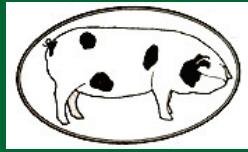


Spot Press



Volume 17 No.3

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Pig Farming In Crisis

The combination of many factors has resulted in the gravest crisis facing pig farming for many years.

The aftermath of the Foot & Mouth outbreak from the Government's laboratories at Pirbright is still affecting a number of farmers. Whilst the draconian restrictions for the rest of the country have been lifted, pig keepers such as Vice-Chairman, Dave Overton, based near Dorking in Surrey, still face severe restraints on their abilities to move stock freely. At the same time, Defra is refusing to compensate anyone except those whose stock was slaughtered. Even there, with one farmer whose stock was subsequently proved to be unaffected, Defra are quibbling about paying recompense for meat condemned and destroyed by them in his farm shop chillers. On our side they ain't!

Then there's the massive increase in feed costs. Cereals, especially wheat, have rocketed in price in response to poor harvests in Europe and north America due to the weather conditions, the drought in Australia and rising demand from countries such as India and China whose populations are suddenly earning wealth from industry and whose lifestyle is changing as a consequence. In reality, cereal prices are only where they should be having been suppressed over the last decade



Free range Old Spots at Liz Best's Gloucestershire farm.

or so but the squeeze is being felt because of the artificially low price paid for meat by the giant retailers and wholesalers.

According to MLC statistics, average prices paid for commercial pigs were actually lower in 2006 at 104.72p per kg d/w than in 1995 when they were 118.0. Comparing 1996 with 2006, the average retail price of loin chops has gone from £5.44/kg to £5.62 and boned & rolled shoulder from £3.86 to £3.87! If you factor in inflation over the decade, the retail price has actually fallen in real terms. With statistics like these, it is easy to see why the Club has been working so hard to protect GOS pork and bacon and to keep it out of the clutches of the supermarkets.

What will be the effects on the GOS herd? Well GOS breeders are largely excluded from the terrors of

the mainstream market but even so, profitability from meat sales is drastically reduced. You cannot keep putting up prices when down the road they're selling 'pork' at the same or lower price levels as they were over a decade ago. Some people will cease keeping pigs and demand for breeding stock will decline. The GOS may slip back into the realms of being a rare breed over the next few years.

What is important for the breed is to maintain the highest standards of quality in order to maintain demand. Pressure on consumers from interest rates, rising taxes, fuel costs, and food cost increases will only make them more careful in their spending plans. Before you undertake a new pig venture or expand numbers, make sure you have a market for the extra stock BEFORE you start. The market is too volatile at the present time to take undue risks.

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BPA Bloodline Survey

The BPA are due to undertake a Bloodline Survey in the next few weeks and it is essential for the good of the breed that everyone responds promptly and in detail. Without one, we cannot know accurately what is happening to individual bloodlines and which may need short-term support to avoid losing valuable genes.

The first stage will be to ask all pedigree keepers to 'kill off' those pigs no longer in the herd for whatever reason. The computer files at BPA are artificially inflated when pigs that are slaughtered are left on the books and a tidying exercise is necessary in order to maintain more accurate records.

Then there will be the survey proper. It is acknowledged that there will be some who feel that the BPA is not helping them but we would urge that the Survey is so important for the benefit of the breed that you complete the returns accurately and promptly.

GOS Take on Tesco—Update

The work at Bristol University has been completed and their detailed report has been received and forwarded to the team at Defra with other information requested by the EU Commission. Defra officials will pull it altogether into the type of format expected in Brussels and we anticipate that it will be sent to the Commission quite shortly. As these are specific responses to queries raised it should not take the Commission long to deal with them but we will be pressing Defra to keep up pressure on Brussels for a speedy solution to all this. As expected the taste tests were positive and we can demonstrate clear areas of difference between GOS and mainstream pork. Once it has done its prime job, there will be opportunities to use the report to promote GOS pork more widely.

New Website - www.oldspots.org.uk

Regular visitors to the website will have noticed some recent additions to the site as part of our plans to gradually regenerate and develop the site.

Most noticeably the sections so far affected are NEWS & INFORMATION, THE BREED and THE CLUB.

NEWS & INFORMATION—This is where we post relevant news to visitors to the site so do check this page regularly! It may be news about Club activities, shows, sales or general alerts about disease outbreaks.

THE BREED—This section has been expanded and when you hover your mouse over the title, you will now find four sub sections to choose from. **HISTORY OF THE BREED** is being rewritten by Andrew Robinson, the Club's Chairman but the existing copy has been enhanced by the addition of some historical photographs. **BREED STANDARDS** is the BPA's Standard of Excellence shown here to help all visitors to the site to be able to select good breeding stock. **GOS MEAT** covers most aspects of the quality meat produced by GOS pigs and the opportunities that arise. It also details the fact

that we are attempting to obtain TSG status in Europe. There are photos included showing GOS meat and meat products in retail situations. **BREED ADVANTAGES** lists and describes the many reasons for keeping GOS pigs and again is illustrated with photos.

THE CLUB describes what the GOSPBC does and the benefits of joining. **MEMBERSHIP** goes into more details and lists the benefits and costs for each category of membership. **MEMBERSHIP FORM** is a downloadable form so that visitors can print off and send a form with a cheque. We are looking at adding a PayPal facility for instant membership. **OUR MEMBERS** is a list by region and alphabetically of those members who have signed the waiver allowing us to publish their details on the site. If you would like to join them, just contact the Secretary asking for a Data Protection form to be sent. **CONTACT DETAILS** is the list of officers and elected Committee members for anyone to get in touch with at any (reasonable) time.

There is still a lot more to do and we are gradually tackling different issues that will be added or expanded over the coming months. The information on the

website until recently dated back to the mid 1990s so it was well overdue for updating.

One thing that the website does is give us the means to transmit information quickly and regular visitors to Forum will have seen daily bulletins on the progress of the recent Foot & Mouth Disease outbreaks and relevant changes in the rules and regulations arising from them. We hope that members who used the facility found it helpful but we would appreciate any comments you may wish to make on how it could be improved from your point of view. It certainly seems to have been popular with over 2800 visits to that one section alone.

MEMBERS WITH WEBSITES

As you may have noticed from the list of members, those who have their own relevant (ie about pigs, not cars or Star Trek!) websites get a free link from oldspots.org.uk As we're trying to build traffic to the site, please do reciprocate by providing a link back to us - www.oldspots.org.uk—on a mutual back-scratching exercise!

Subscriptions Now Due!

According to our records (please TELL US if we're wrong) your current status is shown below. If you have already paid, then there is no further action to be taken. However, if your subscription is outstanding or if you have underpaid, please send your payment (cheque or PO made payable to 'GOSPBC' to GOSPBC, Freepost (GL442), Cirencester, Glos., GL7 5BR) as quickly as possible. Chasing is expensive and time consuming. According to our Constitution, those who have not paid by 31st January 2008, will be struck off the list of members. **Be warned!**

Classification	Membership Category*	Action Required	Sum Paid	Sum Due
Honorary	N/A	NFA	N/A	Nil
Paid by S/O	Family/Overseas/Full/Associate	NFA	£	£
Cheque/PO	Family/Overseas/Full/Associate	Send Payment	Nil	£

There are a few Standing Order payments that we have been unable to identify. If your bank records show that—contrary to the above—a standing order has recently been made in your name, please contact the Secretary immediately with details. Some banks try very hard to disguise the payee's details! If you would like to set up or amend a Standing Order, please ask for a form to be sent.

ARE YOU IN THE CORRECT CATEGORY?

Family Members (F)—Any two or more people residing at the same address. Family Members have 2 votes at General Meetings. Annual Subscription £25

Overseas Members (O)—For all members residing overseas (including the Republic of Ireland). Annual Subscription £25

Full Members (M)—Members keeping GOS pigs and enjoying the benefits associated with that (see below). Annual Subscription £20

Associate Members (A)—Members without pigs who wish to support the aims and work of the Club. Annual Subscription £15

MEMBER BENEFITS (Initials indicate which benefits apply)

- Quarterly colour newsletter, **Spot Press**, featuring news, articles, advice etc. Also free classified advertising of pigs or relevant equipment or services. **(F, O, M, A)**
- Participation in Club competitions – GOS Pig of the Year; Southern Championships; Northern Championships. The Club also organises the BPA's Champion of Champions competition and supplies qualifying rosettes and rosettes and a sash for the winner. **(F, M)**
- Championship rosettes are provided to smaller shows to encourage participation by breeders. **(F, M)**
- Discounted entries for the GOSPBC Show & Sale **(F, M)** [The GOSPBC is the only Breeders' Club to organise a breed-specific S&S]
- Discounted booking fees for participation in GOSPBC workshops **(F, O, M, A)**
- Public Liability Insurance cover (£2m) while exhibiting pigs at shows in the UK **(F, M)** [This can save members up to £200 a year]
- The Club advertises in various journals encouraging enquiries from potential purchasers. It also encourages media coverage to help to promote the breed. **(F, M)**
- The Club publishes two leaflets (one about the breed; one covering Cyclic Breeding) available to breeders on request. **(F, O, M, A)**
- Club officials will offer advice on GOS-related matters on request. The Forum on the Club website is established to provide free discussion and advertising. **(F, O, M, A)**. Members with registered pigs can be listed on the website **(F, M, O)**
- The Club undertakes various activities to promote and protect the GOS breed for the benefit of all members. Such activities include the application for TSG status for GOS pork & bacon, liaison with bodies such as BPA, RBST, Defra etc., work with Deerpark AI Centre to ensure GOS AI available, dissemination of news of concern to breeders such as Foot & Mouth Disease etc., etc.

Care of Your Litter by Andrew Robinson

Hopefully your sow/gilt will have farrowed successfully and produced a good litter of strong, viable piglets. Now comes the easy bit.

The first days

Once your sow has farrowed quietly leave her to feed her litter. I have always used a heat lamp, if only to help encourage the piglets away from their mother. Make sure clean water is always available and give a very small feed. It takes approximately three gallons of water to produce a gallon of milk. The first three or four days are most important for the sow as her metabolism changes from a "dry" sow to one which must provide for her litter. Give small feeds and make sure her body is working OK (bladder and not constipated). Bran with her meal/nuts is always useful.

Should you have a large litter it might be worth considering clipping the piglets' teeth to prevent damage to the sow's udder. I have not done this with pure GOS but did do white crossbred litters which always seemed more aggressive.

By three/four days the piglets will be growing away so an injection of iron will help combat anaemia. There is an oral dose available which many prefer or an alternative would be to put a sod of fresh turf in the creep each day. Hopefully the sow will be milking well; her feed can now be gradually increased by 1lb a day. Assume a maintenance allowance of 3lb for the sow plus 1lb per piglet. At approx 14days I give an injection of Ivomec which will clear any mange/lice etc. and will be passed on to the piglets and should hopefully give them immunity until they are finished pigs. At three weeks introduce a small amount of a good quality creep feed which can be increased gradually up to weaning. Make sure the creep is eaten up or replaced with fresh each day. Stale feed encourages many vices - (digestive problems, flies etc.)



Three gallons of water = 1 gallon of milk. Photo by Mrs Evans



Tattooing

Obviously tattooing is the first requirement when maintaining a pedigree herd. As number sizes can vary, you will need to gauge the best age to tattoo so that the ear numbers are as large as possible and clearly legible. I am fortunate to have a set of old [80+yrs] pliers and very large numbers so don't tattoo till 5/6 weeks. With smaller numbers you would have to do this much earlier. Try to tattoo in the middle of the ear. Having tried many brands of tattooing paste/ink, I have found Ketchum Permanent Black Marking Ink gives the best results.

Weaning

Weaning is usually at about six to eight weeks for pure GOS, though a crossbred litter should be ready a fortnight earlier. Take the sow from her piglets and leave them in their pen for a few days to adjust, being careful to not over-feed as post weaning stress can easily cause scours.

Hopefully after five days your sow will be in season and the cycle starts again.

A detailed article on tattooing techniques appeared in the Spring 2007 edition of **Spot Press**. Photo by Marlene Renshaw.



Soon your piglets will be able to join the rest of the herd. Photo by Gabriel Dudley.



Take the sow from her piglets and leave them in their pen for a few days to adjust. Photo by Richard Lutwyche

The Early Development of the Gloucestershire Old Spots

Looking at the history of the Gloucestershire Old Spots breed, there follows the text of an article entitled 'Foundation and short history of the breed' which appeared in a small booklet published by the G.O.S. Pig Society in 1945.

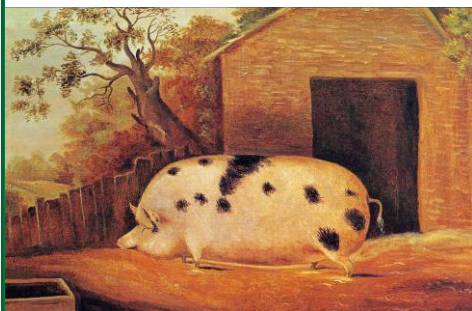
Little is known of the origin of any breed of pig, but there appear to have been native to England two principle domestic types. There was a small dark breed with pricked ears generally resembling the wild boar in form and a long-bodied and a long-eared animal mostly white or spotted. The former was chiefly found in Scotland and the North of England: the latter in the plains and Midland counties where the hog has longer been domesticated. As recently as 1837 the Royal Agricultural Society's prize schedule contained classes for two varieties only - namely, large and small - with no distinction as to colour. Local tradition tells us little about the types of pigs kept in different districts and it may be in the future the geneticist will throw some light on the origin of breeds by discovering the mechanism whereby various types are evolved. For the moment we must content ourselves with pictures and prints and such scanty information as earlier artists and writers have passed on.

There is evidence that in Gloucestershire there had long existed the large, gaunt breed of pig which before the nineteenth century had been predominant in the more fertile parts of England. When livestock improvement began to take place the unprofitable nature of these animals must have suggested them as fit subjects on which to start. It seems likely that the improved stock that was introduced in this instance was the Berkshire. The Berkshire breed in those days was a spotted pig remarkably similar to the G.O.S. in form, and more early maturing than the average local strains. If it is objected that the modern Gloucester Old Spot bears no resemblance to the modern Berkshire pig, one has only to recall the dissimilarity between the Suffolk sheep and the modern South Down, yet both these breeds derive their existence from a common origin of stock improvement. It would seem that the new improved breed was introduced on to those gaunt spotted pigs that were natives of Gloucestershire at the end of the eighteenth century and that spotted markings were retained as a concession to local tradition, or because the character was generally prepotent.



The unimproved Berkshire painted by J Shiels c. 1840 for Low's book 'On Domesticated Animals'.

In the early period of livestock improvement breed points can have been little more than local disciplines being perhaps an outward and visible sign of consistent breeding. What in the first instance has improved breeds has been the development of higher farming practices. The conscious attitude of the fancier, or later the geneticist, must always have been subsequent, in the case of farm animals, to the first stimulus to keep pace with an improved plane of nutrition. It is, therefore, necessary to consider the system of agriculture practised in that part of Britain known as the Berkeley Vale and extending from the neighbourhood of Gloucester along the estuary of the Severn down to a corner of Wiltshire and North Somerset on the lower reaches of the River Avon. In this fertile plain running up to the limestone spurs of the Cotswolds was made the single and double Gloucester cheese, with its obvious by-product of whey. It is also a fruit and cider country where a secondary line of profit lay in the orchards and small paddocks that surrounded the villages. It has been said that the rightful place of the pig is as a scavenger and that except on the surpluses of fully developed agricultural systems successful bacon industries have never been established. It is on this system at any rate that a spotted breed of pig flourished as part of the national economy of this favoured district, much in the same way as the Romney Marsh sheep fulfils a similar purpose to this day in the orchards of Kent. In the Severnside orchards were found the matrons of the improved Gloucester breed, while we are told the males of the species usually stood at service either in the village inn or blacksmith's shop. Charfield Market, which is the centre of this district, was renowned as the home of the breed and there a spotted pig would always command a premium of one or two shillings a head over any other breed of equal size or weight.



GOS pig by J Miles, 1834, an oil painting owned by Gloucester City Museums.

If then the old Spotted Pig of Gloucestershire was an indigenous breed, it may be wondered why it has a modern Breed Society. Actually, mid-Gloucester agriculturalists had mooted the idea of establishing a herd book for the breed in the last century, but it was not until November 1st, 1913, that a meeting held at Bristol set the project in train. The threat of war always turns men's thoughts to the state of agriculture. That is natural, but it seems, too, some psychological factor that compensates for the enforced disintegration of life and property by an impulse to achieve greater perfection in domestic livestock. At any rate, livestock improvement always becomes an urgent matter. In 1913 the Board of Agriculture, financed by the Agricultural Commissioners, announced a livestock development scheme of which the licensing of boars was to be a part. This caused some consternation in the Berkeley Vale, which had to face up to the fact that its native breed would be exterminated by official decree. It happened that the Livestock Officer for the Province of Bristol at that time was Mr William Nixon, since better known to his generation, as a shrewd judge of Dairy Shorthorn cattle. He had made it clear to certain

The Early Development of the Gloucestershire Old Spots (cont)

farmers on the Bristol Corn Exchange that he would only be able to grant boar licences to recognised breeds and pointed out that it would be a pity to exterminate the local breed of spotted pig. The only solution he could offer was that breeders should form themselves into a Breed Society.

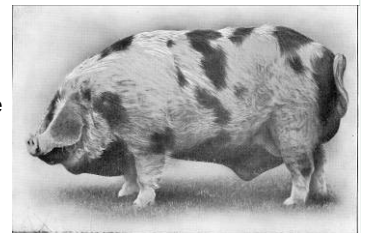


'The First Selection' from Vol I of the Herd Book.
L-R Harry Nichols of Kingscote, James Peter
(Chairman) of Berkeley and W Nixon, Livestock
Officer for the Province of Bristol inspecting a pig
bred on Berkeley Vale.

When the meeting was duly held it is interesting that among those who had the faith to deposit an initial £5 was none other than the Board's Livestock Officer himself. The meeting subscribed £100 in all to have the Gloucestershire Old Spots Pig Society duly registered and claimed among its first life members no less than ten of the resident nobility in Gloucestershire. The first President of the Society was Mr Sidney Humphries of Bristol; the Vice-President was Major Algar Howard of Thornbury, now Sir Algar Howard and still a supporter of the breed. The first Chairman was Mr James Peter of Berkeley, who incidentally was the founder of the first Young Farmer's Club in this country, and the Honorary Secretary, Mr Eldred Walker, whose indefatigable work for the breed is world-wide and who, at the age of eighty is still a member of the Council.

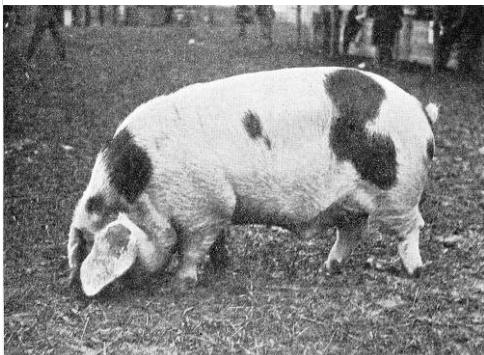
Busy days followed the Bristol meeting in 1913. Motoring was not as foolproof as it is today and many vicissitudes attended the first Selection Committee among the steep limestone hills and in the muddy Severn lanes. It was always the same story: climbing over walls or through orchards to find "the old pig". After three thousand miles of travel, two thousand pigs were inspected and three hundred were selected for entry in Volume 1 of the Herd Book. How good were the early specimens of the breed and how little the present type has departed from it in essentials may be seen from the picture of The First Selection.

It was perhaps unfortunate that so much enthusiasm surrounded the formal establishment of the new breed. Publicity spread outside local circles and the new-old pig was hailed nationally as of vital consequence to the future of the British bacon industry. There was a reason for this. At every stage of improvement in the pig there has been a fear that existing types would become over-refined at the expense of the more substantial virtues. This fear applies to all forms of livestock and it is usually justified. Even after the French Wars, in his *British Livestock*, Lowe had written: "While we should improve the larger breeds that are left us by every means in our power, we ought to take care that we do not sacrifice them altogether. We should remember that an ample supply of pork is of immense importance to the support of the inhabitants of this country. England may one day have cause to regret that this over-refinement has been practised and future improvers vainly exert themselves to recover those fine old races which the present breeders seem aiming to efface". Such an argument was particularly cogent during the period up to the Great War of 1914, when so much emphasis has been placed by breeders on producing pigs virtually of a lard type.



Winterbourne Blanco—1st & Breed
Champion RASE 1920. Owned by
Robert S Brassey

The Gloucester Old Spots came into the wider agricultural world as a true native that has not been spoiled by too much selection. The breed was docile, and a good breeder, with a large proportion of lean meat. It was a period when lean, streaky bacon was first becoming popular and seemed a far sharper revolution in public taste than it did even in a later period when Danish imports had been more fully developed. Suffice it to say that so great was the reception given to the new breed that an order was received from the late Kaiser to forward a pig to the Imperial Farms and only the outbreak of war prevented its execution and left the Society in possession of enemy gold.



Nashes Premier 2nd—first prize Oxford Show and
1st Essex Show 1924 for Mr Jim Sherriff of St
Albans.

At the end of the last war the Gloucestershire Old Spots was the most talked of pig in Britain. A boom set in and very big prices up to six hundred guineas were paid for specimens of the breed. The Society did everything possible to check this inflation of prices as they saw that a reaction would cause damage. Fancy prices for livestock always slump and the breed for a period always wanted in popularity, but good work had been done - the skin of the old Severnside pig had been thinned, the bone reduced, corners worked off, and a new national bacon pig had been produced. The record of the breed in the national showyards during the twenties and early thirties is sufficient evidence of its supremacy. For three years in succession following 1925 the breed secured not only the prizes, but all the challenge cups given at the London Dairy Show for bacon. These included the "Harris", "Whitley", and the "Beale" Cups - an achievement never equalled by any other breed. In the Fatstock Shows over the same

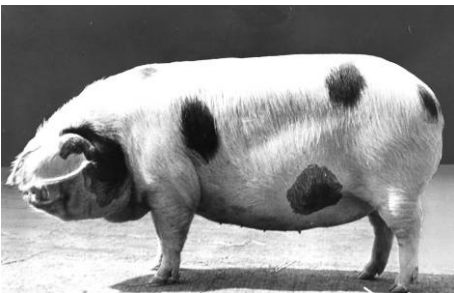
The Early Development of the Gloucestershire Old Spots (cont)



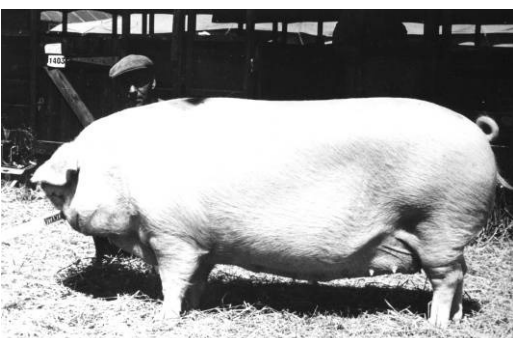
Jim Sherriff's Nashes Duke & Duchess took 1st & Champion prizes at Birmingham Fastock and Smithfield shows in 1926.

been outstanding having regard to the difficult conditions under which pig breeders have laboured since the war. The show and sale has been an opportunity for local breeders to make those comparisons which are essential to livestock improvement and which are our agricultural shows before the war were making less possible owing to the expenses involved. The ultimate strength of any breed society is the interest and enthusiasm of the small breeder.

The Gloucestershire Old Spot pig has been exported and found to have done well in Central Europe, also in Italy, Africa and Australia. Some litters of this breed are said to have been features [sic] in the production of the Spot Poland-China breed in the United States, American buyers having been attracted by the local breed when purchasing Dairy Shorthorn cattle in the Berkeley Vale. There seem little doubt that wherever farming practices develop overseas, involving the use of the pig, there will be some place where this ancient British breed will continue to play a part.



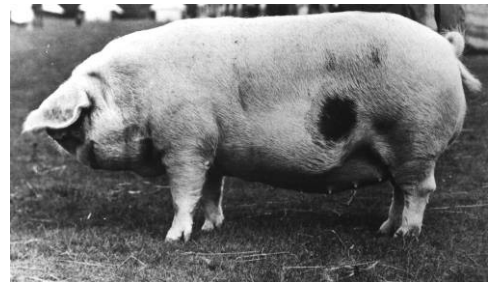
Frampton Rose Marie 3 was Champion at the GOS Show & Sale at Bristol in 1952 for Vic Withers. This pig is the model for the Club's logo.



period, the Gloucestershire Old Spot first cross also took numerous first prizes at Smithfield, Birmingham and other provincial shows. On one occasion at the Wellington, Shropshire, Christmas Show, in addition to the bacon prizes it also took first for cutters and first for pork. If the entries at the summer showyards declined during the depression of the thirties, first crosses continued to win carcase competitions right up to the outbreak of the present war.

At the Centenary Royal Show at Windsor in 1939 as a result of a special appeal, breeders again made up a good entry, although few of the exhibits arrived owing to Foot-and-Mouth Disease in Gloucestershire. In 1942 the Society was re-organised following the loss of all its records by fire in the air raids on Bristol and since September of that year two shows and sales have been held annually in conjunction with Messrs Bruton Knowles at Gloucester market. The entries have

increased in number and the quality of the pigs shown has



By 1936, the spots had been reduced and the modern breed was evolving as seen here in Nashes Duchess 57 1st & Champion at the RASE show at Bristol in 1936.



Fifty years ago at the 1957 Berkeley Hunt Show (Glos) and spottiness has been reduced to modern levels. Gordon Cullimore (Walgaston herd) is on the far right. The judge is Joy Ham, daughter of Vic Withers and she is talking to Bart Shield (cap and white coat) whilst Percy Barton (trilby hat) is on her right.

Cyril Painter's Poundbury Muriel 8 bred by F S Tuck in 1957 was a very successful show animal in her time. To some, she represents the epitome of the GOS breed. Note the almost total lack of visible spots.

Farrowing Advice by Bill Howse

Care of the Sow Immediately Before and After Farrowing

Outdoors

First of all make sure your farrowing ark is big enough for your sow, in height as well as length and breadth. It needs creep rails inside so that piglets can escape from the sow as she rolls over. It's a good idea too to have a fender outside so that they can't!



Photo by Lindy Howlett

Make sure the sow is kept up to date with any vaccinations and wormers as per the manufacturer's instructions. If possible move the ark to fresh ground about a week before the sow is due and put plenty of fresh straw in. In winter hang a sack over the doorway to keep out draughts.

Give her plenty of titbits – apples, bran, grass. Not only to keep her gut working but to reinforce to her that you are her friend. No matter how friendly your sow is, be prepared for her to be very protective of her piglets. Do not trust her! Take a pig board into the ark with you and if she seems at all aggressive, leave her be.

Before she starts farrowing she will make a nest. Pigs outside are usually best left to get on with it. Keep an eye on her from a distance.

About 12 hours after she has farrowed give her a half feed. Warm water in winter is always welcome. If you put her feed trough away from the ark you can check the piglets while she is feeding. Count them and remove any dead piglets and the afterbirth.

Indoors

Again, make sure the sow is up to date with vaccinations and wormer.

Scrub out the pen and disinfect all the rails etc. Make sure the sow trough is high enough so that piglets can't climb in and get stuck. If the sow is used to being outside make sure the door is strong! She won't like being shut in. Put the sow into the pen about a week before she is due to farrow. Again, titbits are welcome as is a little gentle daily exercise. Three days before her due date place the infra-red lamp where the sow can't reach it.

With 24 hours to go give her lots of fresh straw and she will make a nest. As in the outdoor scenario be aware of the sows changing moods and don't trust her.

If you are there with her as the first piglet is born clean its nose and put it on to suckle. When she's finished the after birth will come away. Leave her alone for about 12 hours. Let her stretch her legs and give her a half feed. While she's out you can clean the pen and remove any dead piglets and the afterbirth.



A sow and litter in a farrowing pen at George Styles' Bewdley farm.

At 2 days old the piglets need a dose of iron. This comes in the form of paste on the tongue or an injection. Follow the manufacturer's instructions. Alternatively, throw a sod of earth into the pen (cut from clean, pig-free ground). The piglets will play with it and ingest iron and other minerals.

Increase the sow's food gradually depending on the size of the litter.

This article was first published in Tamworth Trumpet

IN SEARCH OF PERFECTION by Charles Campion

There is always that moment at a drinks party when someone finds out that you write about food and restaurants for a living, "So", they invariably begin, "What is your favourite meal?" I suppose that should not lead to instant grumpiness, after all at parties across the land anyone owning up to being a Doctor gets a full rundown of constipation symptoms; lawyers get tapped for free advice on dealing with noxious neighbours; and mechanics get an impromptu performance of the strange noises made when the car fails to start. But the job title of food writer seems to inspire jealousy and nervousness in equal parts, the prevailing view is that food writers only ever eat 3 star Michelin food and if invited to dinner would scorn anything less than five courses. Nothing could be further from the truth. Granted foodies may be a tad obsessive, and granted we can also be excessive, but we should be cherished - apart from farmers we are the only folk who are genuinely interested in where our food comes from.



One of my particular fixations is the search for the perfect bacon sandwich, a quest that is shared by a surprisingly large number of famous chefs - if you have spent hours rustling up forty portions of *Quenelles de brochet, écrevisses et sauce Nantua* (a strength-sapping task that involves pushing several kilos of flaked pike through a hair sieve) the simple glory of a decent bacon sandwich appeals greatly.

Here are my thoughts on the perfect bacon sandwich. A great sandwich starts with a great pig, and a great pig has a particular combination of fat and lean, somewhere along the line in this healthy eating world we seem to have forgotten that the flavour of meat is carried in the fat. In Wales there seems to be a trend towards "wild boar" bacon this sells at a gratifying premium price but it is more of a marketing ploy than anything else because out of four grandparents three are Duroc and one is wild boar. But what the success of this "wild boar" bacon is exposing is the consumer's yearning for bacon with real flavour, a trend that all the older traditional pig breeds should be exploiting.



Smoked GOS streaky bacon on display at A Johnson & Son, TBMM Accredited Butchers of Yoxall near Lichfield, Staffs.

I am very lucky to have a very good local butcher, (Levett & Hill in Droitwich, since you're asking), and they are lucky in that they buy from a small bacon curer in the Black Country who doesn't seem to have changed his methods since the war - the First World War that is! Imagine that you were inspecting a side of their smoked streaky: for a start it is 6 or 7 cms thick and about 35 to 45 cms wide, this came from a large and heavy pig. It is also (when judged by foolish modern standards) very fat: about 60% of each rasher being smooth white fat. When you grill it - or better still put it on a trivet in a roasting tin and give it twenty minutes in the top oven of the AGA - you end up with a very dry and very crisp shard of bacon that packs an epic flavour punch. Which is why for me the perfect bacon sandwich is always made with smoked streaky, back bacon is altogether too meaty and chewy. As in all matters of gastronomy with bacon sandwiches perfection lies in the details, so having secured the perfect cooked rasher it needs to be teamed with doughy white bread - a bloomer or sandwich loaf, cut by hand, each slice about 2 cm thick. Smarter, more fashionable crusty loaves, brown bread and sourdough all have their place but

it is not in bacon sandwiches. You also need good unsalted butter - not too much, just enough to melt into the bread and lubricate each mouthful. As to sauce, brown sauce is unacceptable - the devil's own mix of vinegar and sludge. A small amount of tomato sauce is the only permissible optional extra, the sugary sweetness acting as a pleasing contrast to the salty bacon. To drink? Tea, strong and brown. Whatever would the Michelin inspectors make of that.....?

Charles Campion writes about food and restaurants for the *London Evening Standard*, he also judges on the *Masterchef* and *Celebrity Masterchef* programmes. His most recent books are *Food from Fire*, the real barbecue book - published by Mitchell Beazley and *The London Restaurant Guide* - published by Profile. His blog may be found at <http://campion.thisislondon.co.uk>, This article was first published in *Tamworth Trumpet*

Pig Health

Swine Mange

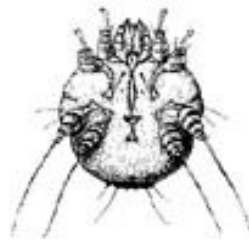
(Reproduced from the internet)

Jeremy Powell, DVM Extension Veterinarian /Steven Jones Extension Horse Specialist

Introduction

Two types of mange mites affect swine. *Sarcoptes scabiei* var. *suis* is the most common cause of mange in domestic and wild swine. It was first reported in 1857, and today there is worldwide distribution of this external parasite. Mange leads to an extensive loss in performance and productivity. Economical impact estimates are in the hundreds of millions of dollars for the swine industry worldwide. In the United States, sarcoptic mange is a prevalent problem. Swine can also be affected by *Demodex phylloides*, but these infestations are much less common.

Figure 1



Sarcoptic mites are barely visible to the naked eye (Figure 1). The mite appears as a tiny white speck against a dark background. Generally, a microscope is used to aid in the diagnosis of this condition.

Transmission

Mites are primarily spread through direct animal contact. Different species of mites affect a variety of livestock hosts. Each of these is host specific. Therefore, swine mange mites can only affect pigs and cannot survive on man, other livestock or pets. Mange mites can live off the host only a day or two because they are susceptible to environmental conditions. Moderate ambient temperatures and high humidity (normal swine facility conditions) may lengthen their survival time off the host.

Life Cycle

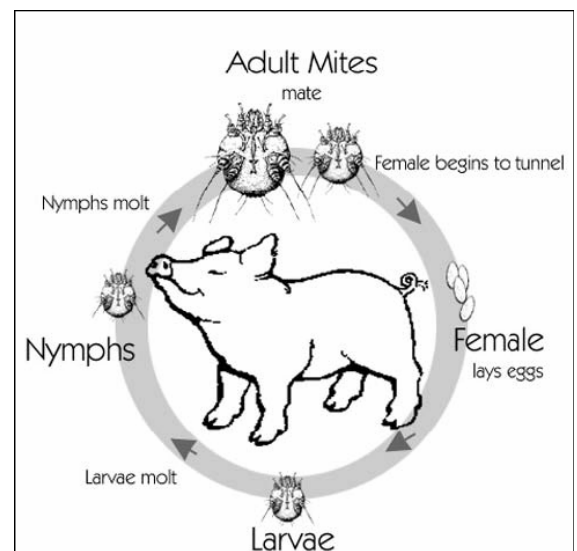
The life cycle of the mite takes approximately 10 to 14 days to complete (Figure 2). An adult male and female will mate on the surface of the skin. Then, the female mites burrow into the outer layer of skin using mechanical destruction and salivary secretions. Females lay eggs in the skin tunnels at a rate of 1 to 3 eggs a day. In approximately 5 days, the eggs hatch in the tunnels. After developing through a larval and two nymphal stages, the mites will reach adulthood in 6 to 9 days. The adult females can live up to 30 days. **Figure 2**

Clinical Signs

The “tunneling” action of the mites leads to severe skin irritation. Pigs can respond to a mite infestation one of two ways – the hypersensitive form or the hyperkeratotic (chronic) form.

The hyperkeratotic form may be found in animals 6 months of age and older and is much less common than the hypersensitive form. Common findings include thickened, rough, encrusted, raised skin lesions that are dull gray or brown in appearance. These lesions may be found on the ears, head, neck, shoulder or legs. Mites are usually present in very large numbers in these areas.

The hypersensitive response is typically seen in young, growing animals. It leads to very intense itchiness, dermatitis and raised, red papules on the rump, abdomen, flank, head and ears. If left untreated, these signs can last up to 18 weeks after the initial infestation. These animals will rub and scratch the irritated skin resulting in hair loss, abrasion, restlessness and decreased performance.



Pig Health (cont)

Regardless of the form of mange, mites can be diagnosed by scraping the periphery of the affected area and viewing the scrapings under oil immersion through a microscope. Pigs affected with the hyperkeratotic form may only show mild itchiness. These animals can act as carriers to expose other susceptible hosts.

Treatment and Control



Several products for treatment are currently on the market. Topical sprays can be used to kill adults, nymphs and larvae. Eggs are resistant to sprays, so two to three applications may be needed according to label instructions to effectively treat infested animals. The spray-on products include permethrin (Ectiban®), amitraz (Taktic®), fenvalerate (Ectrin®) and phosmet (Prolate®). It is important to completely cover the animals with spray-on products in order to prevent inadequate treatments. Injectable products can also be used to effectively treat mange in swine. The injectable products include ivermectin (Ivomec®) and doramectin (Dectomax®). The label recommended dosage for these products will kill 100 percent of adult mites and immature forms. Because eggs will not be killed, a second dose might be necessary in two weeks to effectively eliminate mange. When administering any of the above products, one should follow manufacturer's instructions closely, and remember to pay attention to withdrawal periods.

In a recent research trial that was conducted at the University of Arkansas, doramectin (Dectomax®) demonstrated adequate effectiveness against *Sarcoptes scabiei* var. *suis*.¹ Twenty-two pigs that had naturally occurring mange mite infestations were used in the trial. During the study, doramectin was administered to the infested pigs at 300 micrograms per kilogram of body weight. After treatment, all pigs proved negative for mites in the 7- to 28-day post-treatment period.

Some animals may develop a secondary bacterial skin infection when affected by mange. These animals can be treated using antibiotic and anti-inflammatory therapy. Older animals that are chronically infested with mange should be culled from the herd to eliminate any source of mange mites. The information given herein is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names is made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by the Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service is implied.

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Memories of Summers Past or Lessons in Disguise

This sunbathing sow wearing factor 347 is one of the photos on the website Gallery page donated by members.

WE NEED YOUR PHOTOS...

In order to help maintain a photo library for **Spot Press**, the website and other publications, we need your photos please. On farm, witty, illustrating management techniques such as feeding, mating, inoculating, farrowing etc., if fact anything you have. So please e-mail digital images to mail@oldspots.org.uk or post prints, negatives, slides etc to GOSPBC, Freepost (GL442), Cirencester, Glos, GL7 5BR. We will scan and return them to you.

Members' News

First in Caithness



A LITTER of three rare Gloucestershire Old Spot piglets have become the first to be registered in Caithness with the British Pig Association. The pigs were born recently at the croft in Quintfall, Lyth, belonging to Paul Barrett. Last year, Paul purchased a Gloucestershire sow from the famous "Josephine" bloodline and a boar from the renowned "Rufus" bloodline. Two of the female pig-

lets have already been purchased by a breeder south of Inverness because of their rarity. Although listed as a rare breed, Gloucestershire Old Spots have enjoyed an upturn in numbers in recent years as more people have discovered just how easily a couple of pure-bred Gloucesters can be reared to produce pork with far superior eating qualities. Paul Barrett's croft also consists of a further

three Gloucestershire Old Spot sows and a Jersey cow with a Belgian Blue cross bull calf. ■ Our picture shows

Paul and his children, (from left) seven-year-old Nadine, Jay (5), Zak (3) and Angel (10), admiring the piglets.

Paul Barrett and his family recently moved from Essex up to the far north of mainland Scotland and when he came to birth notify his first litter, the BPA informed him that his was the first GOS litter born in Caithness. His foundation stock of three gilts came from Dave Overton in Surrey and his boar from Julian Newth in Somerset.



Matt Cockin with some of his own pigs on his small holding near Wisbech. Log onto www.homebutcheryservice.com to find out more.

Home Butchery Service

Matt Cockin has recently launched a new service offering butchery of pigs, goats, sheep and poultry on your own premises within a 50 mile radius of Wisbech, Cambs. Here in his own words is how he got to offering this unique service.

'After 20 very enjoyable years in the RAF, I finally realised a long held dream of owning a smallholding. I'd been a GOSPBC member for some years and when an option to leave the Service presented itself in 2005, I jumped at the chance to start a new, less nomadic lifestyle (11 addresses in 16 years!). In my last year of Service, I undertook a NVQ day release college course in 'Meat Processing' from the Smithfield Unit, Waltham Forest College, Enfield, North London, and once I 'retired', the family and I set up home in North Cambs.



In continued my butchery by working part-time in a long-established, high quality, family-run butchers. Through local contacts, I met many a smallholder interested in my fledgling butchery skills. Over the next months of preparing my own home animals, I began to think that there may be a demand for small, unique mobile butchery service where I



Have cleaver will travel.

prepare home-owned, legally killed carcasses for small-holders at their premises. I contacted the local trading standards and the FSA to check on the legality of such a service. Both bodies were very supportive and green lights were given. Now 6 months on, the Home Butchery Service is finally up and running and the web site has provoked a lot of interest www.homebutcheryservice.com

The rest of my time is spent adjusting to civilian life, my pigs, chickens and sheep avoiding the attentions of my wife's and daughter's mad ponies, chasing my dog, apologising to neighbours for my dog, house husbandry and taxing my children around Cambridgeshire and Norfolk. In my spare time I attempt karate and coach rugby.'

Members' Advertisements

FOR SALE

12 month old Sambo boar for sale—can be registered if required.

Steve Milner, Halifax, West Yorks.

01422 240303 lindamilner8@aol.com

Regular supply of weaners available—11 ready at end Nov Ellen x Sambo

Sharon Barnfield, Ross-on-Wye, Herefs.

01989 750079

sharonbarnfield@ukfarmers.com

Show winning Patrick boar for sale - just over 3 years old and a lovely lad.

01527 68520 and ask for Jack—Redditch, Worcs.

Three Patrick boars for sale born 27/6/07, birth notified so can be registered.

Bruce Carman, Stoney Stanton, Leics.,

01455 285525 or 07747 026759
bruce@sopersbridgefarm.co.uk

Patrick boar 3 years old—excellent temperament and prolific sire. Only £100.

Alex Oxspring, Pershore, Worcs.,

07947 716594

aloxspring@hotmail.com

FOR SALE

Four lovely gilts—too good to slaughter born 6/3/07 by Patrick out of Princess—birth notified.

Pat Stancomb, Arundel, West Sussex

01243 582774

13 week old weaners birth notified, sire: Foston Sambo 35, dam: Burfords Dolly

Janie Clifford, Frampton-on-Severn, Glos.

01452 740268

Foston Rufus 38 (R003532) born 8/9/06 by Foston Gerald 24 out of Foston Ellen 84. 100% quiet and a good worker.

Maggie Wilson, Swadlincote, Sth Derbys.

01283 761366 / 07709 604297

2 Dolly gilts 8 months old looking for lovely new home.

Liz Best, Tetbury, Glos.

01666 890220 / 07776 037359
lizbest10@hotmail.com

Patrick boar & 2 Princess Joan sows plus weaners—weaners are now 18 weeks. Lovely adult Patrick boar 3 years old and 2 lovely Princess Joan sows all with fantastic temperament. Will split but all have to be sold.

Richard Cook, Hereford

07774 253717 cookyard@yahoo.co.uk

FOR SALE

Two In-Pig Dolly Gilts due 3rd and 30th December in pig to Winterwood Gerald.

Helen Lightfoot, Hartpury, Glos.

01452 700510
helen.lightfoot@tiscali.co.uk

10 month old boar for sale—excellent temperament. Not registered but registration is possible. Sire Exfold Gerald 58

Andrea Stephenson, Blackburn, Lancs.

07974 323916

Birth notified weaners for sale—healthy, wormed and ready to go. Delivery possible—visitors welcome.

Julie Dronfield, Camelford, Cornwall

01840 250261 gospigs@yahoo.co.uk

Very nice Josephine sow expecting her 3rd litter in early December. Fully registered.

Charles Adcock, Grantham, Lincs.

07974 193767 / 01476 585160 (eve)

Registered Gerald Boar born January 07, free range—lives outside. Out of a Princess sow. Shown this year, good natured and placid.

John Simpson, Scarborough, North Yorks.

01723 859749



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Gloucestershire Old Spots Pig Breeders' Club

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E-mail: mail@oldspots.org.uk

We're on the web—
www.oldspots.org.uk

GOSPBC Fighting Fund

In our effort to maintain the integrity of genuine pork from pedigree Gloucestershire Old Spots, we are undertaking considerable work to protect the real thing for the benefit of breeders everywhere. In response to this appeal please send any donation to GOSPBC c/o Mr S Booth, Broadoak Farm, Chapel Lane, Warburton, Lymm, Cheshire, WA13 9TY.

All donors will be acknowledged in
SPOT PRESS.

SPOT PRESS

The Winter edition will be published in January/February and we invite contributions and suggestions as to what you would like to be included.

Edited by Richard Lutwyche

We thank those contributors listed within these pages.

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The Gloucestershire Old Spots Pig Breeders' Club (GOSPBC) was established in 1990 to promote the qualities and values of the Orchard Pig, then a very rare breed. Now with over 350 members and more pedigree GOS being registered than almost any other breed, the Club and its members are now more important than ever.

What do you get from membership of the Club?

You receive quarterly, a copy of the newsletter, **Spot Press**, in full colour. You may advertise therein and on the website www.oldspots.org.uk free of charge. The website also supports a Forum for raising queries and points of view. If you wish to show pigs, you have £2m public liability insurance just by being a member. You can compete in the various club competitions. You can attend workshops and other events organized by the Club and enjoy discounted entries for the Show & Sale.

Help us to keep the GOS as the leading breed of the 21st century. Encourage everyone with an interest in the breed (especially those who buy pigs from you) to join the Club which can be done via the website or by requesting forms from the Secretary.

As you can see from this edition, the Club is very proactive in working tirelessly on behalf of the breed and all Club members.

Boars at AI

The following boars are standing at Deerpark AI Centre and semen is available to order by phoning 028 7938 6287. To check the pedigrees, go to the online herdbook at www.britishpigs.org.uk and type in the registered number for each and then select 'Pedigree'

R001153GS Alsa Gerald 451

R001685GS Greenan Rufus 4

SSG/80 Whinneyhill Sambo 3

The GOS Centenary in 2013

We were overwhelmed with responses to our last plea for ideas and material to help make 2013 more memorable than 2012. So much so we are asking again for ideas suggestions feedback ... anything!

The anniversary may be 5 years away but to do the date justice we must start planning now. We would like a significant exhibition at several shows that year. We intend to write and publish a book on the breed's history to coincide with the centenary and need to raise funds to help with the costs. As you can see from the article inside, The Early Development of the GOS, we have quite a few photographs in an archive collection but always need more. We would also welcome any early cine film of GOS on farm, at shows or sales or anywhere so please do search out anything you may have and let us copy it (all original material will be returned).

So while the evenings are dark and the days short, please do sort through any likely material you may have and help the Club to make a big splash on behalf of the GOS when the breed reaches its 100 not out.



This photograph was apparently published in *Farmers Guardian* in 1921 but no one knows who or where the herd was. Do you?