

# Red Wattle Hog Association

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

MARCH 2011, SPRING

## REMEMBER:

- The Recovery Program will close January 1, 2013
- The Breed Up Program will close January 1, 2013. No new animals will be accepted into the program after this date. However, breeders who are already in the program will have the opportunity to complete the program as outlined in the Breed up program rules.

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## Lifetime achievement award

There are those who are dedicated preservationists. They have worked tirelessly to conserve the Red Wattles through the bad times and the good times. They have shown unwavering devotion to the goal of preserving and promoting the Red Wattle Hog. To honor these exceptional folks, the Red Wattle Hog Association Board of Directors has voted to create a LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD.

Any member may nominate an individual for this award. The final selection will then be made by the RWHA Board of Directors based in the individuals contributions to the preservation, conservation and stewardship of

the Red Wattle Hog.

Please submit your nominations to:

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT  
RWHA

7024 Spearsville Rd

Morgantown IN 46160

Or

redwattles@hotmail.com

Put "LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT"

In the subject line.

Deadline for submissions is:

MAY 1, 2011

The recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award will be announced at the annual meeting of the RWHA.



## Spring Cleaning

Spring is here and it's time for spring cleaning and that includes the RWHA. The redwattleproject.com online members database and the association email list have been updated to reflect all who have renewed their memberships, new members and to delete contact information for those who are no longer mem-

bers.

The forum section has also been updated to remove those who are not RWHA members. Remember these sections are available to members of the RWHA only: "GOT PORK?" and "BUY, SELL, TRADE REDWATTLES" section is a benefit of membership.

If you notice any errors in the spring cleaning: incorrect addresses, numbers, emails or deleted in error, please, contact me as soon as possible

Dot Parker Jordan

redwattles@hotmail.com

308 Knoll Court Apt E

Crawfordsville IN 47933

## An open letter to the membership



As many of you know, Brian has returned to college to pursue a degree in biology and his DVM. This is a fulltime commitment which has led us to, regretfully, turn over our RWs and our farm to our daughter and son in law. They will continue to raise RWs with our guidance.

This is a necessary step for us because we will need to live in an apartment for the next several years so that Brian can be closer to Purdue University. It has been brought to our attention, some folks don't think we should continue to serve as officers of the RWHA because we aren't actively breeding RWs.

Lets look at the facts:

The bylaws state that officers must be "members in good standing". It does not state that officers have to be actively breeding RWs.

Brian and I remain committed to the conservation, improvement and promotion of RWs.

It actually gives us more time to devote to the membership's needs, because we don't have the daily needs of our farm to attend to.

In the time we have been in office we have:

Successfully negotiated the purchase of redwattleproject.com

Negotiated with the ALBC to allow the RW registry to be made available online on the

website.

Created this newsletter.

Created a database to track membership activity

And now, with the help of other RW stewards, we are working on creating a selection guide and a card grading system for the RW's.

Brian and I are willing to step down from office in the RWHA if that is the wish of the majority of members of the RWHA.

Please email, call or send a note to let us know what you want us to do.

Sincerely,

*Doc and Brian*

## The ABC's and 1,2,3's of registration numbers

On redwattleproject.com you can look up animals by their registration number. But what do the numbers tell you?

Obviously, the lower the number the older the animal is.

There are three letters used in the registration numbers:

R- recovery. These are animals that have come through the Recovery Program. This program helps to bring RW's into the registry that have not been documented. R1 is first generation recovery. R2 is second generation recovery. All of these animals have

been reviewed and approved by the RWHA Board of Directors.

G- this indicates an animal that is being used to start the "Breed Up" program. This is a voluntary program which, when used correctly, broadens the gene pool and strengthens the breed.

B - These are animals of historic significance. Their inclusion in the registry helps to fill out the history of subsequent generations.

You will also notice some registration numbers that have a decimal point and two or three numbers be-

hind them.

These are animals in the Breed Up program.

The numbers after the decimal indicate the percentage pure Red Wattle that the animal is.

For example:

.50 indicates a 50% pure Red Wattle

.875 indicates an animal that is 87.5% pure Red Wattle.

If you have any questions about the registry please contact: redwattles@hotmail.com



## Castration: the whys and whens

By Josh Wendland, ALBC Master Breeder,  
Technical Advisor to the RWHA

Castration is a necessary minor surgical procedure done for thousands of years since animals were domesticated. In other words, it is the removal of the testicles in the male animals to improve growth rate and meat quality. It is also essential to the managing of breeding stock by only leaving the best animals intact.

**WHAT HAPPENS IF I DON'T CASTRATE?** Boars left untouched develop large amounts of testosterone and this stimulates the body to go into a breeding first mode. Which not only taints the meat but makes the animal more interested in breeding than growing. Also, since the meat is not edible the salvage value is minimal.

**IS BOAR TAIN REAL?** Absolutely! While some may claim Red Wattles do not carry it or if a boar is not around females or been put into service do not carry the taint. I find this very rare and not consistent. It is definitely not worth the risk of ruining the product or losing a customer. There is a lot of money tied up in an animal by the time it is fattened and processed to have to dispose of the meat.

**WHEN TO CASTRATE?** AWA and a lot of welfare certifications demand within the first two weeks. However, I do not find fault in doing it at weaning in severe cold. I prefer not to remove the pigs from the sow to get them chilled and sometimes weather doesn't permit at other times of the year. Breeding stock is first selected at

birth with individuals definitely not being kept being castrated. At weaning is the second round of selection for boars. This is where later castration is necessary. And I try to have other cuts done ASAP - definitely by the time the boar is at the 200 pound range. After 200 pounds the animal starts to take on the taint and it takes time to get that out of the system and to heal the incisions.

**WHEN IS A HOG TOO BIG TO CASTRATE?** After the 200 pound mark it starts to get hard on the animal and hard on the person (and helper) performing the task. I do it with just a little help and a sturdy gate to squeeze them behind. That being said, the cull boar price probably won't pay for your fuel to get rid of him. I have a neighbor who made good money buying old boars castrating them and letting them heal. Then would put weight on them as they healed (this can take a long time, and some may never heal or die) once they healed he would again sell them and receive good sow price. This is not easy but an option. I look at it that he gave me lots of pigs and doesn't owe me a lot of money and I usually sell my old boars.

**TECHNIQUE:** I usually hold baby pigs between my knees while kneeling on the ground. Weanling pigs and up to 50# I turn the pig upside down and put one leg under me and let one go straight out while sitting on pig. Larger pigs will require a helper to hold down animal. I use disposable curved bladder scalpels. The ones I use are

blue and about 3 inches long tip to tip. The incision needs to be made towards the bottom of the scrotum so the cavity can drain as the animal heals. Some people do only one incision but I usually make one for each testicle. Push the testicle to make it tight in scrotum, this allows it to stay in position and not float while cutting. I usually cut into the testicle when making the incision to go through all membranes at the same time popping testicle out of the hole. Pull on testicle to expose cord. While pulling I apply the knife to the cord to aid in tearing. Repeat on the other side.

The pig's immune system is amazing I don't know that I have ever had a hog die of infection, a lot of the times I don't treat small pigs up to weaning with any antiseptic I just let the draining do the cleansing. (Bleeding and draining last for a very short time, and very little blood is lost.) For the larger pigs I use a product called Vetericyn VF wound treatment and have had good and fast healing.

**Animal welfare:** Pigs and all livestock for that matter, have a lot fewer nerves and pain receptors than humans, if it was for not being restrained I truly believe pigs would not squeal when being castrated. The fact that they are being held or sat on is frustrating to them and sparks the survival instincts to squeal and run away. There are not a lot of things to give a hog to for anesthesia. I believe most drugs are toxic to

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swine. There are aspirin type meds or anti-inflammatories but I truly believe none of this is necessary.

We must remember the separation between livestock (food source) and humans. These animals are man made by human selection and breeding. The only reason they exist is to meet our food needs. While we enjoy them and ensure they have the happiest and healthiest lives possible. Their true purpose must be kept in mind. We are to be in dominion

over the animals and good stewards of our resources.

Complications: The biggest thing to watch for is a rupture into the testicles. This is when the intestines breakthrough into the scrotum and will be a major problem if cut open, they will spill out and cause irreversible damage. If you detect extra bulges or round full scrotum get a second opinion before cutting. Castration can still be performed by a vet or other experienced person as some stitching will need to be done.

*Editor's notes: Boar taint is in the nose of the smeller as much as it is in the hog. Some folks are more sensitive to the smell than others.*

*There are a few RWHA members who have found a niche market for boar meat. However, if you wish to pursue this niche it is advisable to do market research to be sure you will have customers for this specialty meat.*

*Before deciding to leave male piglets intact, check with your processor to be sure they will process intact males. Many will not. In addition if you are using a USDA inspected facility, be aware that boar meat can be condemned by the inspector without notification to the owner.*

## RWHA annual meeting 2011

The annual meeting of the RWHA will be held at the Small Farm Show and Conference in Columbia, Missouri.

The Conference is November 3, 4, 5. The time and location for the RWHA meeting is to be announced as soon as it is available. A schedule of speakers and workshops is not yet available for this year's conference.

This year at the Small farm Show and Conference the RWHA will be offering a card grading workshop. The card grading workshop will be open to anyone who wishes to participate.



## What is card grading?

The RWHA is implementing a card grading system in order to help all breeders make better decisions about which RW's to retain for breeding stock and which to send to the processor. It is imperative that we improve our selection process to ensure the quality of the genetics we steward in future RW's.

What is card grading?

Card grading is a simple system. It allows the individual animals to be evaluated against a standard for the breed. The RWHA is currently developing a guideline booklet that will include both words and pictures to help in the evaluation of individual animals.

Unlike the traditional show ring system, card grading doesn't compare animals to each other. It compares animals to the standard of perfection for the breed.

Card grading animals results in animals that are excellent— sound and conform to the standard with a high percentage score receive a Blue Card.

Animals that are sound for breed and show most of the characteristics as outlined in the guide receive a—Red Card.

An animal that is acceptable with no disqualifying features or unsoundness would receive a—Yellow Card

Animals that are unacceptable for breed-

ing; unsound or do not meet the guidelines receive a—White Card

There is no "Winner" in this system.

For example: Ten RWs could be evaluated and all of them receive blue cards

Or

Ten RWs could be evaluated and none receive blue cards

Or

Any combination of blue, red, yellow and white cards.

If you have questions about card grading or the card grading work shop please email: [redwattles@hotmail.com](mailto:redwattles@hotmail.com)