

FEATURE ARTICLES

- Fermenting Feed
- Controlling Lice
- Ear Notching

American Guinea Hog Association

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Newsletter—Winter 2017



Curly Tales

Dear Members,

Looking back on our progress in 2016, we would like to thank all of you, our members; for your support, for your valued input, and for your continued patience. With your help, we were able to accomplish many of our goals, including updates to our Bylaws and other legal formalities, and the implementation of our Genetics Recovery Program. With these in place, we look forward to the next steps in refining the Association's policy procedures, formatting guidelines for new breeders, providing marketing assistance for all breeders, and to further promoting the breed through various venues. As always, your ideas and suggestions are welcome and appreciated.

As we usher in 2017, we look forward to another year of growth for the AGHA.

What amazing strides have been made since a small group of dedicated people took on the responsibility of preserving this amazing breed. With growth comes change and we find that as the number of registered pigs increases, we need to refine some of our procedures to more closely identify and track our numbers. In February, you will receive a Herd Census form in an email from me—flintandsteelfarm@gmail.com. This will help us track as many registered animals as possible, and better understand how many breeding animals are alive. We have also made some changes to our Litter Registration and to Adult Hog Registration fees, as well as putting into place ID requirements for newly registered animals. Details about these changes are in the section *Association News* section of this newsletter.

With the health of our population secure, we as breeders have the duty to offer the best from our breeding programs to potential buyers. Gone are the days that many of us remember from when the numbers were so small that almost every piglet was valued as breeding stock. We now have the luxury, and the responsibility, to choose those piglets that best fit what each of us want from our breeding program. The challenge for each of us is deciding what makes our ideal Guinea Hog. The upside of a Landrace breed is the variation within the breed and no rigid that need to be followed in choosing breeding stock. This also, however, can become the downside in that there are no specific selection guidelines for breeders. Until a Breeder's Guide can be developed, which is a huge hurdle for a volunteer organization, we must all depend on good common livestock sense and the

network of breeders for assistance. We are, therefore, asking that starting this year, each of us take more time evaluating piglets to be registered, rather than registering whole litters. Because it is often difficult with younger piglets, there is now less cost difference for registering piglets over 3 months of age.

I highly recommend ear notching as a herd-management tool. I have always ear tagged my breeding stock piglets with custom farm name ID tags, waiting as long as possible so as to evaluate them before grading breeding stock vs feeder and grade piglets. On occasion, I tag extras, removing them from the registry at a later date after changing my mind. This, however, leaves all the grade and feeder piglets with no marking of any sort, which came back to bite me this past year.

I had three litters of feeder/grade piglets that I put together in one paddock. They had assorted bloodlines from 2 different boars and three sows. They had no distinguishing markings, being all black and of a similar body type. Out of this group of piglets, one gilt began to stand out from the rest. She had the body type that I favor, 12 teats and was of an even, friendly disposition. As she closed on 8 months, I removed her and bred her for a fall litter. She had gorgeous piglets and was a fantastic mother. Too bad for me, I had no idea which breeding she was from and to determine it at this point would require the expense of DNA testing five separate possible parents. Not financially sound for me at this point.

As you can imagine, in addition to my tagging, I will be notching from this point forward. I could tag all the piglets in each litter instead, but notching is simple, permanent, and solves the issue that I had in this particular case.

Read Tori Rozanski's article on notching in this issue and I believe you will agree!

Change, I know, can be a four letter word for many of us, but it is long due. We have tried to make it as user friendly as possible and in the breed's best interest. After all, isn't that why we're all in it? If it wasn't for the love of these special hogs, we could all be raising a standard breed.

Perish the thought,

Angele



In November, the Annual Membership Meeting was held via teleconference. To listen to the conference you may dial 1-302-202-1115 and enter Recording ID #71659024 when prompted. An overview of the year was given as well as the results of the votes on two proposals that were up for vote. We would like to thank the members who took time from their evening to join us for the conference.

The Association is pleased to announce that both of the proposals presented to the General Membership passed by a resounding majority. The new Bylaws, a critical part of the workings of an association, passed by 97.7%. The Genetics Recovery Initiative passed by 87.9%. The Board of Directors thanks all of you who participated

NEW FEE SCHEDULE FOR REGISTRATION FORMS - Effective January 1, 2017

- Litter Registration will be \$5 per piglet registered compared to \$10 per litter
- Adult Hog Registration will be \$10 per animal registered (this is a \$10 per animal DECREASE)
- The Transfer fee will remain the same

Breeders registering multiple piglets will have a small increase in cost, whereas breeders who wait to register piglets until after 3 months of age, or those registering adult animals, will see a savings of \$10 per animal.

Based on 2015 year end data, this will not significantly effect the Association's net income.

New Litter Registration Certificates—This form is the one sent to each breeder when they have registered an entire litter of piglets. whether online or by mail. The new *Litter Registration Certificate* now has these features:

- COI
 - Tagging/Notching information as well as markings
 - Number of piglets in litter/died in nesting
- Previously, some of this info was on the initial form, but not on the permanent certificate. This will help the breeder better track all the info on registered stock.

New ID requirements—In answer to the increasing member requests to track pigs in the registry, as well as the Association's need to better track our registered animals, as of January 1st 2017, all newly registered animals must have some sort of identification. Examples are:

- Notching
- Ear tagging
- Tattooing

This ID will be required information on the *Litter Registration Form* and on the *Adult Hog Registration Form* and will be noted on the Certificates sent as well as the forms kept by the Association Registrar. Breeders who wish may list both a notch and a tag number.

While everyone adjusts to the new requirement, please let us know if you need more time to get notching or tagging equipment ordered. We will, of course, be flexible during the transition. Thank you!

A 5% AGHA Member Discount is being offered by Premier Supply Company and extends to all Premier products including ear tags and tagging applicators.

Use Promotion code of AGHA17, which is 5% off any order. This code may be entered on the shopping cart page of the website, or given to a Premier sales rep over the phone. **The promotion is good through May 1, 2017.**

Additionally, when you link to the website please use the following URLs:

Home page: https://www.premiersupplies.com/?utm_source=AGHA&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=AGHA17

Catalog request page: https://www.premiersupplies.com/pages/catalog.php?utm_source=AGHA&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=AGHA17

Ear tag landing page: https://www.premiersupplies.com/c/ear-tags-and-tattoo-supplies/ear-tags?utm_source=AGHA&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=AGHA17

Fencing landing page: https://www.premiersupplies.com/hogs_pigs/fencing.php?utm_source=AGHA&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=AGHA17

The 2017 AGHA Calendar is available for orders. Cost is \$19.99 each, 2/\$35, or 3/\$48 and Includes shipping.

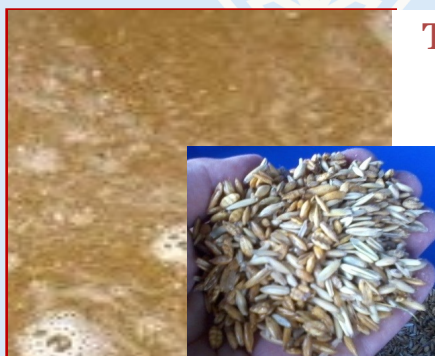
50% of proceeds goes to advertising/MEN Fair account
50% goes to the newly-formed Emergency Fund Account, which has been formed to assist people in need of help during hurricane/tornado/floods.



THE HEALTHY PIG AND PASTURE, PART 2:

Fermentation and the Well-Cultured Pig

BY MERRY SCHEPERS



I'm not suggesting that you acculturate your hogs by buying them season tickets to the opera or the ballet, but rather suggesting that you add fermented grains to your feeding program to enhance the health and well-being of your hogs and to maximize their utilization of the forages they eat. Fermenting grain is easy, can be done effectively on a small scale, and the benefits to your hogs are tangible.

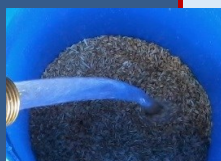
“Fermenting grain is easy, can be done effectively on a small scale, and the benefits to your hogs are tangible.”

HOW TO FERMENT FEED

Making fermented grain for your animals is quite easy.

- Put grain in the bucket (we use crimped oats and five-gallon buckets).
- Cover with warm water (1:4 ration of grain to water).
- Add a culture (we like to use a few tablespoons of Stonybrook yogurt when starting a ferment, as it has six different live strains of culture).
- Stir it all together.
- Put the lid loosely on top of the bucket, securing it in a few spots to keep out bugs and dirt but leaving enough unsealed areas to release CO₂.
- Keep in a warm spot.

It is that easy! In the winter, you may need to move the ferment bucket to the mudroom or another reasonably warm place in your house. By the next day, your bucket will be bubbling away and ready to feed. You can certainly get as complicated as you wish about your fermentation set-up, but this is a bare-bones, basic method and it will work just fine.



HEALTH BENEFITS

Adding fermented feed to the diets of hogs is becoming more wide-spread in Europe, and several European universities have conducted research into its benefits and effects. As European commercial hog farms reduce the use of antibiotics in their operations, they have begun introducing ferments as an adjunct to the hogs' feed. This was done primarily to take advantage of probiotics in the ferments in lieu of antibiotics. It is a proactive rather than a reactive approach to hog health. Results have shown that

- ◆ Fermented feed given to the nursing sow not only lowers fecal coliforms in her intestinal tract, but also in that of the piglets.
- ◆ Piglets fed a small amount of fermented feed wean easier and are less likely to develop the scours.
- ◆ The lower pH in the stomachs and guts of pigs fed a portion of ferment in their diets also lowers the number of Salmonella, E. coli, and other pathogenic bacteria in the gut, while enhancing the presence of beneficial bacteria.
- ◆ The probiotic activity also aids the hog in fending off illnesses that would require the use of antibiotics, and do so before the pathogens get a strong foothold.

DIGESTIVE BENEFITS

In addition to the intestinal biota, the intestinal terrain of the pig is affected by regular feeding of foods high in lactobacters. Research has shown that the villi (the tiny pouches in the walls that transmit the nutrients) in the cecum and the intestines of these hogs are deeper, providing more surface area and allowing for more thorough digestion of feeds and better absorption of the nutrients from those feeds.

For those of us who pasture feed our pigs, this finding is of great importance. Hogs are not ruminants and cannot break down the complex cellulose found in forages; but a hog, lacking the large stomach of a ruminant, possesses a very large cecum and hind gut. The lactobacters from fermented feed help break down the complex food chains that a hog's digestion alone cannot, making more nutrients bioavailable to the animal, and the deeper villi in the gut extract and channel those nutrients into the pig's body.

The addition of ferments to the diet of hogs can improve their feed efficiency by 6.9% and weight gain by 4.4%. These numbers come from research based on confinement feeding; I would expect those numbers to increase for animals that are pastured, and especially for hogs like the American Guinea Hogs that are very efficient in their use of forages.

....continued on Page 4

THE HEALTHY PIG AND PASTURE, PART 2:

Fermentation and the Well-Cultured Pig (continued)

HOW TO USE FERMENTED FEED

It is best to use the ferment only as an adjunct to the diet of your hogs; fed in large quantities, it has an anti-nutritional effect. We usually give each animal a drained ladle of ferment once a day. They love it!



Pour off the liquid fraction in your ferment bucket into another bucket, add more grain to the second bucket and more water to get to the 1:4 ratio; this pitches your ferment with an active colony of cultures (known as “back-slopping”) and hastens the fermenting process.

After doling out the fermented grain to your grateful hogs, wash out the bucket and let it dry for its next turn in the fermenting rotation. What you want to see – an actively bubbling ferment. What you might see that’s ok but not ideal – a white, semi-opaque film on top, known as kahm yeast. It won’t hurt the hogs, but you don’t want it to get the upper hand, so skim it off before back-slopping to the next batch.

SUMMARY

As you can see, making ferments to add to your hogs’ feed is a simple process that nets you and the animal tangible returns in the form of improved health, better digestion, and improved utilization of forages, and is a tool you might want to add to your hog-raising kit. You will see health and performance benefits from it. It is a whole lot cheaper than a season ticket to the opera – though the pigs do seem to like a bit of singing now and then.

NEXT IN THIS SERIES:

Herbal Support for Pastured Hogs

PRECAUTIONS

If you see black molds growing on the bucket and on the surface of the ferment, these are aflatoxins, bad for the animals’ digestions and also an abortifacient.

Dump the batch, be more diligent in your equipment cleaning, and make sure there is enough water in your ferment.

For deeper insight into this subject, I refer you to this article: <http://jasbsci.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/2049-1891-6-4>

Merry Schepers studied Animal Science at Oklahoma State University and interned for a year at a Bull and Boar Stud in Griesheim bei Darmstadt in Germany. She now raises heritage hogs on pasture on a small farm in the Missouri Ozarks.

PARASITE MANAGEMENT: *Lice*

By Susan J. Williamson, D.V.M.

Many years ago, my sister and I were active 4-H members and showed as many different species as we could. My father sometimes bought our show pigs from a local breeder, but one year, he brought home some nice looking piglets from a different source in another part of the state. My sister and I raised those piglets with an eye to having them finished for show at our small county fair in late August.

On the appointed day, we loaded our livestock up and went to the fairgrounds for check in. After we unloaded all the livestock, we walked the hogs to the wash pens to bathe the mud off. Unlike many of the hogs there, our hogs had been raised outdoors with a muddy wallow in which to spend the hot New Mexican summer. They had a pen separate from our other hogs, and were given the best of feed and care.



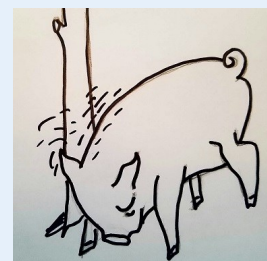
It is important to know that lice are species specific; your cattle or goats will not give the pigs lice and vice versa.

To my horror, when I rinsed the thick layer of mud from our beautiful pigs, there were several large bugs walking on their heads, concentrated at the base of their ears! Deeply disturbed, I tried to convince the hog leader, the extension agent, any adult I could find to come look at the pigs and tell me what to do. They were all busy. The internet had not even been thought of at this time -- computers were not in every household -- so I turned to my favorite place: the library!

There, after pouring through the few veterinary texts available to me, I found that my pigs had lice. I also realized the pigs had likely come to our property with lice, as we had never had any external parasites on any of our hogs ever before, and none of the hogs at home, after close examination, had any lice. Fortunately, the fact that we kept our show pigs separate from our other hogs had ensured that we hadn't had a major outbreak on our farm. In addition, that year all exhibited swine were sent from the show directly to the slaughterhouse, so no other hogs picked up the parasites to take home.

While swine lice (*Haematopinus suis*) is the largest lice species (4 to 6 mm long) and are easily seen with the naked eye, lice are a fairly common external parasite of swine. They often go unnoticed, especially situations where hogs live on pasture or in a breeding operation. They are less common in commercial "all in-all out" operations because their lifecycle demands they stay on the host, meaning these hogs cannot pick up lice from their environment.

Lice bite and suck blood, leading to scratching behavior as the hogs try to relieve the itching that results. The hogs can scratch so much that they damage their skin or destroy their feeders, housing or fencing. Lice prefer to live in or near skin folds, at the base of the ears, inside the legs where the legs meet the body and in the flank skin. They are generally dark grey in color, which can make them difficult to see on our black pigs. Their mouthparts are pointed, as they bite and suck blood using those long mouthparts.



PARASITE MANAGEMENT:

Licecontinued

A female louse lays a handful of eggs a day, attaching each egg to a hair, and each egg hatches, releasing a nymph (baby louse) which takes a blood meal at each stage of development; there are three stages. Lice take 23-30 days to go from egg to egg, so they can reproduce in great numbers quite rapidly.

Lice almost always spread via direct contact, through rubbing and close body contact of herd members. They can, however, survive off host for a very short time. Therefore, items that are carrying nymphs or adult lice are potentially infective. Examples of this might be that fence post the hogs like to rub on; if one pig rubs and a second immediately follows to rub in the same spot, it might be possible to become infected that way. A sow can easily transmit lice to her new litter practically at birth. A breeding pair can easily share lice during their honeymoon. They are not infected via bedding the farmer brings in or the like.

A herd is typically infected when a new hog comes in that is carrying lice. Therefore, it is highly recommended that all new arrivals are quarantined for 30 days AND treated with a antiparasiticide at arrival AND again 10-14 days later to treat any lice that were in egg form at arrival. Doing this ensures your herd will never be infected.

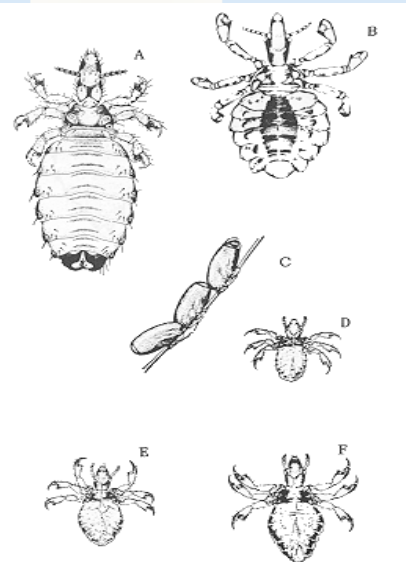
While lice are generally considered a minor health issue, a large infestation can have an economic impact via the excessive scratching and discomfort; the hogs are not resting and behaving normally, instead expending energy in activities to try to decrease the itching. Sometimes the skin damage can be so severe the wounds become infected and require care. Lice are a source of stress to the hogs, which can decrease efficiency and make them more susceptible to disease. A heavy infestation has the potential to cause anemia in piglets, if the numbers are sufficient to suck a large amount of blood. Finally, lice can transmit diseases such as swine pox and hog cholera.

TREATING LICE

1. Treat the entire herd with an appropriate medication
2. Treat the entire herd again 10-14 days later.

Failure to treat the second time will result in failure to eradicate the lice.

The best prevention is to maintain your herd in a closed fashion, ensuring they are well cared for with proper nutrition and shelter. My father opted to never purchase hogs from that particular breeder again, and we never had another incident with lice.



Hog louse. A, Female. B, Male. C, Eggs glued to bristle. D-F, Nymphs.

Image Source: NC State Extension Website

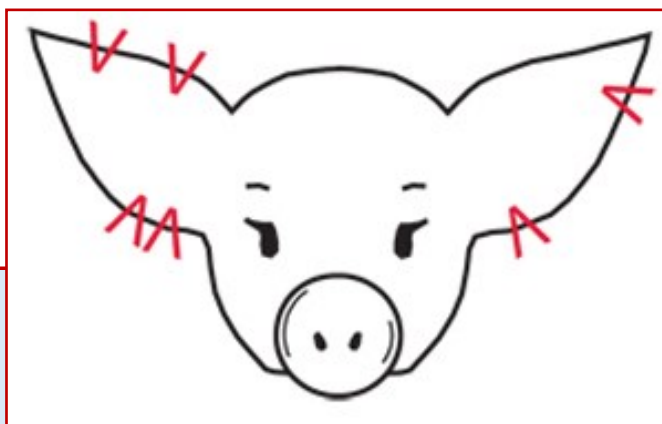
Many years ago, when my hogs had the aforementioned run in, there were few safe and easy treatments for lice. Today, however, we have many safe and effective treatments. Whatever you choose, please check the label for meat withdrawal times and discuss your needs with your veterinarian. Ivermectin is one commonly used medication.

To treat lice, one needs to treat the entire herd with an appropriate medication and then treat the entire herd again 10-14 days later. Failure to treat the second time will result in failure to eradicate the lice. Because they spend their entire life cycle on a host, there is no need to treat the environment or set traps.

EAR NOTCHING

“I didn’t want to do it.”

By Tori Rozanski (Clear Morning Provisions)



Ear notching piglets was something I never wanted to try...never, ever, ever.

The mere thought of performing this task sent a shiver down my spine. You see, I had conjured up terrible mental images of piglets screaming and writhing in pain as I hacked multiple chunks of tissue out of their soft, velvety little ears. Despite assurances from experienced, reputable breeders that no such trauma/drama was involved in the ear-notching process, I remained unconvinced.

Some kind of identification is now required for all AGHA registered hogs.

This is nothing new for our farm as we have always ear tagged our litters. My piglets, however, kept losing their ear tags. Some tags were even lost before the piglets ever left my farm for their new farm homes. **Ear notches are permanent — they do not fall off.** This fact forced me to explore the possibility of adding ear notching to my herd-management practices. Thus began my year-long stint of research into the pros and cons of ear notching and the mechanics of performing this seemingly distasteful act.

Internet “how to” articles on ear notching are abundant and I read as many as I could find. Eventually, I stumbled onto one that came with a clear, and easy to use cheat sheet and everything fell into place. I purchased a small-sized, stainless steel, ear-notching tool from my local Tractor Supply and, with more than a little anxiety, awaited our next litter.

When the next litter arrived, my son and I headed out (cheat sheet in hand) to tackle the job. After the first notch was made and the soft, tiny little piglet did not even flinch, I was able to relax. The whole job took about 20 minutes and most

of that time was spent catching the piglets. Some of the ears bled just a teeny tiny bit—some did not bleed at all. It was really a non-event and I felt rather foolish for building up such an aversion to the task.

The only thing I did wrong was to make the notches too shallow. This made them hard to read later on. Since I bought the small-sized ear

notchers, I should have used the entire notch not just half of it. I will be sure to do full-sized notches.

My research, combined with my actual experience, proved my ear notching anxieties were completely unfounded.

The piglets I notched did not even seem to notice. In fact, I found ear-notching to be far easier than ear tagging. Going forward, each and every litter born on my farm will be ear notched. I still plan to apply ear tags at around eight weeks of age as they make it easier for me to identify individual pigs from a distance and offer me the ability to include my farm identification on the tags.

EAR NOTCHING

PROS AND CONS

PROS

- provides unique identification
- permanent (won’t fall out or fade)
- can be done day of birth which allows sows and their litters to share the same pastures/pens and co-nurse
- virtually painless
- economical
- easy to read

CONS

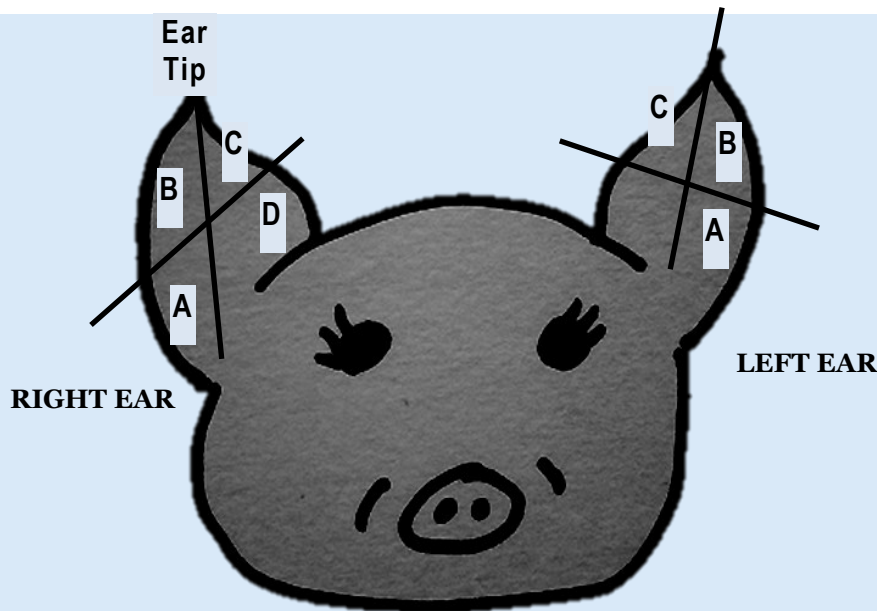
- some find notches unsightly
- does not identify the originating farm

“Going forward, each and every piglet born on my farm will be ear notched.”

EAR NOTCHING...continued

STANDARD EAR NOTCHING METHOD

- The right ear is used to record the litter number (each litter on the farm is assigned its own number).
- The left ear is used to record the individual piglet number (each piglet within the litter is assigned its own number).
- Each ear is divided into four sections.
- Notches in each of the sections represent a given number.
- The ear tip is used in the right ear only.
- Notches from each section, and the ear tip, are added together to get the desired number.
- No more than two notches are permitted per section — one notch on the ear tip.
- Notches are read from Right to Left
- Note: Section D is not used in the Left ear as there are no litters in which 27 piglets are born



Section A

Notches in these ear sections represent the number **one**.

Section B

Notches in these ear sections represent the number **three**.

Section C

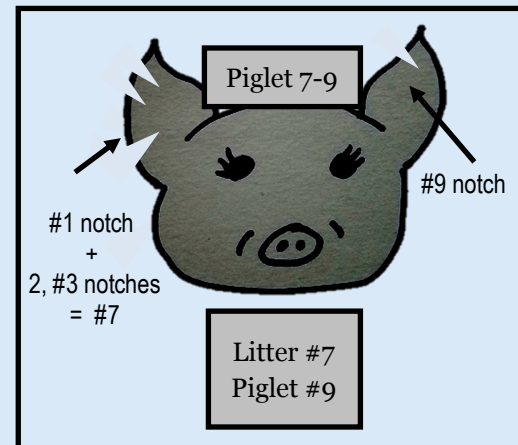
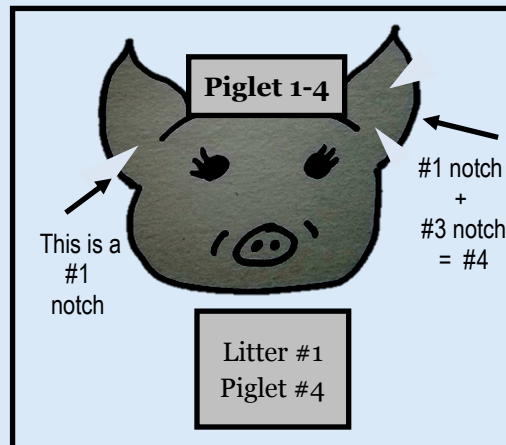
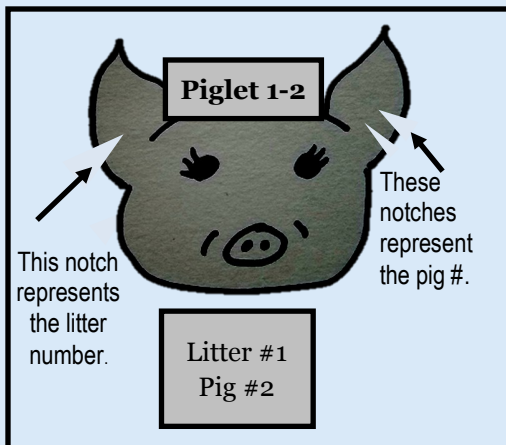
Notches in these ear sections represent the number **nine**.

Section D

Notches in this ear section represent the number **twenty-seven**.

Ear Tip

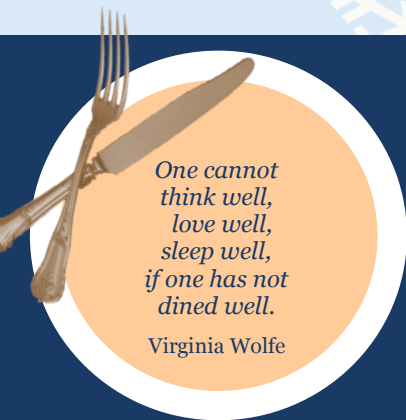
A notch in this section represents the number **eighty-one**.



EAR NOTCHING...continued

Feel free to print this Quick Reference Guide for use when notching your litters. It only displays the notches up to Litter #28. Once you have notched 28 litters, chances are the notching system will have become second nature and you will no longer need to use a guide.

| EAR NOTCHING QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|--|---|---|
| LITTER IDENTIFICATION NUMBERS (Right Ear) | | | | | | |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Litter #1 | Litter #2 | Litter #3 | Litter #4 | Litter #5 | Litter #6 | Litter #7 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Litter #8 | Litter #9 | Litter #10 | Litter #11 | Litter #12 | Litter #13 | Litter #14 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Litter #15 | Litter #16 | Litter #17 | Litter #18 | Litter #19 | Litter #20 | Litter #21 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Litter #22 | Litter #23 | Litter #24 | Litter #25 | Litter #26 | Litter #27 | Litter #28 |
| INDIVIDUAL PIGLET IDENTIFICATION NUMBERS (Left Ear) | | | | | | |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Piglet #1 | Piglet #2 | Piglet #3 | Piglet #4 | Piglet #5 | Piglet #6 | Piglet #7 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Piglet #8 | Piglet #9 | Piglet #10 | Piglet #11 | Piglet #12 | Piglet #13 | Piglet #14 |



SWINE & DINE

It's Slow-Cooked,
Comfort Food Time!

Roasted Pork Shoulder by Kate Spinillo (Ham Sweet Farm)

Ingredients

Pork Shoulder (Bone-in preferably) (recipe based on 7lb roast)

| | |
|----------------------|------------------------------|
| 5 Tbsp Salt | 5 Tbsp Black Pepper (Coarse) |
| 2 Tbsp Brown Sugar | 2 Tbsp Onion Powder |
| 2 Tbsp Garlic Powder | 5 Tbsp Paprika |
| 1 tsp Ground Clove | 1 Tbsp Cinnamon |

Directions

Night Before:

1. Mix all dry ingredients well in a bowl
2. Generously apply to pork roast
3. Let sit uncovered in fridge overnight

NOTE: If you have a skin-on pork shoulder, be sure to score the skin with a sharp knife or box cutter in a crosshatch pattern. Take care to not cut into the meat, rather just through skin into the fat. This will aid in helping to render the fat out.

Day of:

1. Remove from fridge 30-60 minutes prior to cooking to allow to come to room temperature
2. Pre-heat oven to 250 degrees
3. Cook meat until internal temperature of thickest part is 175-180 degrees
4. Remove from oven and let rest for 20 minutes (the roast will continue to cook and reach the desired temperature of 185)

If you have a skin on shoulder, this is where you're going to get that crispy skin.

- Let roast stand additional 10 minutes (30 total) after removing from oven.
 - Preheat oven to 500 degrees
 - Place roast back in the oven, once it has come up to temperature, for an additional 20 minutes to crisp up the skin [keep an eye on it, cooking time may vary].
 - Remove and let rest for 20 minutes
1. Using knife and fork, shred shoulder into chunks or slices
 2. If you have skin on, using a cleaver, chop the skin into fine chunks and mix into the pulled shoulder meat. This will give you another texture throughout the pulled pork.
 3. Toss with your favorite BBQ sauce and enjoy on a sandwich or serve with Sauerkraut on the side.



When you're cooking a pork shoulder, you have to consider what texture you want with the end product. Do you want to have a good slicing product or do you want a good pulled pork product. Shoulder is one of the few cuts on the pig that allows you to have this option and that's due to the high volume and distribution of fat throughout the various muscles of the shoulder. This fat allows for low and slow cooking without the typical risk of it drying out over that period of time.

SWINE & DINE (continued)

For the Love(?) of Sauerkraut

by Angela Ingraham (Flint & Steel Farm)

I married a German and not long into the marriage he professed his love of Sauerkraut. I never took to it myself, even preferring Cole Slaw on my Rueben sandwiches (which I understand is almost a felony). For years, I bought it, held my nose while working with it, and ate from the side of the roast that didn't touch it.

Shortly after we were married, we moved to the farm. Here, my goal became "If you can make, don't buy it" — almost like a challenge to myself. It soon became apparent that cabbage grew easily here in our soil and I was, therefore, out of excuses.

A friend bought me a copy of "Nourishing Traditions" cookbook. It included an entire section on lacto-fermenting and the Sauerkraut recipe called for whey. THAT I have in abundance — from yogurt making. I plunged in and never looked back. It was super easy, it was actually fun, and it was rewarding to check one more thing off the "Things NOT to buy" list.

So, while I still may not love Sauerkraut, I do love my husband and I absolutely love making things from the farm.

Home Made Sauerkraut

Adapted from *Nourishing Traditions*

One medium head of white cabbage, cored and shredded

1 Tbsp Sea Salt

1 Tbsp Caraway Seeds (optional)

4 Tbsp Whey (if you don't have whey, add one additional Tbsp sea salt)

- In a large bowl, toss salt with cabbage.
- Pound with a wooden mallet until the cabbage begins to soften and release juices. Alternately, you can knead the cabbage with your hands. You will feel the texture change and the liquid begin to form. Sometimes I do both, knead a bit, then pound a bit. It takes some time, 10-15 minutes, and provides some exercise as a side benefit!
- Once the liquid begins to form and the cabbage is a soft texture, add the whey and caraway seeds and mix thoroughly. In quart mason jars, fill with cabbage, pressing down with a tamper as you fill so the liquid covers the kraut. When the jar is full, you should be able to press the kraut down enough so that the liquid is an inch above the kraut. Cap tightly and put at room temperature for 3 days to a week before transferring to refrigeration. I check it every couple of days when it is at room temp, bubbles sometimes form and release a gas that is normal and opening the cap releases the pressure formed. You may eat it at this point, but it improves in flavor with age.

I keep mine in a small dorm fridge, marked by the date made, so that we eat the oldest first. At this stage it lasts many months. Many Kraut enthusiasts insist that it should have at least 6 months to fully mature. Paired with a Guinea Hog roast and warm applesauce, it makes an amazing fall and winter comfort food.



A LUCKY COMBO!

It is a Pennsylvania Dutch Tradition to eat Pork and Sauerkraut on New Year's Eve.

Before the meal, those at the table pause to wish each other as many blessings as the number of cabbage shreds contained in the pot.

In addition, the pig has long been a symbol for good luck and well-being.

Because of this, many people believe that eating a meal that contains both pork and sauerkraut will bring luck in the coming year.

Pork and Sauerkraut—for luck and for flavor—a year round favorite!

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If you have questions regarding any aspect of breeding, caring for, or marketing your American Guinea Hogs which you would like to see addressed in an upcoming Curly Tales issue, please email Tori Rozanski, clearmorningprovisions@gmail.com.

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