



CANADIAN HERITAGE BREEDS WELCOMES YOU TO 2017!

Canadian Heritage Breeds Newsletter

February 2017

2017 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Canadian Heritage Breeds: A tribute to our past, a gift to our future

Journey back in time with Canadian Heritage Breeds!

This year Canada turns 150, and CHB is celebrating this milestone with a special focus on our agricultural roots! During the year CHB will celebrate our farming history with some special articles and events to pay tribute to the hardworking homesteaders who shaped this country, and the functional, hardy livestock they depended on for their survival.

A highlight of each year is the annual CHB Fall Poultry Show, but this year's show will have a new twist – or more accurately – an old twist! This will be a weekend like no other where you'll experience the poultry, livestock and farm equipment of a bygone era! More surprises will be announced later, but for now make sure you have set aside the first weekend of November for this historic event.

Of course you'll also want to make plans to take in the other fun and exciting activities happening during the year, including the Summer Fair Poultry shows. There's nothing better than a fair for family fun and entertainment, and when you combine it with a poultry show... well that's an unbeatable combination! Watch for more details on the CHB shows, workshops and other upcoming events in these newsletters, and by checking the CHB website.

We hope you enjoy this edition of the Canadian Heritage Breeds' newsletter.



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What is CHB?

We are about the preservation of genetic diversity, heritage breeds, networking, social gatherings, education, breed conservation, and fun. CHB offers a number of events and resources including poultry shows, seminars, breed displays, social gatherings & smaller events throughout the year.

Our membership includes every level of enthusiast from the first time urban coop owner to farmers with decades of experience raising heritage breed animals. CHB also encourages youth involvement with a developing Juniors program. Although CHB is based in Central Alberta we aim to create a resource for not just Alberta, but



Partridge Cochins | Photo Credit:
Hawthorn Hill Poultry

for all of Western Canada and beyond!

CHB publishes an online quarterly newsletter announcing upcoming events, articles by and about our members, breed introductions and information, and more.

MOVING? WE WANT TO STAY IN TOUCH!

If you have moved or changed your address, please let us know!

Email:
canadianheritagebreeds@gmail.com

Become Involved

CHB is always looking for members who want to become more involved! As we continue to grow, there are always opportunities open for YOU to become more involved with seminars, breed displays, sales, shows, get-togethers, newsletters, etc. If you are interested in volunteering for a specific event, are available for general assistance, have ideas for



advertising, or interesting things we should have at the show, we would love to hear from you! We always need volunteers to help at upcoming shows and events. Help with the fall show set up and tear down are the two biggest areas where we can use even just a couple of hours of help.

Become a Member

For only \$10.00 per year, you will receive or have access to:

- In-club Awards
- Discounts on CHB Club Events
- Early Registration for Seminars
- Advertising Opportunities
- Quarterly Newsletter

[Register online today!](#) Canadian Heritage Breeds is a Registered Non-Profit Society.

Upcoming Events

Be sure to mark down these important dates! 2017 is shaping up to be the best and busiest year yet.

CHB 2017 Events:

- **June 10th** Poultry Educational day (Lacombe Peavey Mart)
- **July 23rd** CHB Westerner Days Poultry Show (Westerner Park, Red Deer)
- **July 29th** CHB Vermilion Fair Poultry Show (Vermilion Agricultural Society)
- **September 9th** Heritage Meat Event (tentative – location and details TBA)
- **November 4 - 5th 2017** CHB Fall Poultry and Pigeon Show (Lacombe Agricultural Society)

Other Upcoming 2017 Events:

- **Sunday April 23rd** Prairie Ornamental Avicultural Association (POAA) Spring Auction www.paaa.ca
- **June 9 - 10th** Homestead Show & Market, Midnight Stadium, Fort MacLeod
- **August 19 – 20th** 110th Priddis & Millarville Fair - includes sheep, goat and poultry shows (Millarville Race Track & Fair Grounds) <http://www.millarvilleracetrack.com/millarville-events/fair/>

If you have an upcoming event which might be of interest CHB members, email us the details and we'll add it to the Events Listing to be published in the next newsletter! canadianheritagebreeds@gmail.com



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*Thank you to Peavey Mart for your ongoing support of
Canadian Heritage Breeds!*

Canadian Heritage Breeds Youth Mentorship Program

During the past few years, several members have suggested that CHB should consider ways to engage the youth more and encourage participation in the Junior poultry show classes. The idea of starting up a Youth Mentorship program was first proposed in the 2016 Fall Newsletter. The response was positive, and the board has decided to move forward to turn the idea into reality. CHB is very pleased to announce the launch of our brand-new Youth Mentorship Program! You probably have lots of questions, so here is some Q and A...

What is it all about?

The 2017 Youth Mentorship Program will run as a small pilot project, with plans to expand if it proves successful. For now, it will be centered around heritage poultry keeping, with a focus on education and mentorship to help kids develop a strong and lasting foundation in a specific breed of poultry. The goal is to help the younger generation with support and encouragement to give them a greater chance to achieve success and find enjoyment in raising healthy, high quality heritage poultry. To be successful, a teamwork approach will be needed involving an experienced poultry breeder, the child and his or her parents, all working together.

How do I register?

To be eligible, a parent (or guardian) must be a member of CHB in good standing. Children should be at least 8 years old and up to age 16. (If you have a younger or older child that you feel would benefit from this program, please contact a CHB board member to discuss.) The application form is included with this newsletter and needs to be completed and submitted by March 10th. One application will need to be filled out for each of your children who are interested in taking part. There is no fee to register for the program.

Who are the mentors?

For this first year, mentors will include only the following who currently serve on the CHB board of Directors: Callum McLeod, Crystal McKinnon, Kathy Stevenson and Kyle Lawrence. In subsequent years we hope to expand the program and invite other interested CHB Members to participate as mentors of poultry or other livestock. Mentors will be required to submit a criminal record check.

How is the mentor and child matched?

The CHB Youth Committee will review all applications and successful applicants will be matched with an appropriate mentor based on location and on your stated preference of chicken breed. The mentor will contact the family to introduce themselves and discuss the next steps.

What is provided by the mentor?

Six well-started chicks from high quality flocks will be supplied to the family at a reduced price of \$6.00 each. Besides supplying the boy or girl with a few chicks to get them started, the mentor will offer teaching, advice, and tips to help them make good decisions and hopefully avoid problems. There is also the advantage of building supportive connections with other CHB club members, families, and poultry experts who will be involved in the program.



When can we get started with our chicks?

All chicks included in the program will be similar in age to maximize group learning at workshops and shows. They will be hatched during March and ready for the child to begin raising at around 4 weeks old. An ILT vaccination plan will be discussed with the family to help protect the chicks from this disease.

What are parents expected to contribute?

Parents will need to pay for the chicks and make arrangements to pick them up from the breeder. They need to provide suitable brooding space, and have adequate indoor and outdoor pens available to raise the chicks to adult size, keeping in mind they will likely end up with both male and female chickens. The family will need to provide all the basic requirements such as feeders, waterers, feed, and any other related supplies needed for raising the chickens. It will also be up to the child's parents to provide transportation to required CHB events and pay any entry/admittance fees that may apply.

What Events are we expected to attend?

There will be 3 events during the year where attendance is strongly encouraged:

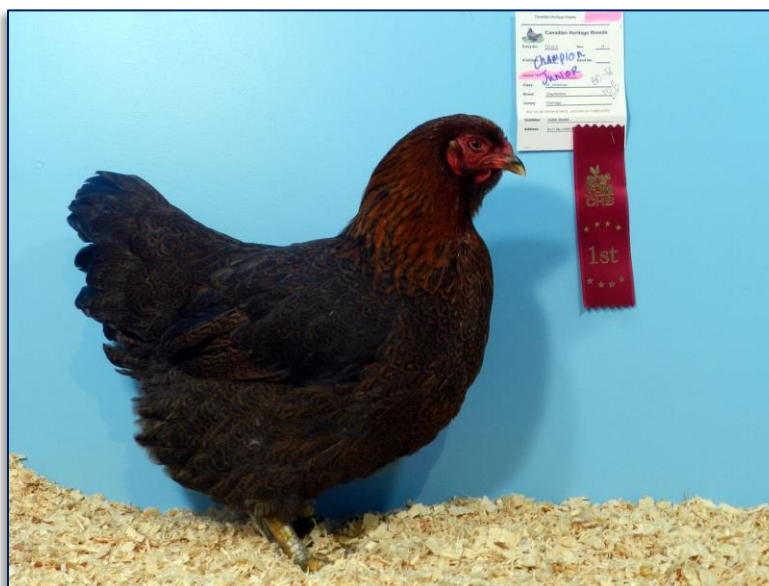
- A poultry education workshop in June in Lacombe
- One summer poultry show (the family can choose between Red Deer or Vermilion Fair shows)
- The annual CHB Fall show in November in Lacombe

These events provide important opportunities to learn more about heritage chickens in general. Youth will be encouraged to bring all 6 of their juvenile birds to the June poultry workshop where they can be individually assessed. The youth will be coached on what to watch for as they grow and mature, find out which will likely be their best prospects for show and breeding, and which will be better suited for egg production or meat purposes. The summer poultry shows will serve as an introduction to poultry show classes, show layout, and judging process. Entering birds is not required.

At the CHB Fall Show, the child will enter at least one of the chickens they have raised through the program at the Junior class level. A Junior Showmanship competition will be included in this show as well, and children will most likely want to participate in this fun event to demonstrate what they have learned and achieved with their birds.

When is the Youth Program over?

After attending the CHB Fall Show, the program is finished and the child will receive a certificate of completion.



Starting a Heritage Chicken Flock

By Joseph Marquette from Yellow House Farm

Step #1: Choosing Your Breed

Perhaps the most exciting step is making the decision to homestead your own flock of chickens. From them you will gain eggs, meat, valuable manure for your garden, hours of lazy enjoyment watching them do chicken things, insect and tick control, and the peace of mind that comes from taking a clear step toward sustainability and food independence for you and your loved ones. It should be stated, that homesteading is true *farming*. Making the choice to raise heritage fowl in traditional ways makes you your own farmer. It is a noble vocation and most rewarding. Nature is our ultimate teacher. A return to her is a return to the co-creative process which always leads to joy.

Having made the decision to become a poultry farmer, the next decision is to choose the breed that will best suit your needs. *Nota Bene*, the key here is breed, not breeds. Perhaps the most common error for beginning poulterers is to fall prey to the color-filled catalogues of myriad breeds and buy a smorgasbord of varieties resulting in a lot of not much. The decision to become a homesteading poultry farmer is the decision to establish a relationship with one breed and become its caretaker. In return for your stewardship, they provide you with some of the most nutritious food available to man. As you will see, reading these next paragraphs, although it is not deeply complicated, there is a level of involvement in true homesteading. For most, one's level of success as a poulterer will depend on one's ability to make a commitment to a single, or at the very most, a couple of breeds. If one is able to do so, the future will hold a productive flock of highly uniform beauties that are both a source of nourishment and pride.

Do your research. Be disciplined. Choose one. For the usual homesteader, the choice will normally fall between an [egg breed](#) and a [dual-purpose breed](#). Of the two, most will choose a dual-purpose breed because they are a good source of both eggs and meat. The choice of an egg breed is appropriate for those who either do not wish to produce much meat for their freezers but would like

an abundant egg supply or for those who have highly limited space to dedicate to their flock.

Once one knows one's goals, the question is to choose a foundational or a composite breed. Because of the irreplaceability of foundational breeds whose extinction would be definitive and irreversible, for any homesteader wishing to serve both sustainability and bio-diversity, foundational breeds is the logical choice. An added bonus to selecting a foundational breed is their outstandingly ancient resume, which makes of your henhouse an adventure in historicity.

It is important to select a breed able to excel in your climate. For our harsh northern climate, this means choosing a breed with the appropriate headgear. For better or for worse, most single combed varieties are not equipped to cope with our cold and enduring winters (with out extra care toward winter housing). Among foundational dual-purpose breeds, the most worthy of homesteaders' attention are the Rose comb White Dorking, La Fleche, Houdan, Crevecoeur, and the Dominique. Good choices for rare foundational egg-breeds would be the Rose comb Ancona, Redcap, and the Hamburg.

To procure stock, the best choice for most will be the purchase of day-old chicks however, availability is often hard to nail down, and cost can be prohibitive. A valid option is to procure your base stock from a hatchery, while turning to the other sources for stock of superior quality whose genetics can be used to spruce up your base.

A quick word to price, spend a little. Good stock is not inexpensive; neither does it need to be outlandishly costly. Remember that in establishing a true homesteading flock, you are going to perpetuate your own stock. Thus, your purchase should amount to a one-time investment. From this starting point, if one initially spends \$200.00 to then have fresh, nutritious poultry for the rest of one's life, that's not too shabby.

As to numbers, most homesteaders' goals will require a minimum of 25 chicks. 50 is a better number. Not all chicks are created equal and if too few are purchased you will not have enough to choose the best come autumn. If you are compelled to save inferior stock on account of small numbers, your progress will be slowed. When working with heritage fowl, it is necessary to bear in mind that they have all suffered from neglect over the last decades. None are,

as of now, truly up to snuff. Their very future depends on our willingness to take them as they are and breed them back up to the excellence that is their history and future promise. It is this willingness to engage them as they are, knowing that it isn't the fast track to easy profits, which will be most edifying and profitable in the long-term. They have served us for centuries; if they are to be here when we need them next, it is essential that we serve them now. If you purchase fast track hybrids, they will last but a year or two. Insofar as they will not breed true, you will then be compelled to buy yet another batch. This cycle will continue until you realize that you have spent more money in stock than you ever needed to, which, of course, big hatcheries bank on, literally. Furthermore, had you begun with heritage poultry in the first place, your stock would have, by this point of horrible recognition, been much improved.

Step #2: Your Chicks Are Here!

The first eight weeks of your chick's life are critical. Be prepared for their arrival so that all will run smoothly. Remember the old adage: well begun is half done. Oddly, as you return to farming, more and more of these old adages will start making perfect sense!

In preparation for your chicks, line a high-sided plastic tub with a layer of newspaper and then add an inch or two of *pine* shavings to accommodate your chicks comfortably. The shavings are necessary, as chicks must never be kept on slippery surfaces. Straddled leg will occur and that's the end of your young flock. Cardboard boxes, though often used, are a fire hazard. We *never* use cardboard boxes. Large plastic tubs are widely available at department stores, are relatively inexpensive, easily cleaned, and can be reused indefinitely. Your new chicks need room to doze beneath their heat lamp, find their feed and water, which should *not* be beneath their heat lamp, run around, avoid their heat lamp as desired, and generally stretch.

250-watt heat lamps are the usual choice for brooding chicks. Often, though, when brooding indoors, a 250-watt bulb is not needed. 125 or 90-watt bulbs may be sufficient. If brooded out-of-doors, it may be best to opt for a 250-watt bulb. When using a 250-watt bulb, be sure that your fixture is equipped with a porcelain base. Simple spotlights with plastic bases, often seen for construction projects, are *not* safe for 250-watt bulbs. Newly purchased light fixtures should bear a sticker referencing the highest wattage recommended for safe usage. A healthy dose of paranoia is not so bad here. The usual recommendation is

that the heat lamp should not be less than 18 inches above the bedding. Anything less than 15 inches is asking for an early morning five-alarm.

Watch your chicks and their relationship to their heat source. If all of your chicks are huddled beneath the lamp and are trying to climb over each other to the center, your lamp is too high. If they are all fled to the corners, then the bulb is too low. If they are all bunched up in one place as if huddling for heat and yet are refusing to be under the heat lamp where it would seem that they could be warmed, it is likely that there is a draught harassing them. Beware of draughts, prolonged exposure will hinder development and often kill your hatchlings. The ideal temperature for day-olds is 95F. Every week or so, you will raise the lamp to reduce the heat by about 5 degrees. This will, of course, depend on where they are located and the time of year. Always use the above description of behavior to tell whether or not your chicks are comfortable. When the temperature is just right and there are no lethal draughts plaguing your chicks, they will move about freely, some eating, some drinking, some running after phantom dreams of butterflies, and others snoozing beneath their trusty lamp.



Cochin Chicks | Photo Credit: Larissa Stenger

Be cautious as they grow. Chicks need not be overcrowded. All sorts of health issues emerge from overcrowding and the inevitably subsequent uncleanness: coccidiosis, aspergillosis, and cannibalism, to name a few. A trick to avoid uncleanness is to place their waterers and feeders on some sort of wooden shield such that they are not directly on the shavings. Osmosis will make a damp mess of your shavings in no time leading to the possibility of all sorts of health issues. By placing your waterers and feeders on shield-like pieces of board, they can be lifted out and cleaned daily, discarding the wet shavings from the board pieces. Also, as your chicks grow, raise your waterers and feeders up on blocks such that they are always about chest level. If too low, the chicks will fill them with shavings and general mess, causing you more work than you need.

Next, it is necessary to consider what to feed your hatchlings. The easiest route is to use commercially prepared Chick Starter. There are many choices for chick starter at your local feed store. Store your feed in a secure container such as a clean plastic or metal garbage can. This will keep out the rodents and the potential for salmonella that they carry, as well as moisture that will quickly lead to unhealthy molds.

Whether to use medicated or unmedicated Chick Starter is a personal decision. The medication in medicated Chick Starter is a coccidiostat included to vaccinate your chicks against coccidiosis, an extremely common threat to your chicks. This vaccine should not be confused with the dreaded antibiotics used in CAFO's and large agribusiness to ward off the diseases waiting to thrive in their monstrous environments. It is simply a vaccine to counter a common disease for chicks that is naturally found in the environment. Some might consider it common sense others not. A human correlation may be the decision to vaccinate or not vaccinate your children for measles. Ultimately, it is a personal decision.

Regardless of your use of medicated or unmedicated Chick Starter, one should always add a tablespoonful of apple cider vinegar per gallon of water. This old-fashioned remedy is making a comeback. It is thought to help early feathering, aid in digestion, and is even touted as a natural coccidiostat. Many reputable breeders, now using unmedicated Chick Starter coupled with water treated with apple cider vinegar, are reporting low levels of coccidiosis in their chicks for several years. Realities being what they are, though, should you choose against medicated Chick Starter, we highly recommend that you add the apple cider vinegar to their water and maintain high levels of cleanliness. An added bonus with apple cider vinegar is that it goes a long way in impeding the development of green algae in the chick waterers, which reduces the need for weekly scrubbing.

One common problem seen in artificially brooded chicks is referred to as "pasty bum". Pasty bum is just that; chicks develop little wads of poo around their vents as if they were in need of wiping. Usually this is blamed on high brooder temperatures. Nevertheless, it appears commonly even when all is well. When brooded naturally by mother hen, she pecks it off as part of her motherly routine. Without a mom to speak of, there are always a few that end up a bit pasty. Usually they're just fine, yet if pity moves you, the dangler can usually be removed with a wet Q-tip, a gentle touch, and a little patience.

Step #3: They're Growing Up So Fast!

By eight weeks old, you have moved your chicks out to the barn or coop. A living room is no place for an eight week old chick, let alone 50 of them! In reality, you probably moved them out several weeks prior; there is a reason for which chickens are not kept inside as cage birds. At this point you want a good foot of floor space per chick. Remember the inevitable woes of overcrowding, besides it makes a heck of a lot more work for you.

At this point, it is appropriate to give them daytime access to an outdoor run. Chicks younger than eight weeks, without the benefit of a mother to keep them close and protected, are best kept indoors. At eight weeks, depending upon the weather, most young pullets (a hen under one year old) and cockerels (a cock under one year old) are more or less feathered and ready to chase bugs and other yummys out-of-doors. It would be unwise, though, to give them access to total free-range. They will be hard put to find their way home at night, and you'll be hard put to find them. The end result will be their place of honor on the neighborhood predator's table. Aside from nighttime marauders, hawks find them easy pickings at this age. Moreover, without mom's sense to get them out of the rain, a summer afternoon's thundershower could prove a disaster. If kept within a pen, it is easier to keep out predators, secure them at night, and usher them in out of the rain.

Also, at eight weeks one is beginning to wean them from the heat lamp. Depending on the time of year, it may be quite appropriate to exchange the 250-watt bulb for one of lower wattage. Moreover, the light can be unplugged by day and plugged back in at night. Slowly wean them such that they need no heat at all.

At eight weeks old, one switches feed from a Chick Starter, medicated or otherwise, to an *unmedicated* Grower ration. It may be wise to start them on a Grower Mash to maintain the texture of their feed. However, begin mixing it with a Grower Pellet to eventually wean onto pellets completely. Pellets lead to less waste and spillage, which helps out the pocketbook. Remember that feed is the single greatest expense for poulterers. Moreover, spillage attracts rodents, which is better avoided.

At this point it may be an option to start mixing a tablespoon or so of brewer's or nutritional yeast into their daily ration every once in a while. This will boost their niacin intake, which will help prevent rickets, a common ailment

of birds at this stage of the game. Don't overdo it; every few days is sufficient. Keep up the daily apple cider vinegar. At Yellow House Farm, we use cider vinegar from cradle to grave.

By ten to twelve weeks of age or so, cockerels are being cockerels. They bicker non-stop and annoying the pullets, sound familiar? If housing allows, separate the sexes. Cockerels are easily recognized via their combs and wattles that begin to develop much earlier than those of the pullets. If housing does not allow, they should definitely have access to a large outdoor run so that pullets can separate themselves at will. If neither is possible, you're going to run into difficulties. The poulterer's mantra is "cleanliness and floor space". One option, at this point, may be to cull out any obviously undesirable cockerels to enjoy as summer broilers and old-fashioned fried chicken.

We shall deal with slaughtering later, but now is as good a time as any to recognize the reality that slaughtering is part of a farmer's life. Although it may not be immediately apparent, your flock's health and the good of the breed in your care depends on your ability to remove, in one way or the other, the extra birds from your flock. Until very recently, every woman, save the most moneyed, butchered their family's fowl. It is an honorable, even spiritual, tradition to be understood not shunned. Here at Yellow House Farm, we have taught many people to butcher. They have, without exception, left feeling bigger for the experience, less afraid of the natural. On several occasions, the comment has been simply, "This makes sense." When we return to nature and farming, nature and farming "make sense", i.e. "feel right", and we begin to realize that the perversion is the cellophane wrapped, styrofoam package of denial we buy at the supermarket every week. No large factory farm can replace the surety of your own backyard and clean fresh air. For those absolutely unable to take that step, there are many custom butchers to whom you can bring your culls for the purpose of filling your own freezer.

By fourteen weeks old, it is time to make a first significant cull of your egg-breed cockerels, i.e. if you are raising Redcaps, Anconas or Hamburgs. These breeds won't amount for much as roasters. Thus, it is deeply impractical and uneconomical to hold a large number of cockerels beyond this age. Using your [American Poultry Association Standard of Perfection](#), consider your cockerels carefully. Cull your cockerels following the following criteria in the following order: vigor (bright-eyed, masculine, and ready to go); weight; shape/confirmation;

color. At this point, certain cockerels in your flock will be beginning to show early signs of excellence. They'll have that certain *je ne sais quoi* that speaks of confidence and strength, look carefully. Practice makes perfect. Considering you have 12 to 25 cockerels (or more) to choose from, with a little practice, you'll be able to knock it down to the six best. The others should be removed from the flock to a preparatory pen where they are fed a finishing ration. Try to avoid overly large spaces such that they soften up a bit. Slaughter age for cockerels is 16 weeks.

Step #4: Ready To Lay

By 18 to 20 weeks old your pullets are preparing to begin laying. It is time to move them to their laying coop that will house them during their pullet year. Under proper management, a hen lays the greatest single quantity of eggs during this time. The pullet year is a period, which spans from 6 to 18 months of age, lasting from the time of her first egg until her first adult moult. Remember the saying: "Early hatch, early growth. Early growth, early eggs."

If your goal is to save 10 to 20 pullets, hopefully you are looking at from 25 to 50 candidates, at least. The best candidates follow the same criteria as those aforementioned for cockerels: vigor, weight, shape/confirmation, and color. When in doubt, use your *Standard of Perfection*; when not in doubt, use your *Standard of Perfection*. A good pullet at this stage has enlarged, reddening comb and wattles. Viewed from the side, her body forms a clear rectangle, showing good depth. Viewed from the front, she is quite square and full of breast. Viewed from above, her back forms a fairly clear rectangle. Avoid hens that taper back into a distinct triangle at the tail, when viewed from above. This pinched shape inhibits high egg-production. In general a promising hen's body is a spacious, three-dimensional rectangle that appears to give plenty of room to organs and the assembly line that is internal egg-production. Pullets that have small, pinched heads, dull eyes, lethargic temperaments, concave and oddly angled bodies, pinched breasts, and triangular backs are not going to get you very far. If saved, they will drag your flock down. This, however, underscores the reasons for hatching many and culling many. The more one hatches, the more one is assured of having a wide range of choices when choosing breeders and layers. Those that do not make the grade are for the pot, another joy of keeping chickens.

Our next order of concern moves to lighting. The old saying goes, "Even the sparrow lays in springtime." This little

piece of knowing tells us that it is not the spring that shows the good layer, but the ability to lay during the rest of the year. Laying is the result of lengthening daylight. Laying, like budding in plants, is subject to photosensitivity. As the daylight lengthens in springtime, birds come into lay. Thus, if daytime is extended artificially at the appropriate time, a hen is tricked into thinking it's spring and laying commences. It's not the cold of winter that stops the eggs, excepting in the most extreme spells, it's the darkness.

At about 22 to 23 weeks, hang 60-watt energy-saver light bulbs (they run on 15-watts) in your coop. Hang one for every 100 square feet or so. Plug the lights into a timer set to turn on 13 hours before scheduled sunset. The lights only need to stay on until daylight is strong (sometime around 8-8:30am). By setting the lights for the morning, this allows for a natural sunset and easy roosting. After two weeks, extend the light to 15 hours before scheduled sunset. By now many of your hens have started laying, and the others will quickly follow suit. At this point, if the vast majority of your hens are laying, notice if there are a few who are not and remove them from your flock. You do not want their sluggishness to be perpetuated into future generations. Moreover, everyday they eat for free is a poorer day for you.

Once the pullets begin to come into lay, use up the remaining grower ration that you have and switch to a Layer Pellet. Continue adding cider vinegar to their water at the measure of 1 tbsp. per gallon, and supply supplementary oyster shell and grit to aid in calcium depletion and proper digestion.

Step #5: Spring is coming and Love is in the Air

Ultimately, along with the ability to cull as necessary, it is the understanding and practice of the art of breeding that separates serious homesteaders from backyard tinkerers. It was proper breeding that brought our heritage breeds into existence, and it has been the lack of proper breeding that has decimated them. Unless we return to the traditional breeding of heritage poultry, their imminent extinction is assured, and with their disappearance goes the future of our communal food security. Make no mistake, it is at this level, i.e. breeding, that the poulterer becomes such. It is here that one is of greatest service to the breed in one's care. This is the foundation of local food. Remember that extinction is forever.

For most homesteaders, a traditional Rolling Breeding System will do the trick. Craig Russell, current president of the [S.P.P.A.](#), does an excellent job of elucidating this old-

fashioned tradition. It consists of maintaining one's flock in two parts. At any given point, one is breeding first-year cockerels to second-year hens and second year cocks to first year pullets. The rule is mothers to sons, fathers to daughters. It is a simple to and fro of generations.

The Rolling Breeding chart on page 11 posits that one is beginning one's breeding program with a trio, one cock and two hens. It is, however, just as well, or even better, to begin with a couple of cockerels and 10 pullets. Ultimately, one is working two groups, or pairings, of six to ten hens each.



White Wyandotte Flock | Photo Credit: Larissa Stenger

Eventually, though, one's flock will start to show signs of a sort of bottleneck of inbreeding referred to as *inbreeding depression*. At this point, it is necessary to import new blood into one's flock usually via the purchase of a new cock. The difficulty with heritage breeds is, of course, their rarity and the consequent difficulty of procuring them.

On a slightly different note, when one invests time into a single breed, over the years one's flock becomes quite uniform and productive. To the observer, it begins to exude health and beauty. Eden is a choice that we make, and the bucolic is available to the willing. When we remember that farming is the natural movement of our inner co-creativity, we shall regain the enjoyment of simple pleasures.

Which birds to use as breeders is a tough question but one worthy of consideration. There are many different approaches to the birds. As farmers, we approach matters from an extremely clear hierarchy. Blatant disqualifications are just that; however, various people might differ on what that actually means. Anything color-based is for farm purposes *not* in the category of serious defect, unless you are hatching so very many that one good bird more or less is not of distinct value.

Rolling Breeding

1 st Breeding Season	2 nd Breeding Season	3 rd Breeding Season
		Pairing _____ 1 Cock
	Pairing _____ 1 Cock	Cock
Original _____ Cock	Trio 8	Pullets 10
Hen	Pairing _____ 2 Cockerel	Pairing _____ 2 2 Cockerels
Hen	2 Hens	2 Hens
		8 Hens
We save for the next season the best :		
3 Cockerels	3 Cockerels	3 Cockerels
10 Pullets	10 Pullets	10 Pullets

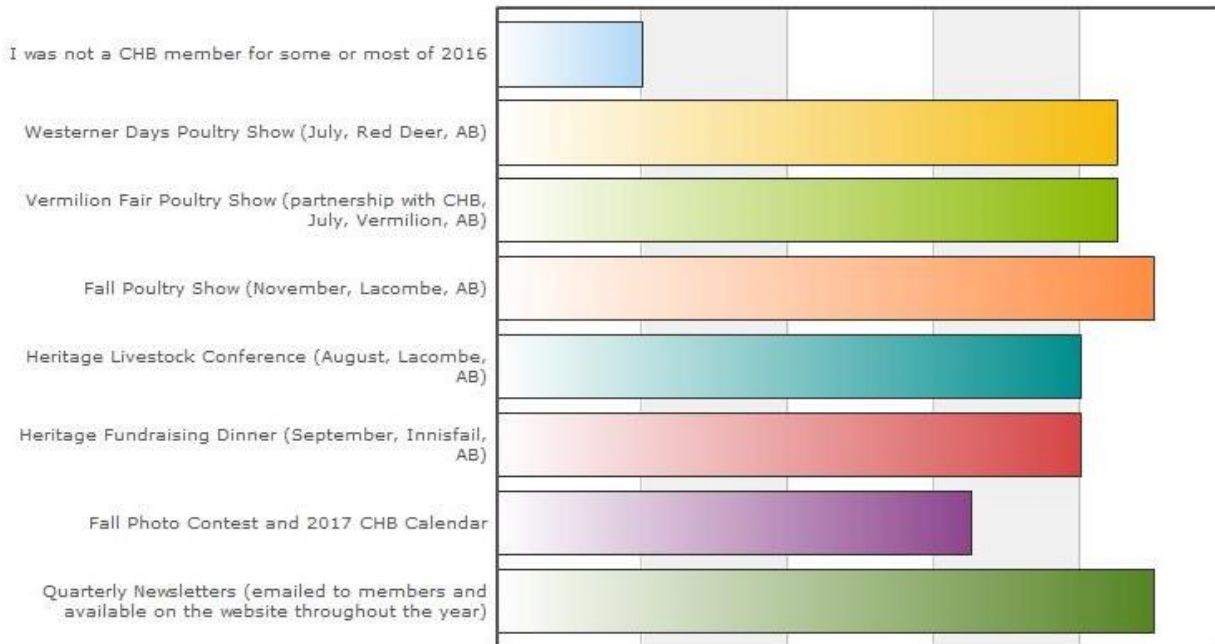
Member Survey Results

For the third year in a row the CHB membership was asked to complete a survey to provide feedback on the past year’s events and activities, weigh in on areas of focus for the upcoming year, and share their thoughts overall on Canadian Heritage Breeds Association. Through the survey CHB members were also given an opportunity to volunteer and take a more active role in areas of interest to them.

Perhaps most importantly, an overwhelming majority of respondents agreed that the events and activities undertaken by CHB in 2016 were inline with the Mission Statement. With each decision that is made the Board of Directors of CHB considers how well it “fits” with Canadian Heritage Breeds Mission so it’s great to see that members also agree!

CHB MISSION STATEMENT: Canadian Heritage Breed Association, CHB, encourages the preservation, growth and overall welfare of heritage breeds. CHB is the vehicle that allows the public, both rural and urban, to recognize the strengths, values and relevance that heritage breeds possess in today's marketplace. CHB will demonstrate the benefits of heritage breeds through public awareness campaigns, which are designed to educate as well as offer the opportunity to become proactive in the conservation of heritage breeds.

Another important metric is the value members saw in the various CHB events and activities throughout the year. Although there was great member interest in all the 2016 events and activities, the annual Fall Poultry Show and the Quarterly Newsletters remain at the top of the list. As would be expected, the Fall Show and Newsletters are also at the top of the 2017 list.

I saw value in CHB undertaking each of the following in 2016 (choose all that apply):

The survey also had a question about the website Breeder's Listing and its value as a promotional and marketing tool for heritage livestock and poultry breeders. With 90% of members agreeing that the Breeder's Listing achieves these goals, the listing will be continued in the same format at last year.

Member input was also requested on a new 2017 initiative, a pilot scale CHB Youth Mentorship Program. For the initial phase, a program that provides support and opportunities to youth interested in raising standard bred poultry was proposed. An overwhelming 95% of respondents supported the idea of the program with several members showing interest in assisting to organize, mentoring or having their children participate. With this feedback, CHB will be going ahead with a pilot scale program this year!

Once again, a sincere thank-you to all the CHB members who took the time to fill out the annual survey! The survey has proven to be a valuable way to receive member feedback but of course member input is welcome at any time so please never hesitate to contact any of the Board of Directors of CHB!

Welcome to Our New CHB Director, Yvette Franklin!

Yvette Franklin balances a life of farming with her husband Arden and their young son Samuel.

They call their 160 acres home in the Lakeland area in the beautiful province of Alberta.

She has dedicated herself to raising quality heritage poultry with her main focus being on Russian Orloffs, Orpingtons and Black Copper Marans. Aside from raising poultry she has a small breeding group of Berkshire Swine.

When she's not on the farm you can usually find her showing her reining horses, which is a passion she's had since she was a young girl.

She hopes she can leave a positive impact on the heritage breeds she has chosen to work with.



CHB Recipe Box: Rabbit Braised in Belgian Ale

Prep time: 20 minutes | Cook time: 1 hour, 15 minutes | Yield: Serves 4

The dish works best with a Belgian ale. If not available, try Newcastle brown ale or Anchor Steam ale, or O-Doul amber ale if you need to avoid alcohol. Do not attempt this recipe with a hoppy beer.

Ingredients

- One 2 1/2 to 3 pound rabbit, cut into 6 to 7 serving pieces (2 front legs, 2 back legs, the loin cut into 2 to 3 pieces), plus ribs and flap meat
- Salt
- 1/2 cup all purpose flour for dredging
- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 2 Tbsp butter
- 2 medium onions, sliced stem to root (about 2 1/2 cups sliced)
- 4-6 whole cloves of garlic, peeled
- 6 sprigs of fresh thyme, tied together with kitchen string (or 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme)
- 1 1/2 cups of Belgian ale, such as Chimay or Ommegang
- 1/2 cup of chicken stock
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 celery root, peeled and diced
- 2 teaspoons whole grained mustard
- 2 teaspoons brown sugar
- 1 Tbsp chopped fresh parsley



Method

1 Place rabbit pieces on a platter, sprinkle both sides with kosher salt. Let sit for 30 minutes to an hour.



2 Place flour on plate. Dredge rabbit pieces in flour. Heat oil and butter in a large Dutch oven on medium heat (large enough to fit rabbit pieces in a single layer). Once the butter is melted and foamy, add the rabbit pieces in a single layer to the

pot. Brown on one side without stirring for 5 to 6 minutes. Then turn the pieces over and brown on the other side. Remove to a plate.



3 Add the sliced onions to the pot, and cook, stirring occasionally, until lightly brown, scraping up and browned rabbit bits from the bottom of the pot. Add garlic cloves and thyme, cook until onions are soft and the garlic quite fragrant.



4 Increase the heat to high and add the Belgian ale. Let it simmer for a minute or two, then add the stock. Add a half teaspoon of salt and the freshly ground black pepper.



5 Place the diced celery root over the onions in a single layer. Place the browned rabbit pieces over the celery root. Bring to a simmer. Cover and reduce heat to maintain a very low simmer. Cook for 45 minutes, or until the rabbit is just cooked through and tender.



6 Remove rabbit pieces from the pot and keep warm on a platter. Increase the heat to high and reduce the liquid by one third. Then, reduce the heat to low, stir in the mustard and sugar. Taste and add more salt and pepper in needed. Slice the flap meat pieces of the rabbit into strips and return to the pot. Strip away any available meat from the back and chest parts and return meat to the pot. Add the serving pieces to the pot. Cover and let rewarm for a minute. Sprinkle with chopped parsley to serve. Serve with crusty bread, egg noodles, or rice pilaf, along with some Belgian ale.

From the CHB Recipe Box: Beer Braised Muscovy

Braising is a combination cooking method using both moist and dry heat; typically the food is first seared at a high temperature and then finished in a covered pot with a variable amount of liquid, resulting in a wonderful flavor and tenderness.

Crispy braised Muscovy is a simple, luxurious dish. Take your time browning the bird until the skin is crackly and golden, then cook everything together in the roaster until the bird is tender and super-crisp, the vegetables are melting and unctuous, and the liquid is reduced into a sauce you want to slurp up with a straw.

Ingredients:

- 1 whole Muscovy
- 1 bottle rich flavored dark beer (2 if your bird is over 5lbs)
- 2 onions (cut)
- 2 carrots (cut)
- 2 apples (cut)
- 1 cabbage (small head cut)
- 1/2 cup dried cherries (or cranberries)
- 10 dried apricots
- 2 tbsps soy sauce
- 1 tsp freshly ground pepper



Directions:

1. Rub entire bird with olive oil. Using a rotisserie, brown the bird all over until golden (475* for approx 10 min) This can be achieved in the oven by turning the bird often.
2. Place all ingredients in a crockpot set on low, (or a covered roaster in a 200F oven, or a large heavy-bottomed pot on a very low burner), for approximately 6 hours, until the meat falls off the bone. If your pot doesn't have room for all the ingredients, the cabbage can be cooked separately, preferably in the pot liquor. Goes best with potatoes or noodles, and would also be wonderful with spaetzle.

Our Farming Forefathers

By Kathy Stevenson

From 1867 to 1914, the Canadian West opened for mass settlement, and became home to millions of immigrant settlers seeking a new life. The prairie provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta grew rapidly in these years as settlers began to transform the barren prairie landscape. Saskatchewan's population grew by 1124.77% between 1891 and 1911!

Farming developed in Canada largely in response to the needs of farm families. The typical prairie farm was a mixed operation with a primary goal of feeding the family and having some surplus to sell. Its basic components were a kitchen garden, perhaps a few fruit trees; some pasture and ploughed fields planted primarily in wheat, barley, and oats (usually in a two-course rotation: crops one year followed by fallow the next).

Small scale, specialized agriculture developed in the Okanagan and Fraser valleys. By the 1880's the Okanagan Valley had developed a specialized fruit industry while market gardening and dairying flourished in the lower Fraser Valley as urban markets increased.



"Breaking Prairie Sod" Camrose, Alberta, 1900 (courtesy PAA).

Livestock

Pigs have been a part of Manitoba's farming history dating back to the Selkirk Settlers. Seventy pigs arrived on the shore of Hudson's Bay in 1819 and were loaded onto York Boats for the 1,000 kilometer journey southward to the Red River Settlement.¹ Pigs were sturdy animals that were essential to farming families, being used for home production of lard and pork. They could fend for themselves most of the year and were fattened quickly on corn or grain.



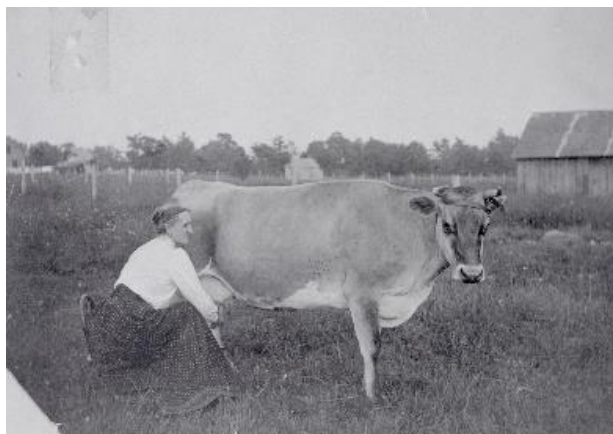
Gillies farm hog, near Edmonton, Alberta. Date: 1916

Sheep have been a part of Saskatchewan's economy for nearly 140 years, with the first sheep arriving on the Canadian prairies in the early 1800's.



Boyd and Lloyd Ayre Hampton (twins) exhibiting twin southdowns, Jr. Section, Oshawa, 1930

Horse breeding programs flourished in the late 1800s and in the early part of the 1900s. During this time, many grain farms had more horses than people (as many as 10 or more), with each horse working an average of 600 hours per year. There were 55,593 farms harvesting over 43 million bushels of wheat, oats and barley in the Canadian Prairie provinces in 1901. ⁱⁱ



Woman milking – Ontario, 1909

The cattle industry in western Canada began as soon as settlers arrived. At first cattle were left to range free and graze on prairie grasses, particularly in Alberta. By 1900, ranchers in the province were shipping 130,000 head of cattle a year to Britain. After the severe winter of 1906-07 destroyed more than 70 percent of the cattle, however, the industry was scaled down, and many farmers kept only a few head to supplement their income from growing grain. ⁱⁱⁱ

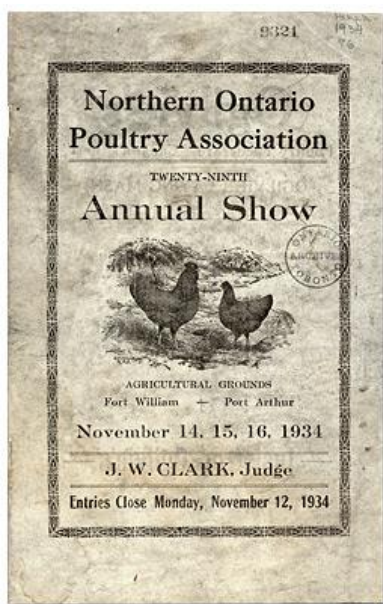
There were also wealthy purebred cattle breeders in Canada during this period, who had brought with them generations of livestock breeding expertise from the old country.



Poultry were prized for their meat, eggs and feathers, and could be found on nearly every farm.



Woman feeding chickens and turkeys, Peace River area Alberta ca. 1920s



Life on the farm could be very isolated, so communities have always provided events for enjoyment and support. As farming communities began to develop in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, agricultural fairs and exhibitions became a vital part of rural life. These events brought people together and allowed them to compare their animals, share their experiences and knowledge, and most importantly, to feel part of a larger whole.

The heritage breeds of farm animals and poultry were truly remarkable. They adapted over time to survive and thrive in rustic conditions, forage for food, raise their own young and maintain a long reproductive lifespan.

These were versatile animals, and they were critical to the survival of the pioneers. They remain the ideal choice for the non-commercial farmers of today, and it is so fortunate that many of these breeds are being preserved through the efforts of committed breeders – including some of our own CHB members. Our heritage breeds are more than a sentimental reminder of our past. They are an irreplaceable wealth of genetic resources, and a living legacy for future generations.

References:

ⁱ *Go West! Settling Canada's Prairies*, William R. Morrison, University of Northern British Columbia

ⁱⁱ *Archives of the Agricultural Experience University of Manitoba Archives & Special Collections, the Libraries*

ⁱⁱⁱ *Wetherell and Corbet's Breaking New Ground – A Century of Farm Equipment Manufacturing on the Canadian Prairies*