

Guinea Hog News

From the President's Desk

I hope this finds all of you well and having a hogging good time. With spring and summer coming to a close hopefully there were many new litters of hogs.

New litters of hogs means there will be more registrations, more work for our registrar. Please be prepared to wait 4 to 6 weeks for your paperwork to be returned to you after you have submitted it. This is due to the amount of new registrations that have come in and also simply because it takes at least a week for the mail to make its way to her desk. (I can drive to her house in 8 hours-it takes a letter a week!?) So please be patient.

I would like to express my thanks to each one who is now on the Board of Directors. THANK YOU! I could not have accomplished what has been done thus far this year without your help.

The American Guinea Hog Association has a new web site. Some of you have signed in to it as members and breeders. Please be advised you CAN NOT sign in unless your membership is up to date. You will need to get your

name and address into the system if you want to have your farm show up on the breeder's list. So, you have been informed, now it is up to you to do your part!!

We are still working on becoming a 501-C3 institution. We hope this will be done by the end of the year. This is something that we really look forward to.

I would like to remind you to have your paper work all in order, as well as your payment enclosed, when you send it in to the registrar. This will make the process go faster and smoother for all parties involved. We want the registration process to be as easy as possible.

If you have an article you would like to submit for the newsletter please contact the secretary. Perhaps you have a question you would like answered or an issue or concern discussed. Please feel free to submit those as well.

We hope that you will work with us as we work forward. Our hope and goal is to help the hogs. I recently made a trip to Domin-

ica in the West Indies. I believe this island in the Caribbean at one time had Guinea Hogs. Sad to say I was a few years too late to find any pure Guinea Hogs. I believe so few exist anymore that I could find only 1 that looked to be part Guinea Hog. This is a good example of how a breed can be lost because people did not understand the value of having a hog that could be raised on small farms without a lot of commercial feed. They did not realize the benefits of having a small breed that produced food/meat for consumption and thus felt no need for preservation. We must take a lesson from this and continue raise herds that produce offspring can be sold to others and/or eaten. If you do not see the value of making use of this useful, economical hog you have missed out on their full value.

I am hoping to see regional meetings spring up in different parts of the country. These would encourage farmers/breeders to get to know each other and to work together.



Concerns and issues could be discussed and ideas shared. I personally have raised Guinea Hogs for a number of years and am concerned that people are forgetting the importance of keeping the breeding stock lean enough to successfully breed and produce litters. Another concern of mine is that breeders be conscious of what is being sold. We want quality not quantity!!

Thank you for all you are doing for the Guinea Hogs. Have a wonderful Spring.

Kevin Fall



Board of Directors



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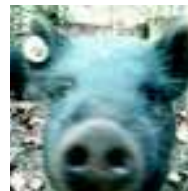
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Recipe from AGH member
Anthea Thacker



The Recipe from *Charcuterie* by Michael Ruhlman and Brian Polcyn for American-Style Brown-Sugar-Glazed Holiday Ham

The Brine

1 gallon water
1 & 1/2 cups kosher salt
2 packed cups dark brown

sugar

8 teaspoon pink salt (if using - not necessary for safety sake though, it's only to improve flavor & color)

1 12 to 15 pound ham, aitch bone removed (optional, will help with carving the finished product)

Half a day in the brine per pound

The Glaze

1 & 1/2 cups packed brown sugar

3/4 cup Dijon mustard

1 tablespoon minced garlic

Mix all the ingredients, taking special care to dissolve the sugar

The Guinea Pig for the Guinea Hog

By Jeannette Beranger and Jennifer Kendall

The Chef This winter, ALBC staffers had the pleasure of meeting Executive Chef Craig Deihl of Cypress Restaurant in Charleston, South Carolina. Deihl holds many titles and awards including a 2010 James Beard Foundation nomination for Best Chef in the Southeast, but around the ALBC office he is affectionately known as “the guinea pig for the Guinea hog.” Deihl is one of the first high-profile chefs in the country to work with the Guinea hog breed and explore how it handles, tastes, cooks, and serves.

On a chilly mid-February afternoon, he invited us into his restaurant for a taste, both figuratively and literally, of his efforts to save one of America’s most endangered swine

breeds. Just a few years ago, there were fewer than 75 of these animals in the entire United States. Today, many breeders are giving these historic animals a second chance and Deihl is at the helm of getting this breed back onto the American dinner table.

Deihl’s excitement for this new endeavor is infectious. After welcoming us with his gracious Southern charm, he immediately flipped open his cell phone and scrolled through image after image of the hogs, the products, and the marvelous dishes he has served featuring the breed.

When asked what was different about working with this particular breed, he exclaimed, ““The fat! The fat is amazing. The texture, the color, and the amount are all phenomenal.” Many chefs are afraid of fat,

but not Deihl – he embraces it. In fact, his operation is set up to embrace the whole hog. Deihl receives the whole carcass directly from the processor and uses every ounce of product. On this particular day, we enjoyed Guinea Hog Liver Pate, Pork Belly, hams, shoulders, and more, all from the Guinea hog. Each part had a unique flavor and style. Deihl also renders the Guinea hog fat to make lard and uses some parts for charcuterie projects. He has even created an artisan meat CSA that will, in the future, offer Guinea hog products.

Deihl understands that working with rare breeds requires a different approach to culinary art. Because there are so few animals on the ground, purchasing only prime cuts is not an option. These breeds must

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The Guinea Pig for the Guinea Hog continued

be used in their entirety. Deihl has embraced this concept and purchases whole hogs from a regional producer, Gra Moore. Deihl also realizes that the Guinea hog is a rare breed, meaning there is limited amount of product available. Deihl has dealt with this challenge by using the meat as a feature on his menu as opposed to a staple dish. While Deihl serves an important role in getting this breed back into the market, it is the unique working relationship that he has forged with the producer that makes the project possible.

The Producer

On a mid-summer afternoon, we visited with producer Gra Moore, owner and operator of Colonial Heritage Farms in Pamplico, South Carolina. Moore's family has a long history with pigs in the region. His father once managed a similar breed, the Essex hog, on small river islands in North Carolina. When Moore's father first saw his Guinea hogs, he thought he was looking at his old Essex herd. This observation prompted ALBC to launch an ongoing investigation into possible links between the two breeds.

Moore first heard of Guinea hogs after becoming a member of ALBC. He was looking for a small breed that would forage well on his property and enjoy the occasional treat of one of the 20+ varieties of heirloom corn that is grown on the farm. When deciding on which hog breed would be most appropriate for his small rural farm, the Guinea hog quickly came to the top of the list.

Over the past several years, a

sizeable herd has been developed at Colonial Heritage Farms and in 2009 the time had come to begin thinking about ways to market the meat of these pigs. Because of their small size and the propensity for this lard-type breed to put on body fat quickly, it was a challenge to determine what kind of niche market the Guinea hogs serve. Since little was known about the optimal processing time or the meat and carcass qualities of the breed, discussions between ALBC and Slow Food Charleston resulted in the recruitment of Chef Craig Deihl to investigate the meat potential of the breed.

Wasting no time, Deihl got to work on his first processed Guinea hog in the fall of 2009. The first hog was processed at around 10 months of age and had a finished weight of approximately 80 pounds. Deihl quickly discovered that the pork from a young Guinea hog is exquisite. After reveling in the quality of the fat and the taste of the meat, Deihl decided to feature the Guinea hog at the legendary Charleston Food and Wine Festival. To meet this demand, Deihl purchased more whole hogs from Moore. The second and third hogs were processed at a younger age, approximately nine months and they had a dressed weight of approximately 60 pounds. The producer and chef are experimenting with the age at processing to determine the optimal processing time that meets the needs and desires of chef and that is still profitable for the producer.

While Deihl and Moore have forged a great working relationship, it is the "back-story" and the local connection to the breed that helps sell local consumers on this new menu item. While the efforts of the producer and the chef are to be commended, the project would be impossible without the Guinea hog itself.

Like other traditional lard-type breeds, however, the Guinea hog faces great obstacles to its conservation. These hogs do not produce a conventional market carcass because they are smaller and have more fat than is typically preferred today. The goal of Chef Deihl and producer Gra Moore is to find a niche market for the Guinea hog; the breed may not be suited to grocery store shelves, but in the right hands there is great potential for them.

These hogs are great for small producers and are appropriate for use in diversified, sustainable agriculture. They are an excellent choice for those who need the services of hogs (such as grazing, rooting, tilling compost and garden soil, and pest control) and desire a small breed. Under such husbandry Guinea hogs thrive, as they always have.

Several members of Slow Food Charleston evaluated the taste of the Guinea hog product. They each were served a pan-roasted loin and provided some of the following evaluations of key product characteristics.

Appearance: fat cap on loin crisps nicely to a golden brown; dark pink to a lighter pink

Aroma: fresh; sweet; earthy; fragrant

Texture: tender and firm; succulent; tender yet not mushy; tender and moist; fat explodes in mouth

Flavor: nutty and beautiful; buttery and juicy very flavorful; delicious;

Overall, the tasters were very impressed with the meat. Each taster completed a scorecard for the dish, giving scores for appearance, aroma, texture, flavor, aftertaste, and overall impression. The tasters scored the meat on a scale of 1-6 with 1 equal to unfavorable and 6 equal to exceptionally favorable. The Guinea hog meat consistently scored 5 and 6 in all areas. One taster even commented, "I think this product has a real future with higher-end restaurants and con-

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sumers who seek out premium products with history and flavor." At a recent dinner held at Deihl's restaurant, the founder of Slow Food Carlo Petrini even commented that the Guinea hog pork was better than the pork that he had at Buckingham Palace a few weeks prior.

Thanks to the guinea pigs, Gra Moore and Craig Deihl, these Guinea hogs just might have a budding market emerging.

For the full article please visit the ALBC website May/June 2010 Newsletter.

American Guinea Hog Association

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We're on the web
www.americanguineahogassociation.org



Guinea Hog News



The American Guinea Hog Newsletter — Questions for the Member's?

What an amazing summer, I hope that all have had a productive one so far. We are pleased to have a paper newsletter for our members and would like your input on whether you would like to get paper newsletters or have them online? Just send an e-mail to the Secretary with a note for which form you would appreciate. Thank you for your time and your membership, we are all in it for the Hogs.

~BOD