

Northeast Pasture Consortium News Update December 2019

Linking Graziers, Researchers, Extension, and Technicians

<http://grazingguide.net/> James Cropper, Executive Director & Editor



2020 NORTHEAST PASTURE CONSORTIUM ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The 2020 annual conference will be held in Fairlee, Vermont at the Lake Morey Resort on January 15-16 in advance of the Vermont Grazing and Livestock Conference on January 17-18. The Lake Morey Resort is off of I-91 just north of White River Junction, Vermont near the New Hampshire state line. Address is 82 Clubhouse Road, Fairlee, VT 05045. Phone numbers 800-423-1211 or 802-333-4311(in VT).



Overnight rates include lodging and use of the Resort's standard seasonal amenities (available on a first come first serve basis). Does not include meals. The above rate is subject to a 9% Vermont Rooms and Meals Tax. Charges paid directly by the University of Vermont are tax exempt.

All individual hotel reservations should be made no later than **December 16, 2019**. Reservations received after that date will be accepted on a space available basis. A credit card is required to confirm all room reservations. On-line reservations can be made at:

reservations@lakemoreyresort.com

Check-in time is 3:00 p.m. and checkout time is 11:00 a.m. Early arrivals and late departure requests will be at the agreed upon rate, based on availability.

Conference Registration

The full conference registration fee for all public sector members attending is \$250. This includes the cost of an enhanced continental breakfast, coffee breaks, and lunch for each of the two days of the meeting and an evening dinner on January 15. Register no later than January 13, 2020 on-



Guest Room Rate: (Per Room, Per Night)
Standard: Single or Double: \$105.00



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line at: [Registration link](#). If there are questions concerning registration, contact Jennifer Colby at: jennifer.colby@uvm.edu or postal address: UVM Extension Center for Sustainable Agriculture, 327 US Route 302, Suite 1 Barre, VT 05641, or by phone: (802) 535-7606.

Farmer registration fee is \$75.00. This is an incentive for them to attend and help guide us on pasture research, education, and technical assistance priorities that they feel still need to be addressed adequately.

Driving Directions:

From Boston, MA or Manchester, NH: Take I-93 North to I-89 North (in Concord, NH) to I-91 North (in White River Junction, VT.). Take Exit 15. Turn left off exit ramp. Take first right (granite Lake Morey Resort sign on corner). Follow the golf course (on left) and take your first left onto Clubhouse Road. Resort is on the right.

From Hartford and points South: Take I-91 North to Exit 15 in Vermont. Turn left off exit ramp. Take first right (granite Lake Morey Resort sign on corner). Follow the golf course (on left) and take your first left onto Clubhouse Road. Resort is on the right.

From Burlington: Take I-89 South to Exit 7 (Berlin/Barre). Take Route 302 East through Barre to Orange. Take Route 25 South to Bradford. Take I-91 South to Exit 15 - Turn right off exit ramp. Take next right (granite Lake Morey Resort sign on corner). Follow the golf course (on left) and take your first left onto Clubhouse Road. Resort is on the right.

From Albany: Take I-87 North to Troy. Take Route 7 East to Route 9 East in Vermont. Take I-91 North in Brattleboro, Vermont. Take Exit 15. Turn left off exit ramp. Take first right (granite Lake Morey Resort sign on corner). Follow the golf course (on left) and take your first left onto

Clubhouse Road. Resort is on the right.

The 2020 Conference Program

Here is a quick summary of our technical sessions for this year's conference. The sessions are:

- The Do's and Don'ts of Silvopasture,
- Pastured Pigs – Feed and Grazing Management,
- The Fescues – Soft-leaved and Meadow
- Pasture Soil Compaction- Identification and Remediation
- Getting the Most out of Winter Grazing by Forage Species Selection/Management and Grazing Management, and the
- Reliance Chesapeake Bay States are Placing on Pasture Management Practices for Achieving their TMDL Reduction Goals in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed
- Producer Showcase – Pasture-based farmers from VT and NH.

2020 Northeast Pasture Consortium Annual Conference Agenda

January 15

<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>
7:30 AM	Continental Breakfast (Included with registration) Morey Room
8:00 AM	Welcome & Introduction of Participants - Jim Cropper, Executive Director presiding, Morey Room
8:30 AM	Session 1 – The Fescues – Soft-leaf and Meadow – Moderator, Jessica Williamson, Morey Room Speakers: Jessica Williamson, Penn State University, University Park, PA – <i>Overview of Tall Fescue Toxicosis</i> Jerome Magnuson, DLF Pickseed, Halsey, OR - <i>Tall Fescue: Advances in Forage Quality and Palatability</i> Jerry Cherney, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY - <i>Meadow fescue: A Perennial Grass Option for the Northeast</i>
10:30 AM	Break - Morey Room
11:00 AM	Session 2 – Pastured Pigs – Feed and Grazing Management – Moderator, Don Wild, Morey Room Speakers: Phil Race, Valley View Devons, Nunda, NY - <i>Harnessing the Instinctive Behaviors of Pigs on Our Farm</i> Don Wild, Wild Acres Family Farm, Great Valley, NY – <i>My Experiences with Raising Pigs on Pasture</i>

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12:00 PM **Lunch** - Lakeside Dining Room

1:00 PM **Session 3 - The Do's and Don'ts of Silvopasture** – Moderator, Daimon Meeh, Morey Room
Speakers:
Kate MacFarland, US Forest Service, Burlington, VT & Will Byrum, USDA-NRCS, Greensboro, NC - *What is and isn't Silvopasture in the Northeast?*
Jeff Jourdain, Jourdain Forest Management, Becket, MA – *Experiences Establishing Silvopasture from a Forest*
Kevin Ogles, USDA-NRCS, Greensboro, NC - *How to Identify the Primary Objective of Integrating Animals and Woodlands. Is Silvopasture Actually the Objective?*

2:30 PM **Poster Break** – (authors present) Morey Room

3:30 PM **Session 4 – Getting the Most out of Winter Grazing by Forage Species Selection/Management and Grazing Management** – Moderator, Jessica Williamson, Morey Room
Speakers:
Jessica Williams, Penn State - *Interseeding Forages into Corn to Extend the Grazing Season*
Heather Darby, UVM - *Extending the Grazing Season in the Northeast*
Troy Bishopp, Upper Susquehanna Coalition Regional Grassland Conservation Professional - *My Quest for Winter Grazing: The Good, The Bad, and the Ugly*

5:15 PM **Adjourn**

6:00 PM **Dinner** – Lakeside Dining Room

7:00 PM **Evening Session – Producer Showcase** - Moderator, Kevin Jablonski, Morey Room

Speakers:
Randy Robar, Kiss the Cow Farm, Barnard, VT - *Kiss the Cow Farm, an organic, grass-based dairy selling raw milk and ice cream, pastured eggs, chickens, ducks, and turkeys.*
Lora Goss, Stonefen Farm, Pike, NH – *Stonefen Farm's Grass-fed Beef Operation*

January 16

7:30 AM **Continental Breakfast** – Morey Room

8:00 AM **Session 5 – Pasture Soil Compaction- Identification and Remediation** – Moderator, Fay Benson, Morey Room
Speakers:
A. Fay Benson, Cornell University, Cortland, NY - *Identifying and Quantifying Pasture Soil Compaction*
Larry Hepner, Consulting Agronomist & Soil Scientist, South Kortright, NY - *Soil Structure Changes Due to Pasture Soil Compaction*

9:00 AM **Session 6 - Reliance Chesapeake Bay States are Placing on Pasture Management Practices for Achieving their TMDL Reduction Goals in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed**
Speaker:
Mark Dubin, University of Maryland Extension, Annapolis, MD

10:00 AM **Break** – Morey Room

10:30 AM **Public and Private Sectors Research, Education, and Technical Assistance Priorities Deliberation Breakout sessions**

Public Sector – Chair Daimon Meeh, Morey Room
Recorder, Jessica Williamson
Private Sector – Chair Kevin Jablonski, Cardroom
Recorder, Megan Wilcox

12:00 PM **Lunch** – Lakeside Dining Room

1:00 PM **Sector Res., Ed., & Tech. Asst. Priorities Reports** - Jim Cropper, Executive Director presiding, Morey Room

Private Sector report – Kevin Jablonski, Co-Chair Elect
Public Sector report – Daimon Meeh, Co-Chair Elect

2:00 PM **Business Meeting** – Fay Benson, Public Sector Co-Chair and Don Wild, Private Sector Co-Chair, Presiding

Election of Private Sector and Public Sector members-at-large to serve on the Executive Committee of the NE Pasture Consortium – 4-year term.

Other business to come to the Floor, such as resolutions and proposed changes to Consortium research and extension priorities.

Jim Cropper, Executive Director, Thank you to the outgoing Executive Committee members, Welcome to the new Executive Committee members, and Announcement of the 2020-2021 Public and Private Sector Co-Chairs

3:00 PM **Adjourn**

Introducing our Guest Speakers

The Do's and Don'ts of Silvopasture Session



Sheep on silvopasture in WV

Jeff Jourdain is a consulting forester out of Becket, MA who has worked with a number of landowners in recent years to evaluate and implement silvopasture projects.

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Kate MacFarland Honored for Agroforestry Work



Kate MacFarland. USDA Forest Service photo by Rachel Schattman.

VERMONT – Kate MacFarland was honored by the Association for Temperate Agroforestry at the organization’s biennial meeting on June 25th. The AFTA Early Career Award recognizes individuals who demonstrate sustained service to agroforestry and leadership of impactful outreach or research programs. MacFarland received this award in recognition of her work in advancing

agroforestry throughout the United States. The award is given every other year and only when a deserving candidate is nominated.

MacFarland, stationed in Burlington, Vermont, joined the USDA National Agroforestry Center in 2013 as the assistant agroforester. She provides leadership for national and regional workshops and trainings, develops outreach materials for science delivery for a range of technical and general audiences, and supports the integration of agroforestry into USDA programs. Kate has served on the program committees for three North American Agroforestry Conferences and was influential in organizing two USDA meetings on emerging opportunities in agroforestry. Her efforts have been instrumental in the development of 2 working groups, the Northeast/Mid-Atlantic and the Pacific Northwest Agroforestry, as well as the formation and development of the Appalachian Beginning Forest Farmer Coalition. She also acts as NAC’s liaison to the Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, and Northwestern regions.



William Byrum is a forester at the East National Technology Support Center in Greensboro, NC. He is a native of North Carolina and a recent addition to the technical staff at the East NTSC.

Pastured Pigs – Feed and Grazing Management

This is the first time for a session on how to raise pigs on pasture. Phil Race is our quest speaker. Don Wild, who will moderate and speak at the session, also has pastured pigs. However, he is a long time member and currently serves on the Consortium’s Executive Committee.

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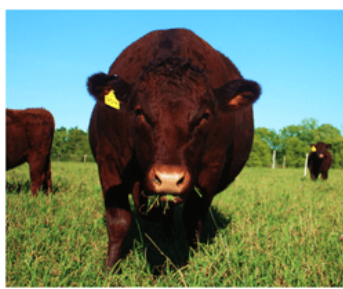
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Phil Race and Sharon Pierce, Valley View Devons, Nunda, NY

They raise cows, pigs, and chickens - grass-fed and -finished beef, pastured pork and chickens, and breeding stock. What began with their desire to provide their own healthy food evolved into Valley View Devons. Their goals are to:

- Raise animals humanely in a natural environment,
- Feed the animals a pasture-based, species appropriate diet,
- Produce high quality, healthy food for ourselves and our customers,
- Restore and improve the land, and
- Share information and build community



The Fescues – Soft-leaved and Meadow

Jerome Magnuson, Forage and Organic Specialist, DLF Pickseed, Halsey, OR

DLF Pickseed is the US branch of a global seed and plant breeding company adding value to customers and end users through leading edge research and product development. DLF Pickseed employees are characterized by a high level of competency, passion and commitment. Together with an entrepreneurial mindset and a flat organization, this contributes to DLF Pickseed’s unique agility.

DLF was founded in 1906. It was originally Danske Landboforeningers Frøforsyning, which translates to the “Danish Farmers Organization’s Seed Supplier”. It was, and still is a cooperative, which means DLF is owned by Danish Seed Growers, the contract seed growers of DLF.

DLF was later transformed to Dansk Landbrugs Frøelskab, which translates to “Danish Agriculture Seed Company”. The original structure of the DLF coop is still strong. About 3,000 Danish Seed growers are coop members in DLF. Their strategy has been to develop DLF, following a growth strategy while producing seed that has been an attractive activity for the members. This strategy has made it possible to build up capital in DLF, being financially strong enough to complete the acquisitions of Pickseed, La Crosse Seed, and lastly PGG Wrightson Seed.



Soft-leaf Fescue

From King’s AgriSeeds

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DLF Pickseed has been producing organic seed for many years. It continues to be a leader in providing high quality seed. The increasing demand for products grown using sustainable agricultural practices has made their USDA approved organic seeds a premium choice for organic producers.

As reported in the September Issue of the Northeast Pasture Consortium News Update, three genotypically distinct breeding varieties of tall fescue contrasting in their ability to accumulate Si and varying in leaf texture were provided by the parent commercial seed company, DLF Seeds Limited, Denmark. This is why we sought out Jerome to talk at this session of the Conference.

Jerry Cherney, E.V. Baker Professor of Agriculture, Soil & Crop Sciences Section, School of Integrative Plant Science, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY

Jerome H. Cherney was born and raised on a dairy farm in central Wisconsin, receiving a B.S. degree in Plant Pathology from the University of Wisconsin. He received a M.S. degree in agronomy from the University of Wisconsin and a Ph.D. in agronomy from the University of Minnesota. After directing a multi-college grass tetany program at Louisiana State University as a post-doctoral Fellow, he accepted a faculty position at Purdue University in forage crop research and teaching. A primary focus of his forage program at Purdue was the evaluation of herbaceous biomass crops. He became the New York State forage specialist in 1990, focusing on perennial grass management and quality.

Jerry has been evaluating meadow fescue as a companion crop with alfalfa in hayfields. He has compared it with other grass species – orchardgrass, tall fescue, and festulolium, in forage trials grown with alfalfa. He has found it to be less competitive to alfalfa and provides more neutral detergent fiber digestibility (NDFD) [2-4 %

points] than the others. This is important when feeding it to dairy cows as a one percentage unit increase in NDFD increases milk production by 0.5-1.0 lb./cow/day, and more than 1.0 lb./cow/day for the highest producing cows. This is important whether it is in pastures or hayfields.

Minimizing Soil Compaction in Pastures

Lawrence D. Hepner Jr., Consulting Agronomist & Soil Scientist, Emeritus Professor of Agronomy & Environmental Science, Delaware Valley University, 3228 Gunhouse Hill Road, South Kortright, NY

Certified Professional Soil Scientist Consulting Soil Scientist and Agronomist specializing in urban, rural and agricultural land uses. Areas of expertise include:

- Detailed Soil Mapping
- Crop Management Plans
- Nutrient Management Plans
- Watershed Management
- Storm Water Management
- Alternate Wastewater Systems including Wetland Treatment Systems
- Rotational Grazing
- Compost

Provide expert testimony on the potential impacts of proposed projects on agricultural production, soils, and land use.

With his wife Diane, they manage their 100 acre farm in the Western Catskills of New York where they raise vegetables, hay, livestock, and timber, and operate a bed and breakfast, in balance with nature. They employ regenerative agricultural practices to improve the health of their soils for healthier food for themselves, their farm animals, and their customers.

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Getting the Most out of Winter Grazing by Forage Species Selection/Management and Grazing Management

All three speakers in this session are members of the Northeast Pasture Consortium with agronomic and/or grazing management expertise. With this much inhouse expertise, we wanted to bring everyone attending, or reading the Proceedings later, up-to-date with their research or experiences on options for providing winter grazing on livestock farms and how to manage grazing to get the best utilization possible as well.



Producer Showcase

Randy Robar, Kiss the Cow Farm, Barnard, VT

Kiss the Cow Farm is owned and run by Randy and Lisa Robar. For the past eight years they have been growing a dynamic, small, diversified farm operation focused on feeding their friends and neighbors delicious food.

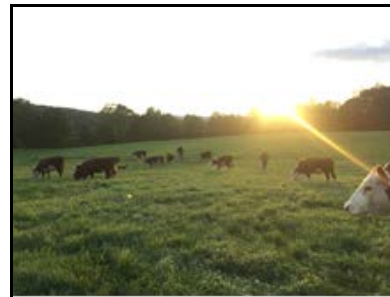


Dairy Cows on Rotational Pasture near Lake Champlain



Randy is the full-time owner-operator. Lisa currently works half-time off the farm, but spends the rest of her days, weekends, and summers farming. They host WWOOFers (Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms people) and apprentices (pictured with the Jersey cows) during the season to help with chores and other work, which allows them to train a new generation of farmers.

Since beginning working on this farm, they have invested in soil improvements through nutrient amendments, intensive grazing, and clipping. They have also added more infrastructure to the farm, including two greenhouses, a poultry processing shed, and additional equipment, such as waterlines, frost-free hydrants, high-tensile and single-strand fencing. They also have a heated milk house, an ever-growing farm store, and a passion for welcoming their neighbors onto their farm.



Lush Pasture at Stonefen Farm

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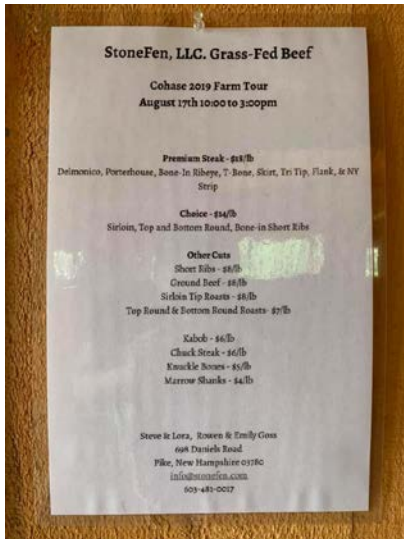
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Lora Goss, Stonefen Farm, Pike, NH



StoneFen Farm has been practicing sustainable and regenerative, rotational grazing for 18 years on their grass-based farm. The Farm has raised beef, dairy and poultry raised on its 30 acres of rich and varied grasses. All their animals are treated in the most humane manner possible and are raised free of hormones and antibiotics. Their animals' health and well-being contribute to the nutritive excellence of all the grass-fed meat they offer for sale.



Reliance Chesapeake Bay States are Placing on Pasture Management Practices for Achieving their TMDL Reduction Goals in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed

Mark Dubin, Chesapeake Bay Agricultural Technical Coordinator, University of Maryland Extension, Department of Environmental Science & Technology, Annapolis, MD



His position with the Chesapeake Bay Program is responsible for the coordination of agricultural implementation, information, modeling and research across a six state area. He also serves as a university staff member of the USDA-NIFA supported Mid-Atlantic Water Program.

Prior to his appointment, he administered multiple agricultural programs for the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, including the Commonwealth's Chesapeake Bay Program. In addition to government service with both Maryland and Pennsylvania, he has experience with the private agri-business sector as well as with the family farm operation. He continues to assist with the family farm as well as manage his own agricultural operation near Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

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2020 Vermont Grazing and Livestock Conference

This event is one of Vermont's largest perennial gatherings of the people who raise animals on pasture, and the service providers that support them. Day One features deep-dive sessions devoted to especially important topics (in recent years ranging from agroforestry and silvopasture to direct marketing, slaughter and butchery, and soil science). Day Two is when keynote speakers present, and we offer a full complement of workshops to address the learning needs of both beginning and experienced farmers. Naturally, we serve grass-based Vermont-grown dairy and meat throughout the event!



Finding the Balance in Times of Change

Jason Rowntree to Keynote on Saturday 18, 2020

Conference registration will go live on December 2nd!

[The event takes place at the family-friendly Lake Morey Resort in Fairlee, VT just off Interstate-91. To make reservations and receive the group rate of \\$105 per night, be sure to mention the Conference when you call 800-423-1211.](#)

Additionally, join more than 350 farmers and agricultural resource providers from six Northeast states at this perennial winter conference for a cross section of the region's livestock industry.

What have some of these attendees liked best about past conferences?

- *The...workshop was very informative and I took a lot of information home with me.*
- *Met a lot of people and the networking was key.*
- *Workshop range and quality*
- *Innovative ideas, spirit of presenters*
- *Loved that our children had their own "conference"*
- *Being with other farmers, hearing their experiences*
- *good speakers, very knowledgeable, the topic has been in demand lately*
- *Great, varied, fresh speakers*
- *Seemed like there was something for everyone at every session*
- *Lunch was excellent and the ice cream was delicious!*



2019 Farm Marketing from the Heart Workshop with Charlotte Smith

UVM Extension helps individuals and communities put research-based knowledge to work. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture. University of Vermont Extension, Vermont. University of Vermont Extension, and

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U.S. Department of Agriculture, cooperating, offer education and employment to everyone without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or familial status.

If you require accessibility accommodations to participate in this program, please call Cheryl Herrick at (802) 656-5459 by December 27, 2019 so we may assist you.

It turns out that heritage breeds of pigs tend to be better adapted to being raised on pasture. In confinement, some would tend to have a too fatty carcass; whereas on pasture, they remain leaner. Keeping trim, they produce lean meat closer to those hog breeds now raised in confinement. As with the large black hog breed described below, it thrives on pasture. The ones pictured are from Valley View Devons.

Other heritage breeds of hogs are the red wattle, berkshires, tamworths, gloucestershire old spots, hampshires, mulefoots (hooves are not cloven), yorkshires, and herefords. These breeds are named after the locale that they originated in or have a distinctive physical feature as the wattles on the red wattle pig's neck or the mulefoot, whose hooves are like a mule's or horse's hoof.

Some of those on the list of being heritage pigs is surprising to me as they were common on farms in the fifties and sixties of the 20th century.

The Endangered Large Black Hog

In my opinion, tops in heritage breeds of pigs. They are native to Cornwall, Somerset, and Devon in England. Because of its docile, friendly nature, the Large Black hog is often referred to as the "dog" among pig breeds. Large, floppy ears which cover their gentle eyes bespeaks their original name of "Lop Eared Black."



Large Black Hog on red and white clover pasture

The Large Black hog is known for its large size and the ability to thrive on pasture and forest foraging. During the late 1800s, the Large Black hog was one of the most popular among English breeds. The Large Black Hog Association was formed in 1898.

It was not until 2015 that the Large Black hog was moved from Critically Endangered to Threatened status by The Livestock Conservancy. The popularity of the Large Black peaked in the 1920s. They had been exported to all European countries and to the United States, Africa, Australia, South America, and New Zealand by this time.

After WWII, small-scale pig breeding was overtaken by industrialization. This meant a sudden, rapid decline in the raising heritage breeds of pigs. The reason for this is because heritage breeds of pigs do not thrive well in confined indoor spaces nor on feed alone so they are unsuitable for the commercial pig farmer.

This led to the Large Black hog's near extinction in the 1960s. Even today, it is one of the rarest "British breeds." It was not until 1973 this breed was put on the Critically Endangered breed list.

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To us, the Large Black hog is perfect for the homesteader raising pigs for their own pork. They work well for those of us who practice pasture management with livestock rotation. The feed bill is small and can be nothing if you have the available pasture and forest.

Characteristics of the Large Black Hog

Their large floppy, black ears cover their eyes but because they are natural foragers, the ears protect the eyes from damage while they root around in the woods. It does hinder their eyesight but does not seem to hinder them. It is believed by some that their hindered eyesight is part of what gives them such a docile nature. They are intelligent, entertaining creatures which can make it easy to forget they are being raised as a food source and not for the fun of it. Granny and Papa taught us a rule growing up which we practice today. “If it is born destined for the table, it does not get a name.”



With a name like “Large Black Hog,” you will not be surprised to know the mature boar can weigh in from 700-800 pounds on average. The sow weighs in around 600-700 pounds on average. As with any creature, being overweight can cause health problems. It is kind of funny when you think about a pig having problems related to being overweight. We use the phrase, “Fat as a pig” because they are known for their size. In

reality, there is a healthy weight for them to develop the best meat and health.

The Large Black hog has remarkable maternal instincts. The sows can whelp and wean large litters successfully. Her piglets have the largest survival rate because of her abilities. Only the Red Wattle and the Gloucester Old Spot pig are her rivals. See picture in adjacent column.

Hogs, by nature, are suspicious and with their ears covering their eyes in this breed, it is a good idea to talk to them and move slowly around them. I would never try to herd them by chasing. They are large and could hurt themselves, their piglets, your dog, or even cause you to be harmed inadvertently.

Even though the Large Black pig remains on the Threatened list, their numbers are on the rise. Because they do so well on pasture and foraging, those producers who have realized the consumer demand for pastured, non-GMO pork, are raising them once again.

From Best Heritage Breeds of Pigs For The Homestead © 2019 The Farmer's Lamp

<https://thefarmerslamp.com/heritage-breeds-of-pigs/>

At our 2018 Northeast Pasture Consortium Conference, we featured Dr. Glen D. Lawrence from Long Island University in a session called *The Saturated versus Unsaturated Dietary Fat Controversy as it relates to Pasture-raised Dairy and Meat Products*. This session was a follow-up to our 2017 Conference’s theme: *From Pasture to Table - Grass Fed Livestock Production of Meat and Milk and Its Preparation - Their Effects on Fatty Acid Composition and Human Health* He presented “Good Fat versus Bad Fat: How Did They Get It So Wrong?” He has written a book about this very subject, and it is now published. It is described on the next page. He is very direct.

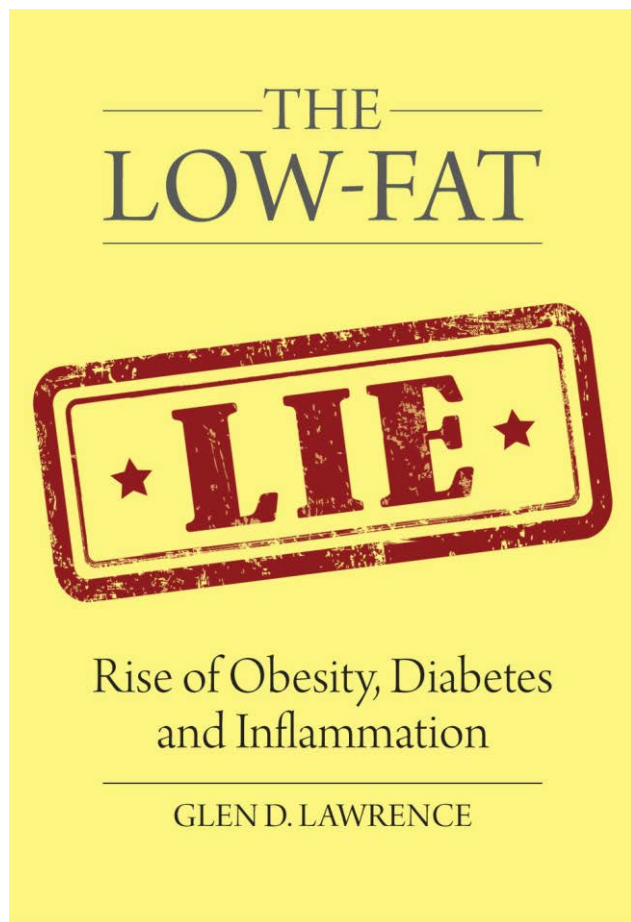


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<http://universal-publishers.com>

The Low-Fat Lie: Rise of Obesity, Diabetes and Inflammation By Glen D. Lawrence

Synopsis

The advice to consume less fat—especially saturated fat—had a profound, adverse impact on public health. Although the percentage of fat in the American diet decreased, the percentage of carbohydrate and total calories increased, and sugar consumption skyrocketed. In *The Low-Fat Lie: Obesity, Diabetes, and Inflammation*, Dr. Glen Lawrence describes how the false condemnation of saturated fat arose from a misunderstanding of how our bodies regulate cholesterol. He explains how replacing saturated fat with vegetable oil stoked the fires of inflam-

mation to cause pain and suffering, in addition to aggravating cancer, diabetes, and heart disease.

Dr. Lawrence points out that a low-fat, high-carbohydrate diet is not as effective as a low-carbohydrate diet for long-term weight loss, yet the low-fat diet mantra continues to resonate from the halls of the agencies doling out dietary advice.

He also describes how sugar consumption produces classic signs of addiction in lab animals, whereas high fat consumption does not. The food and beverage industries take advantage of this phenomenon and use aggressive marketing strategies to get children hooked on sugar at an early age.

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The Low-Fat Lie also discusses

- many ways in which gut microbiota communicate with fat tissue and other organs, including via endocannabinoid signals;
- active components of cannabis in the context of inflammation and pain; and
- how stress can influence eating patterns, while exercise can help relieve stress and suppress or control detrimental eating behaviors.

Dr. Lawrence does not prescribe any specific diet plan. Instead, he aims to enlighten the reader by illustrating the dire consequences of excessively sweetened and highly processed foods.

I love adding a little more fuel to the fire so here are some interesting observations from a recent review in the on-line magazine of Nature Reviews Cardiology <http://www.nature.com/nrcardio> “Dietary fats and cardiometabolic disease: mechanisms and effects on risk factors and outcomes” by Jason H. Y. Wu, Renata Micha and Dariush Mozaffarian. To wit: “Consumption of different major sources of saturated fatty acids (SFAs) has been shown to have contrasting associations with cardiometabolic disease events. For instance, despite having a similar content of total fat, total SFAs and cholesterol, consumption of processed meats is associated with an elevated risk of coronary heart disease (CHD), stroke and diabetes mellitus, *whereas consumption of unprocessed red meats is not significantly associated with the risk of CHD, is weakly associated with the risk of stroke and is associated only modestly with a higher risk of diabetes.*”

Another gem: “Conflicting national and international guidelines on total fat intake. Not unexpectedly, the advances in science on total dietary fat are inconsistently reflected and not fully

accepted across different dietary guidelines.”

Similarly: “These inconsistencies in incorporation of new evidence into guidelines influence government policies, industry product formulations and public perceptions.....In the USA, nearly two-thirds of consumers still report avoiding dietary fat as a way to achieve better health. The food industry also continues to promote low-fat products as being more healthful, even though many such products are highly processed and laden with refined starch, added sugar and salt..... In summary, findings to date suggest no meaningful health benefits, and potential for harms, of low-fat diets in both Western and international regions.”

On the other hand, the reviewers say that existing studies suggest a higher intake of omega-6 and that the omega-6 to omega-3 ratio target currently accepted is most likely too low.

They end their review saying: “Future research must also address major areas of uncertainty and controversies related to dietary fats, which will be critical given the evidence for important effects of fatty acids and their food sources on cardiometabolic health.” Amen.

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The News Update Credo

The Northeast Pasture Consortium News Update is published semi-annually, early fall and winter issues. The goal of these news updates is to keep our Consortium members abreast of the latest research and technology that most impact pasture-based farmers, inform them about the upcoming annual conference, and provide a forum to guide and formulate good policies and best management practices that keep pasture-based farms profitable, efficient, and environmentally sound.