

American Guinea Hog Association



From the President,

The registration and transfer process is pretty simple and straight forward and most time are done correctly. However there are times when the processes are not and creates problems for the buyer, seller, registrar and the board members so here are some tips and advice.

At the time of buying a hog the seller could to do the authorization to transfer online right there when the hog is transferred. If it is done by mail the seller can give a copy to the buyer. If you are transferring a hog the seller could simply sign the certificate and give it to the buyer and then the buyer can do the authorization to transfer.

Sellers, you should NOT sell any hog as registered if YOU do not hold the registration certificate for that hog or the hogs parents. Even if you sold the hog as unregistered and later you and the buyer agreed to register the hog.

Buyers, you should insist on a bill of sale stating you bought a hog, registration number ###, on such and such date from whom. You could also get a copy of the authorization to

transfer. You should not leave with nothing. Additionally, if you bought a hog from un-registered stock you CANNOT register that hog.

Breeders, litters must be registered within 90 days of birth. You don't have to register all piglets as breeding stock at that time. You can still register your breeders after the 90 day period but it would be considered single hog registration. This gives you, as a breeder, time if need to determine the highest quality hog for breeding.

Good communication before, during and after the sale will keep everyone happy and enjoying these wonderful piggies!

Please begin tagging or notching your piglets. Proper identification is critical.

Ron Farnsworth
AGHA President



Adventures with American Guinea Hogs – Share your Story!

I started my adventures in farming and heritage breed preservation late in life, at age

57, after retiring from a 33 - year career in elementary education. To make up for lost time, I jumped in feet first, going 100 miles an hour. Early on, an online friend shared with me that she planned to get Guinea Hogs. I looked them up, but never found much information out there. I put them on the back burner until last April. At that time, one of my rabbit customers told me she had just acquired a small herd. She was so excited about the hogs, and extolled their many virtues. My curiosity was piqued.

With a bit of searching and help from an AGHA board member, I located a farm not far from me here in Georgia who was raising hogs. I really liked what I found! I had just started raising some heritage feeder pigs, and they were a bit large and boisterous for our liking. I found out a little more about them and proceeded to learn about the various lines available to me.

I realized that there were no references to really answer my many questions about this wonderful breed, and became concerned that even the recent history documenting the breed's recovery was bound to be lost as the owners of the foundation hogs of the AGHA grew older. So if I wanted to get to the root of things, so to speak, I decided that it was my job to create the book I was looking for. After thinking more about everything I wanted to include in a reference about the hogs, I decided it would be more appropriate to actually have 3 books.

I am seeking current and former AGH breeders of all levels of experience to interview for my books. I'm hoping you can help, or point me in a good direction. The first book's working title is *Hogs with Heart: Stories and Care of the American Guinea Hog*. This book will share anecdotes from owners of the hogs to illustrate their uniqueness, their intelligence, and how endearing they can be. It will also summarize the variety of ways they are being kept on modern or historical homesteads – covering breeding, feeding, housing, fencing, and more. The second book, *Historical Hogs with Heart: The Foundation Hogs of the AGHA*, will share personal stories and facts about the hogs on everyone's hog registrations. I plan to interview people who owned and knew the hogs personally to preserve this information for future breeders. This kind of information is important to avoid genetic bottle necking and to help heritage breeders make informed decisions when choosing their stock. The third book, *Succulent Pork and More: The incomparable Taste and Myriad Uses of America's Homestead Hogs*, will interview professional chefs, homesteaders, and farmers who are making use of the whole hog for culinary and household uses. It will be more of a "how to" book and a collection of modern and historical recipes.

I'm very excited about starting this project, and think that having these books

available will greatly assist the breed and its breeders in the future. I plan to have bulk sale prices for breeders wanting to offer these to their breeding or feeder hog customers. If you are willing to talk with me on the phone and schedule a recorded interview, please contact me at broadriverpastures@gmail.com. I am particularly interested in talking to elderly people who grew up with the Guinea Hog and can share their memories before it's too late to record them. You do not have to be a well established breeder to talk with me. I'll be compiling responses and sharing summaries of the wide variety of conditions under which these hogs can thrive. I'm also interested in historical recipes using lard to make soap, lotions, candles, and more. I'll look forward to hearing from you!

Cathy R. Payne
Broad River Pastures
www.broadriverpastures.com

Castrating and Tetanus

One of the biggest draws and advantages to raising more primitive breeds of livestock is the "Hands-Off" style of management. The need for intervention in birthing and health maintenance is minimal compared with modern, conventional breeds. We, as stewards of the breeds, can stay more in the background, watching for problems, but knowing that the breeds have survived with their hardiness and survival instincts intact. Unlike modern breeds that require regular vaccinations and medications due to man's intervention in molding the breeds into eating, fast growing, rapidly producing machines, the heritage and primitive breeds chug along happily and healthily with little assistance from us. Requiring only a safe dry place to shelter, a healthy balanced diet and fresh water, they give back to us tenfold in healthy meat and offspring.

I am often asked if I vaccinate my AGH, and until 2013, I always replied in the negative. That was when I had our first case of tetanus here on the farm. Tetanus bacteria are commonly present in soil, dust, and manure. The tetanus bacteria can infect even through a tiny scratch. The bacteria travel via blood or nerves to the central nervous system. One of the most common times a pig can be infected is at the time of castration. Even with careful cleansing before the incision is made, even a tiny bit of soil or manure may be drawn in through the wound and tetanus may occur.

Tetanus symptoms result from a toxin produced by tetanus bacteria. Symptoms often begin around a week after infection. But this may range from three days to three weeks or even longer. The most common symptom is a stiff jaw, which can become "locked." This is how the disease came to be called lockjaw. The piglet that was infected here started exhibiting symptoms at one week after castration. Listlessness and lack of appetite was followed by tensing of the leg muscles. Within a few days, the jaw and legs were stiff and it was at this point that I realized what I was dealing with and put the piglet out of its misery.

There are two methods of dealing with tetanus, as a preventative or as a treatment. Tetanus Toxoid is administered to the animal to help build an immunity to Tetanus. After the injection, the Toxoid will start to take effect approximately 10 to 25 days, which is the time it takes tetanus to show up in the animal if present. The injection will stay in the system up to 2 to 3 months. Tetanus Antitoxin is administered to the animal if tetanus is present in the animal already or you suspect the animal of getting it. This antitoxin takes effect almost immediately after the injection and only stays in the system for up to 10 days.

Tetanus Toxoid and Antitoxin administered subcutaneously or intramuscularly is the recommended method for prevention. I now give each piglet a dose at the time of

castration. I chose the Antitoxin, as it is available immediately and since the incision heals so quickly in castration. Another method is to vaccinate the sow a week or two before farrowing, as the protection will be available in the colostrum. In this case, the Toxoid would be used.

Large doses of Tetanus Antitoxin may provide beneficial response in animals already infected with tetanus, but success of treatment is not assured.

Animals that suffer slow healing puncture wounds or deep abrasions should be given a second dose of antitoxin in 7 days and additionally as considered necessary. In the case of an injury due to a wire fence or tusk puncture, a dose given immediately would be recommended.

Tetanus can exist in soil even where horses are not present, but if you own horses, or are near horses, you should assume it is present.

Should you choose not to vaccinate, you might consider having the Antitoxin on hand. At the least, practice extreme sterilization during castration, wiping the entire area at least three times with sterile swabs and using fresh or sterilized scalpels or surgical knives. Immediately after castration apply a disinfectant of your choice to the open area.

To castrate or not is an entirely different subject for which there are strong opinions, but if you do decide to go that route, it would be wise to consider this issue. Tetanus Toxoids and Antitoxin are not expensive and are readily available from On-line Vet Suppliers such as Valley Vet. They are produced by Colorado Serum Company. Antitoxin comes in a box of 10 units of 5ml (one dose) each for \$21 plus shipping. Toxoid comes 10 units of 1ml doses, but swine should receive only .5ml. They are kept refrigerated until use.

Contributed by Angela Ingraham



Snark, snark!!!

I started a little experiment about 18 months ago with 2 boars in the woods with very little feed from me to see how they would grow.

I took two runts from two different litters, left them intact and put them on 2 acres of woods. I live in southeastern Georgia so green growth is about 10 months out of the year. On the 2 acres were pine, red oak, live oak and sweet

gum trees, some grass and a very large pile of stumps. I feed them 1 cup of water soaked hog mash twice a day and they had their own water barrel with a hog nipple on it. We didn't provide any shelter.

When we put them out there they were 8 weeks old weight about 20 lbs. This was September of 2013. About once a month I would walk around their area to check on what they have been eating and where they were sheltering. They were pretty much lightly routing everywhere and sheltering under some small pines.

At 1 year of age they weighted about 60 lbs. according to the tape and at 18 months, November 28, 2014 they weighed about 100 lbs. according to my bathroom scales right before slaughter. They were small for their age but didn't appear to be mal-nourished. Their hair was always very black and shiny. The stump pile is all but gone.

During the butchering I examined every organ and all looked normal size and as they should. I detected no boar taint either by smell or taste. The only noticeable difference was fat, these guys had almost none. The meat was lightly marbled and dark in color.

Overall I am pleased with the results and I now know they don't need as much feed as some might think they do, or at least I did.

Ron Farnsworth
President AGHA. Inc.

GO!

I cannot express enough what a phenomenal opportunity it was to attend The Livestock Conservancy conference in November in Austin, Texas! This was our first and had no idea what to expect.

There were so many session topics, Jesse (my husband) and I decided to attend different classes to maximize our exposure to as many as possible. I'll admit that, based on the topic titles, I had my doubts that there would be many topics that interested me. However, with the very first session I chose to attend, I learned that the topic titles really did not do them justice. I was hooked!

This conference was easily the most friendly and comfortable to participate and learn in. All of the speakers were actively working in the fields they presented, which made it easy to relate to and interact with. No long, boring classes here! One thing I was particularly impressed with was the fact that the sessions were applicable to novice through experienced. No matter what level you were at, you were able to take something new away from each class.

I, as I'm sure others did as well, participated in some of these sessions in order to learn about a topic they might be considering getting into in the future. I did this with regard to ducks! We currently have a few Rouen ducks in our pond and they're enjoyable to feed and watch. However, based on what I learned, to raise ducks on a more serious level, especially for profit, is not the same as raising chickens, which we do for profit. Yep, as the session title stated, "Ducks are not funny looking chickens." I'm really glad to have learned what I did before jumping in head first and making a lot of costly mistakes. This probably saved many duck lives! As would be expected, there were several sessions revolved around breed

registry and breed record keeping. As vice-president of AGHA, Jesse attended these sessions to learn what other breed groups and registries were doing, their challenges and successes. Of course the purpose of a registry is to track and maintain the integrity of a given breed. But, methods of doing so are diverse. There are some breeds with such a small populous being worked with that records are still kept hand written, while others have had to employ specialized software to accommodate the volume of animals.

A shared challenge among registries are determining and deciding what anomalies (color, size, fiber, etc. variations) of a given breed are genetically historic and should be allowed in the registry and what should not. Such questions have arisen within AGHA, especially regarding color. These variations can become a contentious topic amongst breed registries, sometimes resulting in spin-off groups of the breed to accommodate the anomalies that some find acceptable while others do not. When this happens, down-line breed integrity comes into question for future reference.

One of my favorite sessions was "Business vs. Hobby Farm", small farm taxation. While taxes are rarely a fun topic to discuss, getting in trouble with the IRS is much scarier. Dennis Bires, a tax lawyer and fellow heritage breed enthusiast, provided a wealth of information on how the IRS distinguishes business from hobby for taxation purposes via their nine factors. In this one hour session, I came away with huge sense of relief that we haven't been doing anything catastrophically wrong (Whew!), as well as plans to improve our record keeping and cutting our taxes. Who said taxes had to be boring!

One of our own AGHA members, Deborah Niemann-Boehle, presented sessions on "Value Added Products with Heritage Livestock" and "Goats in a Diversified Homestead". Great presentations!

Besides awesome information sessions with phenomenal speakers, we were treated to chef prepared heritage breed pork (Large Black), beef (Red Poll and Devon), lamb (Gulf Coast) and turkey (Narragansett), graciously provided by LC members, at every meal. This was indeed a special treat! Vendor displays and a silent auction also kept everyone busy and entertained. And there was always extra time between sessions and around meals for networking and meeting new people. Many participants started out as strangers and met networking opportunities along the way. Jesse and I wore the shirts we had made with "Ask me about my American Guinea Hogs" on the back. It was a great way to open dialog with people who are considering raising AGH, as well as meeting others who already have AGH. We love talking about our hogs!

I would love to write about all the sessions we participated in, but I'm not sure I could hold everyone's interest to finish reading it all. Information on the 2014 conference is still shown on The Livestock Conservancy's website. Check it out and watch for upcoming events in your area in 2015, as well as the national conference!

As I mentioned in the first paragraph above, this was our first Livestock Conservancy conference to attend. It definitely will not be our last! Hope to meet many of you there (where ever it may be) next year!!! So, if you have the opportunity....GO!

Has anyone attended a Mother Earth News Fair? If not, you're missing out! Jesse and I traveled to the beautiful Seven Springs resort in PA in September for the three day event. The weather was a brisk 50 degrees on Friday and cold and wet on Saturday and Sunday. Being from Texas, this was a welcomed change from our 95+ degrees and drought conditions back

home!

Being the planner that I am, I started out with a grand plan of what to see and do while there in order to maximize our time there. That went right out the window as soon as we rolled into the parking lot! I felt like a kid at Disney World! We decided to 'wing it'.

From the Mother Earth News agenda, they're not kidding about the number of exhibitors and speakers/demos they have participating! Wow! There was so much to see and do. It was easy to get caught up in going from booth to booth, not wanting to miss out on anything.

Want to work towards self-sustainability? Or, do you just want to pare down your grocery bill by growing some of your own produce in a small space? Or, maybe take the chemicals out of your daily living and live homeopathically. Ever considered raising your own livestock or poultry? Which ones are the right ones for you? Once you start raising them, are you prepared to turn them into food for your family? Are you a knitter or crocheter? How about spinning your own yarn? Want to live off the grid? How do you compost? The information and products available at the fair were off the charts! So much fun, so little time!

I will say that Jesse and I did have two disappointments. The first was that many of the exhibitors were geared to the PA area. Our Texas climate and PA don't have a much in common, so there were things that just didn't make sense for us to invest in or try out. The second was that because we flew to PA, we didn't have the ability to bring much of anything back with us on the plane. Both of these issues will be rectified next year! We are absolutely planning to attend another Mother Earth News Fair closer to home (probably Missouri) and will make it a road trip so that we can fill up the truck to our heart's content.

Contributed by Jesse McDaniel

I would start by saying that if we are doing everything right and the hogs react accordingly, we would never need to worm our American Guinea Hogs. Having said that, I realize that the world is not perfect so sometimes measures have to be taken to keep our herd healthy and happy. In a perfect world the weather and seasons would never surprise us as it did here in Iowa in November when we had freezing weather three weeks earlier than usual. Things like this catch us off guard. The pumpkins froze, which caused them to lose their food value quicker and pastures were froze as well. One helpful thing for pastures is the rotational grazing system it helps to reduce parasite pressure. The hogs are able to pasture in one area and then move into a clean area to eat reducing the chance of getting parasites from feces in the pasture area. It also gives the sections of pasture a chance to rebuild itself.

Consider an Alternative Treatment is the title of a book I have been reading. While this is the title of a book, it also could simply be a statement any owner of American Guinea Hogs says or something that the owner does. A veterinarian wrote this book and that made me set up and notice what he has to say. I now consider alternative treatments for my animals, tell others to consider alternative and actually use alternative treatments. Much of the information I want to share in this article is from this book written by Dr. Paul Dettloff D.V.M.

I previously made mention of a perfect world. In the perfect world the temperature would not drop 50 degrees overnight. Parasites would not be a pressure and your sows would not be obese. No corn would be fed, everything would be pasture raised and those pastures would have just the right amount of minerals in the forage. I live in 'real-ville'. Otherwise known as the state of Iowa. Even though it isn't perfect there are things that can be done to make life more pleasant and healthy for the hogs and the farmers.

For worming there are several things that can be used. You can combine elcampe root,

walnut leaf, black walnut hulls and mugwort. This is sold by Dr. Paul's Labs. Plantain is another good herb for worming. It is a good idea to worm your animals in the fall to get them into good shape for the winter. This makes sure that all the nutrients from the food you give them is going to their health, not to another 'family' living in their gut.

One thing to consider when taking stock of your hog's feed and pastures is to ask whether or not they have access to dirt, even during the winter. It is good that they do since dirt is a good source of minerals. If you think your dirt is deficient you can add powdered kelp to it. Redmond's Salt is another source of minerals. You can use it in addition to Redmond's clay or conditioner. Here is a recipe for liquid mineral:

1 Tablespoon Redmond Salt added to 1 quart of warm water. Shake well to dissolve salt. Let set for 12 hours. After 12 hours the mineral water will be on the top and a reddish brine will have settled to the bottom. Use the top water, which is the mineral water, for the hogs by adding it to their feed. The bottom reddish brine can be used to melt ice on the barnyard sidewalk or driveway.

Neem oil is a natural treatment for mange and lice. It also can be given orally as a wormer. I use neem oil in the garden as well to control soft skin worms that eat your plants. Cayenne, Echinacea and garlic are good to fight infections, cuts or gashes. You can purchase a tincture that can be given orally or applied to any wounds. If your hogs are coughing this could mean they have parasites and need to be treated with a combination of natural wormer and a diet change. Dr. Paul's swine wormer is made up of a combination of neem bark and leaf, ginger root, garlic bulb and diatomaceous earth.

Plantain and burdock are frozen for us as this time of year. Those of us that live where the seasons limit access to herbs and pastures need to plan ahead. This means we need to buy supplements. If possible buy red clover hay that has flowers. This is great hay for your sows and gilts. If we plan ahead we can meet the needs of our American Guinea Hogs. The herbs and other items I have mentioned can be purchased. If you wish you can gather and dry herbs or make tinctures.

If you want more information about purchasing the book, tinctures or supplements contact me and I will help you.

Contributed by Kevin Fall

Please continue to submit pictures and articles for our newsletter. If you submitted one that hasn't made it, please email me as the secretary or Region 5 representative and I will check to see what happened! All of you who contribute are adding knowledge to your fellow breeders, and promoting the breed!

Thanks for your hard work!

Ann Glass
AGHA Secretary

Our mailing address is:

American Guinea Hog Association, Inc.

301 Proman Lane

Fleming, GA, 31309

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