping areas as fresh and clean as possible to avoid bacterial and viral infections as well as parasitic critters that can carry disease. Good biosecurity is a must at all times.



Umbilical hernia, always present themselves at the umbilical stump. They can be of various sizes.

Most all hernias can be surgically repaired. The breeder must weigh the cost of treatment against the overall gain. Most hogs with hernias can reach processing size or age without incident.



Scrotal Hernia, The hernia may be smaller, or more pronounced but is always in the scrotum. Castration may be dangerous due to intestines protruding into the scrotum. The procedure is best done in your vet's office and can be successful. Most breeders grow them out and process scrotum hernia boars before they reach breeding age to avoid the possibility of boar taint.



Inguinal Hernia, may present themselves anywhere in the belly area from the naval down and may be of smaller or larger sizes. Most hogs will present with one hernia but it's not unheard of to have two.

Attention

In an effort to be economically friendly, financially responsible, and also reduce volunteer time, as of 2019 the RWHA newsletters will no longer be mailed individually. Our newsletters will be placed on our website, redwattleproject.org under the newsletter tab at the top of the homepage screen. They are in date order. If you prefer them mailed to you, you must let us know in writing so your request can be kept on file for future mailings

Your Board of Directors is also discussing the possibility of using the forum on our website for election purposes. We currently use The Livestock Conservancy to track and record our elections. If you have any suggestions please contact a board member.