

Guideline

This folder is meant to be used as a learning tool. As with most things, there are always exceptions or something different. Some pictures and explanations are geared more toward breed standards with registration in the forefront and some are meant to be informative, showing what we all may come across in our herds. All Red Wattle hogs are important and breeders can have different goals in mind for each one. We all have what we feel are exceptional hogs and others that should be feeder/meat hogs. Most importantly you should come away from this tool with a better understanding of all Red Wattle hogs and in some cases, hogs in general.

- Registration and feeder/meat hogs each have their own important places in our herds and farms.
- Registration is reserved for what we each feel are the best of the best. These will likely be your breeders. The best hogs in breed conformity, characteristics and traits known for Red Wattles will usually continue to breed more true. With each generation the goal should be to continue to review and select the best to continue to improve. This means for an example if you have a hog that is good everywhere else but is lacking in the ham area, it can still be registered and hopefully improved upon by breeding to a mate with good hams. There is no perfect hog and never will be. The judgement lies with the breeder. That means you should develop a critical eye and continue to breed to improve your hogs in what you honestly feel is the direction you need to go. While the breed standards are basically set for Red Wattles and registration they are also general enough that we all can take them in the direction we feel is necessary for each of us. This also forces each of us to be honest with ourselves.
- Breed conformity or looks is not the only thing to consider for keeping a hog for breeding purposes. Your choices should also be based on the hog's ability to gain weight and grow in a timely manner that is typical for Red Wattles. Some choices are also based on fertility, good mothering abilities, sufficient milk supply, and litter sizes with healthy offspring. Boars should be non-aggressive, and an active and eager breeder. You alone set your goals.
- Registration doesn't have to be a one-time deal. It's difficult to know what any registered hog will do for its entire life. As it matures it may not develop the traits you were hoping for. If you feel the hog hasn't grown or matured the way you want your breeders to develop, then you might consider moving the hog to the feeder/meat herd and remove the registration from the production registry if your goal is to continue to improve your registered herd.
- Feeder/meat hogs also have a very important place. Without the desire or demand from the public for meat no farm animal will survive. Feeder/meat hogs are what you honestly cull or remove from your litters and herds to grow and become pork products. Whether you raise to process and sell your own pork products or you sell feeder/meat hogs for someone else to raise, they should also be monitored for growth, problems or defects. Quality is important because you want them to produce quality pork. Your records can show you which sows and boars produce the best for pork production or ones that develop aggressiveness, easily put on too much fat, or have legs that break down. You could track those traits back to the sow and boar for future guidelines for yourself.
- All animals evolved from the crossing of others at some point. Red Wattles come from evolving and adjusting for perhaps hundreds of years to the point they are now, which is a separate and entirely different breed from other hogs. We know from record keeping what their basic characteristics and traits are. There will always be exceptions. They are what they are and it's detrimental to them to expect more or something different from them than they genetically have to offer. You will also become disillusioned and frustrated. Your own good record keeping, informed breeding practices and farm management will improve your herd.
- All breeders are responsible for their own actions on their farms. It's impossible for any association to monitor everyone or every animal and unrealistic to assume it should be done. Associations can and should provide their members with the education and knowledge to be productive breeders.

- Arm yourselves with knowledge, courage, honesty and objectivity. Be willing to be critical and make adjustments as needed depending on what your specific goals are while staying within the breed guidelines. You are your own best advocate or worst enemy and how you manage your hogs will always be evident by the end product.