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Election results

We want to thank everyone for participating in the election. This is YOUR association and it’s important that you have a voice.

The RWHA new Vice President is Joe McCabe. 507-421-7806. pekinhillfarms@gmail.com

Our 2 new Board Members at Large are: Larry Sandhaas. 309-787-3398. lsandhaas@gmail.com. and Dannie Prater. 801-835-5987. dannieprater@gmail.com

Although Dave Stevens was elected Vice President by a slim margin he requested to resign shortly afterwards due to personal issues. We all can understand our personal lives come first and we wish Dale all the best. Because the margin was so close the remaining board asked Joe McCabe if he would be willing to accept the position. He accepted and we know he’s going to be a great asset to the RWHA. Our Board of Directors contact information is updated on our website. Just click on the Contact Us tab.

We also randomly chose 3 of our members from the returned ballots to receive free memberships for 2020. Those members are: Walter Eltringham, Joe Streit, and Brad Kahler. Congratulations to you all.

Membership renewal

All RWHA members will be able to renew their membership beginning January 1, 2020 and running thru March 31, 2020. Current membership will expire at midnight on March 31, 2020. You can find the membership forms on our website under the RWHA tab. You can mail your completed form in with your renewal fee, or you may choose to use Pay Pal which is on that same screen. Please do not do both. The mailing address is on the form. Please make your payment to: Red Wattle Hog Association or RWHA. Individual or single membership is \$25.00. You will be able to register hogs under one name only and you will be entitled to one vote for elections. Family/Farm membership is \$40.00. You can register hogs under any immediate family member name. (You must list those names on your form, or if using Pay Pal you must notify the secretary/treasurer with your list of immediate family members). Family/Farm membership is also entitled to 2 votes for our elections. Please remember that Pay Pal does not give a space for phone numbers or websites. If you want those listed on the RWHA membership website for contact information you must also notify the secretary/ treasurer. If we already have that information, no action needs to be taken. Please review your membership/contact information on our website for any errors or changes that need to be made. You can reach the secretary/treasurer at: redwattles@hotmail.com or 270-565-3815.

Website and Face Book

We encourage everyone to please visit and use the RWHA website and face book. The website is full of information and educational materials. We also urge you to make suggestions for improvement or to point out errors. (We're not perfect but we try.) What would you like to see on the website that would be helpful? What could we do better? What needs to be updated? We understand that with time, methods, treatments, rules and regulations, etc. may need to evolve. Please help us out by helping to keep our website and information current. You can find our website by going to Google and typing in: **redwattleproject.org**.

The official RWHA face book is all about Red Wattles. It's a sharing and caring group that's family oriented and non-judgmental. You may find Red Wattle information, breeders, comments, concerns, and questions from breeders who need advice and answers from those with experience on the subject. Get to know other Red Wattle breeders, share your experiences, learn, and post pictures too. You can find our face book by going to google and typing in: **Red Wattle Hog Association face book** or you can type in: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/163024997085878>. Either will work. You will see your Board of Directors listed as moderators or admins of the site. We ask that you become a member of our official RWHA face book site so that we can keep spammers off that may harm the site. Membership to face book is easy too. Just click on the button and we'll take it from there.

Remember to save these sites on your favorites or to bookmark them and they'll always be at your fingertips and easy to find.

Payments for membership, registrations and transfers

There have recently been issues with NSF payments for our services. Normally these are resolved quickly and easily however sometimes they're not and we have outstanding payments due to the RWHA that are several months old. Our Board of Directors is currently discussing methods to address and resolve this issue.

Registration applications and transfers should be made payable to Mountain Niche Registry and mailed to the address shown on the form.

Memberships are payable to RWHA and mailed to the address shown on the form.

Website Forum

At one time the Forum section on our website was very helpful, however in today's world with tons of media resources easily available the Forum has become outdated. We don't want to do away with that area of our website but feel it could be put to better use for all of us. Please send in your suggestions on how you feel the Forum could be more useful to you.

The RWHA and its Board of Directors works for you but can't work without you. We realize everyone's time is important but in order to be successful, meaning your success too, we need your participation in any small way you can.

Are you registering any from that new litter? The RWHA encourages you to evaluate your young pigs/hogs for registration. Registrations are the only way to assure those great, true and correct genetics are recorded and passed on to future generations. It's also another step that assures you have a well-rounded operation. If you need assistance please feel free to contact any board member. We're here to help.

The following article was written several years ago but still is very important to the survival of lower population breeds. The RWHA and several other associations are currently experiencing this very thing. **Decline in population because of lack of registrations.** There are several reasons including owners who don't want to belong to an association, who don't want rules and/or breed standards to follow, and those who want to cross breed. This article will tell you why registrations are important and how they are used.

Why Registration Matters

By Alison Martin

A recent question from a Livestock Conservancy member raised an important point that may resonate with many of you. "The Guinea Hogs that we have are all unregistered; registration, correct me if I'm missing some important aspect, seems more important if one is wanting to sell breeding stock instead of pork products," writes a member in North Carolina.

Some of you will empathize with him – he's raising pigs for his own freezer, selling to family and friends, and hoping to build a side market for charcuterie, as so many are now doing with Guinea Hogs. Why pay the extra money for registered stock? After all, the folks who raised these pigs 150 years ago on homesteads across the South sure didn't register their pigs. Such a process didn't even exist. And another thing, some breed registries take so long to get the paperwork back, is it really worth the hassle?

Others among you will feel quite differently – you may have spent years working to conserve your own breeds and build their numbers, using breed registration and promotion as tools to encourage interest and value in the breed. Maybe you're the breed registrar and have dedicated hours, months, and years to making sure everyone gets their registration papers and helping folks use the pedigrees to make breeding decisions.

But why does registration really matter?

* Conserving rare breeds. All of us who raise rare breeds and work to conserve them do so because of the unique characteristics of that breed. Each has just the right adaptation, personality, performance, or appearance that makes it a breed. Conserving these characteristics means mating only within the breed; too many breeds have been lost when the purebreds used to create value in crossing weren't maintained. The Livestock Conservancy calls this "crossbreeding out of existence." One of the easiest ways to make sure that you and others are keeping the breed true to its own character is to use only registered purebred breeding stock, and to keep up with registrations. Breed registries are also the Conservancy's main source of information to prioritize breed conservation – if animals aren't registered, then it becomes very challenging to track improvements or declines in breed conservation status.

* Breed promotion. Maintaining and selecting for breed characteristics, ensures that the same things that attracted one breeder will attract new breeders. This is important even to those who are raising their animals for market products. Breeders who work together through the breed association raise the level of awareness for both products and breeding stock. One needs to look no further than the highly successful marketing program for Angus beef. By registering animals, we support breed associations and their breed promotion efforts, which benefit all who raise the breed.

* Raising the value of your animals, or, who knows what the future will bring. Let's look at theoretical breeder Ms. Suarez, who raises pigs – let's call them the Super Heritage Breed. She is successful building a market for her animals, is able to increase the size of her herd, and naturally she keeps her best gilts for breeding. As Ms. Suarez learns what her customers want, she selects the gilts who can pass those characteristics to their offspring and who also developed into great mothers. Not only does her herd get bigger, they get better. In fact, in five years Ms. Suarez has a reputation for having really good quality breeding stock, and other breeders approach her wanting to buy a boar. But she never anticipated selling breeding stock, so none of her pigs are registered. Wanting to make extra money by selling registered breeding stock, she asks the Super Heritage registry for the procedure, only to be told that they have a closed herd book and that her wonderful breeding stock cannot be registered. By not planning ahead, Ms. Suarez can't take advantage of the market for purebred breeding stock, even as a sideline to her meat business. She has also inadvertently removed her stock from the gene pool, and the improvements she has made to her stock are lost to the breed rather than providing a lasting contribution.

If your current breeding stock is registered, thank you for contributing to the future of the breed! If not, consider getting your registrations up to date or adding some registered breeding animals to your herd over time. Doing so will help ensure that your herd's legacy will influence the breed for generations to come.

Alison Martin is the Program Director for The Livestock Conservancy. She can be reached at amartin@thelivestockconservancy.org.

Accurate Population numbers

Removing hogs from our registered population is also important. It's vital to our success that we have accurate numbers of our registered producing hogs. Those numbers are used to know where we are for improving the population. They're used by The Livestock Conservancy to determine if Red Wattles are critical, threatened, endangered, or watched and appropriate measures can be made to help with improvements if necessary. The registered Red Wattle population appears to be decreasing the last few years. We know this by the annual count of registered hogs. It all must work together to determine where we are. If you have or had registered hogs that have been taken out of production for any reason, please report them. You can contact me at redwattles@hotmail.com or 270-565-3815. They are never removed from the registry because those records are important to future generations but in the background they are placed on a non-production list so that we all can have a more accurate number of current hogs in production.

The RWHA recorded registered hog population has been steadily decreasing the last few years. For 2012 we recorded a total of 300 hogs registered that year. For the year 2019 we currently have 85 listed and the year is almost over. The RWHA urges you to please be diligent in your record keeping and registrations. Don't fail to register those pigs/hogs that stand out in your litters. For a successful breeding program you need those great recorded breeders too. For help or guidance please feel free to contact any board member.

At Work

Did you know the RWHA advertises in Hobby Farms magazine, as well as Stockman Grass Farmer and Grit? Our ads bring a lot of additional interest to Red Wattles and the RWHA. We are able to do these ads thru the membership dues and registration fees collected. The ads are costly but its' money well spent. This is another way you as a member are helping to promote Red Wattles.

The RWHA has also made contributions to The Livestock Conservancy when they seek monetary help for critically endangered swine breeds and programs. The Livestock Conservancy is instrumental in the survival of many heritage low population breeds and if not for their assistance especially in the beginning, the RWHA would not exist.

The RWHA also pays our webmaster and registry office, Doug Myer, for his services. Doug keeps our website up to date based on our requirements and also records and issues registrations and transfers. We are very fortunate to have him. We may think it takes forever to get our registrations returned but just a few years ago they were only being done per yearly quarter, taking most times 4 months or longer for our official registration to be returned to us.

Your annual membership and registration fees also help to pay for supplies such as paper, ink, envelopes, postage and printing. We sometimes get requests from people who do not have access to a computer and would like written information on Red Wattles and the RWHA. Our registry office also uses those supplies to get your registrations and transfers to you and we have those same expenses to provide your newsletters to you.

These are a few of the RWHA expenses so you'll know your money is at work and helping you and Red Wattles.

Please remember all your Board of Directors members volunteer their time and work. These are not paid positions. They do so because of their dedication to our breed and their desire to help them and you succeed. Feel free to contact any board member for help or assistance or to pass along information that may be helpful to all of us. Their contact information is at the beginning of this newsletter and is also on the RWHA website under the "Contact Us" tab. We're all in this together. We must work together to be successful. We all need your participation.

We are always searching for topics to add to our Tutorial that may be helpful to you. Please let us know if there's anything you would like additional information on regarding keeping your hogs. If you need help or have questions it's likely others do too and we want to help. Please also know that everyone remains confidential unless they give permission to release their names. As much as we love our hogs and believe they're perfect, we also know "Stuff Happens." There are birth defects or out of the ordinary things that happen. Your confidential report of them may help someone in the future by reading a brief article in our tutorial. It's our hope that our Tutorial will continue to grow and change thru the years and be of help to everyone. It's not meant to take the place of a professional veterinarian but to provide you with sound basic information.

Theresa Schieffelbein has written a nice article for our tutorial on loading ramps, chutes and corrals. She even included drawings for examples. Maybe you can get some good ideas from her examples. The more you do in advance, the less stress it is on you and your hogs. We hope you check it out. Click on the Tutorial tab on our web site and scroll to General Information.