



Canadian Heritage Breeds Newsletter

Spring 2021

2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Welcome to March! The arrival of spring always brings with it a sense of renewal and hope. That phrase sounds a bit cliché, but I think it's especially true for those of us raising livestock and poultry. You can't help but feel excitement and optimism when new spring babies make their appearance and we can once again prepare the soil for seeds and plants. These longer days also give us more time to stay active and busy in the great outdoors.

As far as CHB business is concerned, I wish I had some exciting announcements to share with you in this newsletter. Unfortunately, these are still uncertain times and it's too soon for the board to engage in any detailed event planning. The BOD is remaining optimistic that the pandemic situation will continue to improve and allow us to host our annual poultry shows. As always, we'll be sure to keep you posted on any updates through these newsletters, as well as on our website and Facebook page.

In the meantime, we wish you a wonderful and successful season with all the new spring babies you are hoping for. As you take some time to read through these pages, please consider sharing a bit of your news with us. It doesn't need to be a lot of information; just send a few photos and tell us a bit about your birds or animals, or what ever has been happening on your farm. We do love to hear from our members, and the best part of belonging to an organization is the opportunity to learn from each other!

Until next time, have a happy, healthy spring!

~ Kathy Stevenson, Secretary

Photo: Dexter cow at Applejack Ranch.



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About CHB

What We Do

Our mandate is "Conservation through Education". Shows: Every year CHB organizes at least two poultry shows and has more recently begun to host dairy goat shows. Poultry and livestock shows are an excellent public forum to showcase and promote the dazzling and diverse assortment of chickens, turkeys, geese and ducks, as well as several breeds of goats. These exhibits also provide opportunities for people interested in breeding to connect one-on-one with top breeders.

Information: We compile and distribute quarterly newsletters to inform and inspire members. We conduct interviews with successful breeders to facilitate the sharing of their valuable knowledge and the insights they have gained through experience. CHB offers social media resources and networking opportunities to anyone interested in learning more and connecting with others in the world of heritage livestock.

Support: CHB strives to encourage and support heritage breed advocates through educational seminars and hands-on workshops. Our members provide youth and family mentoring, and we partner with other organizations such as agricultural societies and 4-H to lend our support to their members and programs.

Promotion: We present displays of animals and printed materials at public venues to demonstrate the diversity of heritage breeds to both urban and rural people.



Why Is This Important?

- * Heritage livestock and poultry are the perfect alternative for non-commercial farmers and families interested in self-sustainable alternatives
- * These animals allow producers to capitalize on unique and niche markets
- * Protecting genetic resources and survival traits is a crucial strategy for ensuring future food supplies
- * Heritage breeds are a living link to our agricultural history and culture
- * Traditional livestock breeds are rapidly disappearing from the rural North American landscape, but keeping a current census of numbers is difficult. Some are on the verge of extinction and are in desperate need of saving.

Become a Member

- Quarterly Newsletters and access to the Members Only area of the website
- Discounts or free access to select CHB Events
- Advertising opportunities
- The satisfaction of contributing to a great organization with lots of opportunities to become involved!

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

Advertise With CHB!

Canadian Heritage Breeds welcomes advertisers! High visibility, home page advertising is now available on the CHB website. Right now, as a bonus, if your farm, business, or club purchases one year of ad space on the CHB website, the ad will also be included in 4 quarterly newsletters at no extra charge!

CHB Advertising Rates and Specs

WEBSITE DISPLAY AD

Ad area, max. 300 x 250 pixels, hyperlinked to your website or social media page. May contain a combination of still images and text. Ad size shown below.

Standard Website Rate: Appears on "Our Supporters" page.

\$8.50 per month, or \$100 per year.
(minimum 3 months)

Home Page Rate:

Please see the bottom row of photos on Home (landing) page:

www.canadianheritagebreeds.ca

Your ad would replace one of the 3 photos in bottom row of pictures.

\$13.50 per month (minimum 3 months), or \$160 per year.

Full banner, spanning page bottom is also available at this time. Please inquire for pricing.

1 year of website advertising also includes 1 year of the same ad appearing in our newsletters for free. CHB

Newsletters are distributed via email to all paid CHB members in good standing, four times per year.



CHB NEWSLETTER ADVERTISING

Newsletter Only ads:

Full page (8.5 x 11) - \$40 per issue.
business card, or up to ¼ page - \$20 per issue.

**Note: All advertisement requests are subject to CHB board approval, and must meet CHB specifications for content and design*



St. Isidore Farm

St. Isidore Farm is 200 acres of pasture and forest near Yarker, Ontario. There, Andrew and Kate raise Lynch Lineback cattle and Lincoln Longwool sheep, which are famous for their lustrous fleece that is processed into beautiful products. Here's the story of how this all came about!

Our decision to raise Lincoln Longwools morphed from marital miscommunication and broken teen vows.

On a sunny spring day in the late 1990s, I agreed to accompany my wife, Kate, to see some sheep on the Oshawa-area farm of the late Glen Glaspell, one of a handful of Lincoln breeders left in Canada. At the end of the visit, I said, "Okay," and Kate excitedly whipped out the cheque book to purchase a ram and two ewes. Later, I sheepishly explained that "Okay" meant, "We've seen the sheep, let's go home."

My first teen vow was to leave the farm forever and live in urban bliss. That ended with marriage and the move back to the 200-acre family farm near Yarker. The adventure started with renovating a stone farm house, Kate growing heirloom vegetables, raising chickens, and spinning wool. Next, was enforcing a ban on agricultural chemicals for the fields leased by a local farmer. The long process of cleaning the soil had begun with some patches of ground needing seven years for grass to return.

My second teen vow was to never bale another piece of hay as an adult. For many years, I was quite content creating a garden with Kate. That changed when Kate studied literature from Rare Breeds Canada and developed a focus on Lincoln Longwool sheep. We now own a few of the 30 Lincoln breeding ewes registered today in Canada. Like 90 percent of the animal farm breeds that once roamed Canada's farms a few years ago, the Lincoln Longwool sheep is on the verge of disappearing despite its roots that go back to the first century Roman occupation of England. As I like to tell my parish priest, "These are the sheep Jesus was talking about!" Some teen vows were meant to be broken.

We have always been committed to eco-friendly farming practices that allow wildlife to co-exist with farm animals. Thick windbreaks shelter deer, wild turkeys and song birds while page wire fences and a guard llama keep coyotes out of the pasture. Sheep are moved daily to fresh pasture on a 30-day rotation schedule that encourages grass to develop deep roots to nourish the soil and discourages many internal parasites whose eggs are dumped on the pasture and allowed to die rather than be re-ingested after a few days. When the need for synthetic de-wormers is eliminated, sheep parasites don't have a chance to become resistant. Our talented neighbour, Owen Storey, built a mobile shelter, called the "sheep-mobile", that offers shade from the sun and shelter from the rain.

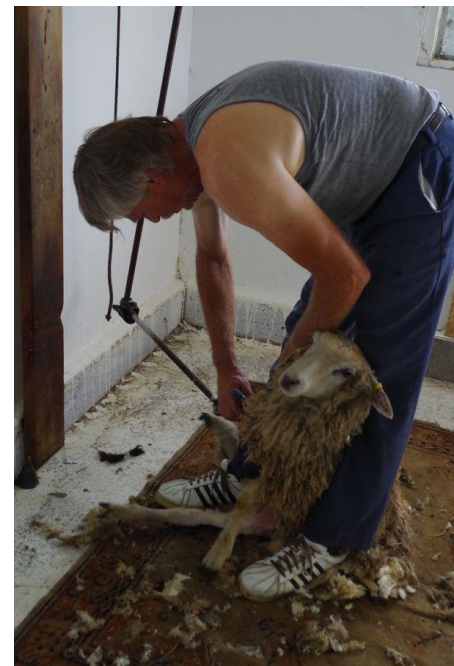
Next in the pasture rotation are cattle, happy to eat grasses near sheep feces or too coarse for the Lincoln appetite. Finally, here come the egg-laying chickens who serve as the clean-up crew and natural manure spreader, happily scratching sheep and cow pies in the endless search for insects to supplement their diet. Luckily, they live in a “chicken-mobile” and portable pen, also built by Owen Storey. Have we said that every not-so-handy farmer needs a neighbour like him?

The strict diet of grass three seasons a year and hay during winter is healthier for ruminants such as sheep. They have special bacteria in their rumen that digest the cellulose of grass, allowing them to benefit from the plant’s nutrients. However, ruminants experience difficulty in absorbing nutrients from grass when introduced to grains that changes the acidity level of the rumen. Grain can also cause fatal bacterial imbalances in the digestive tract (clostridia infection) and urinary calculi in rams. Grass-fed lambs produce lean meat whose fat contains Omega 3 fatty acids that are healthy for humans and easily metabolized. When grain is given to fatten up lambs quickly prior to slaughter, their fat contains a larger proportion of Omega 6 fatty acids that clog arteries and are associated with heart disease.

Shearing is twice a year, usually in the spring and fall with most of the fleece sent off-site for processing while some is kept on the farm for hand-spinning. Wool and looms dominate the upper floor of our house to serve as the idea hub of the farm. Kate's active membership in the local spinners and weavers guild has enhanced the focus of producing local from raw wool to a beautiful, final creation.



Henri, the ram, gets a much appreciated neck rub. With rotational grazing, our sheep are very approachable.



Dave Jones shears a year-old lamb



Kate perfects her technique of electric fence jumping. In the right foreground is untouched grass ready for the next day; in the middle, sheep in fresh grass; in the background, the cattle in coarse leftovers from the previous day; and at the top, the chickens with insects around their mobile chicken coop and yard.



Sheep share a laugh about broken teen vows.

Visit at: <https://www.stisidorefarm.net/about-us>



St. Isidore Farm

Heritage
Lincoln Longwool sheep
breeding stock, fleeces
yarn and sheep skins

Lynch Lineback cattle
breeding stock

A close-up photograph of a sheep's face, showing its curly wool and eyes. Overlaid on the right side of the image is a circular logo for St. Isidore Farm, featuring a stylized sheep's head. Below the logo, the text reads: "St. Isidore Farm", "Heritage", "Lincoln Longwool sheep", "breeding stock, fleeces", "yarn and sheep skins", "Lynch Lineback cattle", and "breeding stock".

Those Marvelous Mini's

If you have not yet discovered the many delights of raising Bantams, it just might be time to find out for yourself that bigger is not always better! There is a bantam breed to suit everyone, from the active Game breeds in their multitude of colour choices, to soft, sweet-natured Silkies. There are even bantam ducks for the waterfowl enthusiasts! Bantams offer non-stop charm and appeal, as well as having many advantages over large breeds.



Unique and ornamental, Black Tailed White Japanese Bantams



White Call Duck in beautiful show condition



These Blue Wheaten Ameraucana pullets lay lovely blue-shelled eggs

Types of Bantam Chickens

Bantam chickens fall into two categories: True bantams and miniatures, or developed bantams. Some examples of true bantams include Dutch, Japanese, Sebrights, D'Uccles, Silkies and D'Anvers. These do not have a large fowl equivalent.

Miniatures have been developed to duplicate the look of a large breed, but in a small package. Through selective breeding their weights are usually about 1/4 to 1/5 that of their large counterpart. They are not perfect miniatures in all aspects however, being disproportionately larger in head, wing, tail and feather size in relation to their reduced size and weight.

Advantages of Owning Bantams

1. They need less coop space, which means more chickens for you!

The small size of bantams is a big win in the chicken coop. These little birds take up much less space than large breeds, which could mean a few more chickens for your flock! This is also a bonus for people who keep urban hens in the city, or those who have limited space in their yard for chicken houses and pens.

2. Bantam chickens are easy to handle

While behaviours vary among the different breeds, most tend to have sweet personalities, especially if handled regularly from a young age. Small children will feel less intimidated around tiny chickens and will more likely enjoy helping with the daily chores. Bantams are easy for kids to pick up and carry. Adults will appreciate this too. Regular inspections and maintenance is necessary no matter what size of chickens you raise. If you've ever wrestled with a big, brawny rooster struggling to get out of your grasp... you'll know how difficult it can be to handle those full-sized, heavy breeds!



*Ella Haffner enjoys spending time with her bantam White Wyandottes
Photo: B. Haffner*

3. Your wallet will thank you

Little birds eat less than big birds, plain and simple. This means less money spent on feed, supplements and treats.

4. Exhibition and 4-H

Opportunities abound for breeding and showing bantams. An unlimited variety of colours, feather patterns and breed features brings no end of challenges for breeders of all ages and every level of experience. Exhibitors appreciate the ease of washing, preparing, and then transporting pocket-sized birds to a show. Nothing is better than a calm and friendly bantam chicken for a kid's 4-H project or for competing in Junior Showmanship.

5. Their practicality

While we don't often think about the utility features of bantams, some are well-suited for these functions and can make a valid contribution to the household in the way of meat and eggs. Many breeds are plump and meaty and well worth the time to prepare for a meal. Eggs from bantams are relatively larger in proportion to their body size than are the eggs from large hens. Depending on the breed, about 2 bantam eggs equals 1 medium chicken egg, and they come in an assortment of shell colors. One-bite pickled or deviled eggs are a novelty, and guaranteed to be a big hit with guests!



Jillian and Justin Skeels enjoy exhibiting their Old English Game and Buff Brahma bantams

An interesting bit of history...

It was customary for the landlords of Europe to demand that tenants provide them with their large eggs as rent payments. This resulted in tenants also keeping bantams in order to produce smaller eggs that they could keep for their own use.

Caring for Bantam Chickens

Bantams have the same basic requirements as large chickens: a draft proof, insulated shelter, safe outdoor enclosure, fresh water and proper nutrition. Due to their diminutive size, bantams will need a bit more protection from the elements - extreme cold in particular. Many bantam breeds are active birds and accomplished at flying. A covered outdoor pen will keep them safely enclosed, plus keep predators out.

Pint-sized chickens are sure to bring joy and whimsy to your yard. If you are looking to expand your flocks, take a look at the vast and varied selection of bantam breeds. Chances are you'll find one that's the perfect fit for you!



Kathy Stevenson

Reference: American Standard of Perfection

Light Brown Leghorn bantam chicks, Photo K. Stevenson

Early Nutrition is Critical

For years the commodity chicken industry—the big guys, raising birds on an industrial scale—have unwittingly done the very worst thing for bird health: They've fed their chicks nothing for the first few days of life. Why? No one really thought you needed to. When chicks are born, the last of the yolk is still attached to their intestines, a nutrient-dense pouch that delivers lots of good stuff. It's nature's little failsafe: if something happens to the mother, or if food and water for some reason aren't on hand, a chick hatches with a few days of sustenance built in.



Considering that, and since feeding chicks would require space and cost money, it just seemed simpler for hatcheries not to deal with it. Most chicks don't taste food or water for 48 hours or more, until they're shipped to the grower (the farm that will raise them to full weight).

A new body of research suggests what might seem like common sense: that the early period is nutritionally critical. Delayed feeding results in a more stressed, much less

healthy adult chicken, one likely to have lower body weight, increased mortality, poor growth, worsened muscle development, and a weaker immune system. At the same time, research suggests chicks that are given food and water post-hatch display a wide range of advantages, including healthier metabolisms and more developed intestines. Unsurprisingly, they grow faster, too.

Modern birds bred for rapid growth need even more nutrition than was previously thought, an infusion of vitamins and minerals to help them prepare for the demanding, six-week sprint towards full weight. "We didn't know chicks needed feed right away," says Peter Ferket, William Neal Reynolds Professor of Nutrition and Biotechnology at North Carolina State University. "The hypothesis was sort of like—well, they're carrying a little lunch sack around with them. But if they're able to eat food right away from an external source, those resources can go directly towards growth, so you end up with better performance and health."

Boosting perinatal nutrition helps modern, genetically souped-up chicks to "not only grow better, [but] meet the need for immune development, the need for skeletal development, the need for behavior," Ferket says. "They actually become like normal birds. But if you don't feed them [early on or in ovo], they become like premature babies—they struggle their first few weeks, and they'll always have problems for the rest of their lives."

Excerpt From:

<https://thecounter.org/weird-science-feeding-chicks-inside-the-egg/>



45th Annual Nova Scotia

Fall Classic

October 23rd & 24th 2021

hosting

American Poultry Association

Canadian National

Nova Scotia Provincial Exhibition Commission Complex

Truro, Nova Scotia

Judges: Bart Pals & Lewis Cunningham

For information email vyandottes01@yahoo.ca



Tips for Successful Chicken Shopping

Along with a welcome change in weather, springtime can also bring a renewed interest in poultry. This is often the time of year when aspiring chicken keepers are looking to start their first flock, and experienced poultry people might find themselves thinking about raising a new breed. It's also the season for lots of announcements from people offering chicks and hatching-eggs for sale. Those beautiful photos of fluffy chicks and colourful flocks can be tempting!



But before you hit 'send' on that e-transfer, give yourself some time to carefully consider the purchase. Make sure you feel confident with who you are dealing with and what you will be getting. If your goal is to establish a quality, purebred flock, buying from an unknown seller is not the recommended approach. Actually, buy/sell sites and online posts can be a tricky way for anyone to buy poultry, regardless of their end goal. It's always a bit of a gamble to do business with someone you don't know, and when livestock is involved the consequences of a bad purchase can be expensive and long-lasting.

Hatching eggs are a popular way to start a new flock. Getting eggs delivered is convenient and cheaper than having live birds shipped, or driving long distances to pick them up. If a breeder is willing to sell eggs it can help you gain access to genetics from other regions. But just as with live birds, you need to feel confident about the person you are buying from. Even if you manage to get a good hatch, you'll need to put a lot of time, money, and care into raising the chicks before you'll be able to assess their quality and know what you've actually purchased. By choosing to buy mature birds you'll reduce the unknowns, but there is still risk involved - most importantly health issues.



So how can we protect ourselves from unscrupulous sellers and improve our chances of getting well-bred, healthy poultry?

The best tactic is to take the initiative and become an informed and engaged shopper. Begin your poultry search by seeking out the most accomplished and reputable breeders. Do some research to find out who is well established and has years of experience raising the breed you're looking for. It's not likely you'll see these breeders marketing good birds in common buy/sell places like Kijiji. You'll need to dig a little deeper to track down the best source for quality breeding stock.

Reviewing poultry show results will help you find the exhibitors who have placed well with the breed over the past few years. Even if you aren't particularly interested in showing poultry yourself, a proven show record is a good indication you are on the right track. Chances are you'll be dealing with someone who knows their breed well and can help you get a solid start. Breed

clubs and local poultry show clubs are good sources for contact information and recommendations. Some clubs even keep a handy breeder directory or reference they can share with you. These contact lists are a great research tool, but they aren't a guarantee of good birds. Vetting the seller always remains the responsibility of the purchaser.

Once you've tracked down a potential source of birds there are a few red flags to watch for.

- When you find a breeder who has stock available, he or she should be willing to answer a few appropriate questions. In addition to basics like the bird's age, size, health/immunizations etc., you might want to know what you can expect from the strain in the way of productivity, behaviours, fertility or other traits that are important to you and your goals. For instance, egg colour is a significant breed characteristic for Marans or Ameraucanas, and could influence your decision to buy.
- If photos are provided, it's always best of course to see the actual birds being sold. In the case of chicks or eggs, the pictures should feature the flock that produced them. If you aren't experienced with the breed or don't feel confident judging their quality from photos, then ask for input from someone you trust and who is knowledgeable.
- Be aware of marketing tools and ad strategies. Terms like "rare" or "exotic" are usually designed to play on our emotions and increase the appeal of the product. Some sellers use language that is unclear, or open to interpretation such as "show quality" or "imported". These adjectives can mean different things to different people. For instance, does imported mean the birds have been specifically selected and shipped into the country from a recognized breeder, or did they arrive as chicks ordered from a hatchery? If the description says "show quality" is the seller confident the birds in question have no disqualifying faults, or are they simply chicks hatched from an exhibitor's line? Knowing the strain might be useful background information, but beyond that you aren't learning much about the quality of the individual birds you are considering buying. Even top exhibition lines produce a percentage of substandard offspring that are not suitable for showing or breeding. A better question to ask the seller is whether they are actively breeding to standard. This is a less ambiguous term which indicates the breeder is informed and follows standard-based breeding and selection criteria.

Starting a new flock, or adding to an existing one is exciting, and making your purchase should not be a cause for worry and stress. Doing some research and making connections is an important first step in helping to make your new poultry experience positive and rewarding. Even the most enticing hatching-egg promotions become easier to pass by when you're in the queue, waiting for some great birds from a reputable breeder!



A poultry show is a great place to make connections