

Spot Press



Champion of Champions 2025



Congratulations to Mr T Barlow with Millfields Star Antoinette 435
Champion of Champions 2025 (Report inside)

Inside this issue:

AGM & Renewal Reminder	2-3
Club Competition Results	4-5
Around The Shows 2025	6-7
BPA Charges for 2025	8
Tribute David Overton	9
Campaign For Small Abattoirs	10-11
What happens when your pigs don't get enough water!	12
Best of Breed	13
Producing Quality Meat	14-15
Maintenance & Housekeeping	16-17
Feeding & Nutrition	18-19
Enough Water	20
GOSPBC Merchandise	21
Pork To Fork	22
Tea Break Time	23
Ed's Note & Contacts	24

Want one of these next year? Then lets see you out in the show ring.

Check the website in the new year for the 2026 show list and updates.

Look forward to seeing you and your pigs in the ring.



Save The Date

AGM

6th Nov 2025

7.30pm

Zoom

Club News**AGM 2025**

Agenda

Thursday 6th November 2025 7.30pm

Zoom code 85315916370 Passcode 829539

Running Order

Apologies

Minutes of 2024 AGM

Matters Arising

Annual Report

Accounts to 31st October 2025

Election of Officers

Election of Hon. Auditor

Any other business

Signed *Mandy Garbutt*

Mandy Garbutt

Secretary GOSPBC

It is hoped by holding this AGM in the evening it will encourage more members to attend and anyone wishing to stand for committee can get a nomination form from Club Secretary Mandy Garbutt . The GOSPBC Annual General Meeting is your opportunity to meet fellow club members, offer opinion and suggestion and be involved with the running of your club. We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible. A copy of the accounts and 2024 AGM minutes will be sent by email prior to AGM



Club News

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

All subscriptions are valid until 31st October 2025. Remember you have only 30 days to renew. There are lots of ways to pay but setting up a standing order or by internet banking is the preferred method.

If you renew by standing order you don't need to do anything (see above) but Please check on your bank statement that the correct amount has been paid for your membership which is now £15 and make any necessary changes. **Please note we cannot return any over payments and will treat them as donations to the Club.**

You can pay us by internet banking using sort code 40-17-25 Ac 81164406 please reference your payment with the name in which your membership is held. Eg GOS Subs Jones You can also set up a standing order on your internet bank site.

If you pay by by cheque you can send one to GOS Treasurer c/o Mrs M Naylor Brook House Farm, Brook House Lane, Framfield, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 5QJ (please mark your envelope 'GOSPBC renewal' and make your cheque to GOSPBC)

You can pay by paypal by using account gostreasurer@hotmail.com please reference your payment Subs and your name or renew through the website renewal page <http://www.gospbc.co.uk/renew-membership/>

Please advise any address, telephone, email etc changes so we can keep our records up to date and keep you informed about the club and its activities. Your email address is most important. If you have any queries please contact Club Secretary Mandy Garbutt. An email reminder will be sent before the end of November.

If for whatever reason you are deciding not to renew please let us know by return so we can stop bothering you! Whichever method you use please don't delay. Remember If your membership remains unpaid by the 30th November 2025 it will be considered lapsed and you will be removed from the membership list and will not be entitled to any further benefits from the club. Thank you.

Privacy Notice The GOSPBC takes your privacy seriously and will only use your personal information to administer your membership and to provide the products and services you have requested from us, and these details will be kept on a password protected system. This information is never shared with third parties or other agencies. We rely on you to inform us of any changes to the information you have given.

Please also note that if your children are successful in the show ring or attend Club events, we will require your permission to use any photos taken by us of the event to be published in our Newsletter or on Facebook so we can celebrate their achievement.

Right to erasure (to be forgotten) Any Member of the GOSPBC has the right to request their details be erased. At the point of this request being made or through the cessation of your membership your personal details will be removed. Additionally if after receiving a reminder to renew your membership, the club does not hear from you within a 2 month period, your details will be erased from our database. You may of course rejoin at any time in the future should you wish.

Club News

CHAMPION OF CHAMPIONS 2025

The Club was very pleased to see this year a lot of different names in the list of breeders that qualified for this competition. There were 18 GOS pigs qualified for this year's Champion of Champions and 11 of them were paraded before judge Jonathan Cloke at the Three Counties Showground at Malvern on Sunday 28th September 2025.

The qualifiers were:

WELSH SPRING SHOW · Kilcot Princess 16 & Kilcot Patrick Jan Boar Sharon Barnfield

DEVON · Pebblesford Ellen 1953 & · Pebblesford Sam 1951 Oliver Lightfoot

BATH AND WEST · Millfields Rufus 437 Teresa Cook & Chilthorne Princess Mary 1066
Beverley Wills

CORNWALL · Kilcot Princess 16 Sharon Barnfield & Hamblecombe Muriel 4 W Vooght

THREE COUNTIES · Millfields Josephine 414 T Cook · Pebblesford Ellen 1953 Oliver Lightfoot

CHESHIRE · Millfields Star Antoinette 453 Thomas Barlow · Appletree Princess Ann Furber
Family

STAFFORDSHIRE · Appletree Dolly 2 Furber Family · Pebblesford Sam 1951 O Lightfoot

SOUTH OF ENGLAND · Millfields Dolly 421 · & Millfields Dolly 445 T Cook

YORKSHIRE · Pebblesford Sam 1951 Oliver Lightfoot & · Balsham Ellen 145 Nick Kiddy

After much deliberation the splendid Elwes Cup was awarded to Millfields Star Antoinette 453 shown by Mr Tom Barlow from Lancashire bred by Mrs Teresa Cook Suffolk (photo left) Reserve went to the Furber family's Appletree Princess Ann. (photo right) Congratulations to everyone on a good turn out of pigs. You can find videos and more photographs from Teresa Cook on Facebook & Instagram.



Club News

NORTHERN CHAMPIONSHIP 2025

Sadly judge Marlene Renshaw had very few pigs before her at The Great Yorkshire Show in Harrogate in July. However of those appearing John & Oliver Lightfoots July boar Pebblesford Sam 1951 (photo left) stood head and shoulders tall to secure the Championship with a lovely July gilt Balsham Ellen 145 from Nick Kiddy taking reserve. (photo right)



Thanks to respective parties for photos



SOUTHERN CHAMPIONSHIP 2025

The GOSPBC Southern Championship was once again held at The Dorset County Show on 7th September. Judge Jonathan Cloke officiating. Sharon Barnfield & Keivn Spriggs Kilcot Princess 16 was duly awarded the Nashes trophy.



Around The Shows 2025



Stafford May 2025
The Elms school as-
sisted by Oliver
Lightfoot took their
GOS to show (L-R)

Great photo below
from the South of
England of the
Millfields team



Beverley Wills and her
GOS were back at Bath &
West after a 3yr absence
and look at her rosettes
Photo below right



Oliver Lightfoot with hon-
ours at Devon below



Teresa Cook
at Three
Counties with
Millfields
Josephine
and Andy
Brenchley
assisting

Around The Shows 2025



Sharon Barnfields lovely gilt showing off one of our new banners at Dorset County Show. (left)

Below a lovely blue sky day at Eden & Oxted Show in August for the pairs class



John and Oliver Lightfoot at the GYS with the Myrtle Styles Cup for the Northern Champion



Below Sharon Barnfield & Kevin Sprigg with Kilcot Patrick Junior Young GOS of Year at Malvern in September



Guy Kiddy out with Balsham Ellen 145 at the GYS



Thanks to everyone for use of photographs, Jodie Fairclough, Teresa Cook, Sharon Barnfield and Oliver Lightfoot

BPA Membership—Get the right package for your herd

There appears to be a great deal of confusion as to what your BPA membership includes, list right sets out the current charges. Make sure you have the right package for your herd. Note BIRTH NOTES ARE INCLUDED so there is no reason not to birth note your litters and give a truer picture of how the breed is doing. If you don't have a package deal currently then you will be paying the Pedigree Activity charges also shown. You can contact the BPA 01223845100 or email bpa@britishpigs.org for further information.

Membership Subscription Rates and Pedigree Charges – 2025 All prices include VAT (where applicable)	
Membership Subscriptions and joining fees: (The BPA subscription year is January to December)	
Pedigree Pig Breeder or Pedigree Pork Producer Memberships.	
Annual Subscription package for herds up to 2 registered females including free birth notes and some herdbook registrations dependent on herd size. Additional registrations for sales or herd expansion and other pedigree forms may be charged. Set up charge, Herd Prefix registration in the first year are included. Payment by Direct Debit only.	£85.00
3 - 5 Registered Females – Package deal as above	£95.00
6 – 10 Registered Females– Package deal as above	£115.00
11 – 20 Registered Females– Package deal as above	£150.00
Subscription rates for larger herds available on request	POA
Institutions (Schools, Local Authorities etc,)	POA
Pedigree Pork Fattener Membership - Annual Subscription for pig keepers who are only fattening bought in pedigree pigs. Includes free pedigree meat certificates.	£35.00
Junior Pig Club 12 years and under includes newsletter and entry to Junior Pig Club events	£10.00
Junior Pig Club 13 - 21 years includes newsletter and entry to Junior Pig Club events	£15.00
Pedigree Activity not included in the package subscriptions	
Extra Herd Book Registration Forms for On-Line Registration of Birth Notified pigs- one per pig	£6.50
Transfer Forms for On-Line Transfer of Registered Pigs - one per pig	£4.50

To help you remember!

Birth note = birth certificate

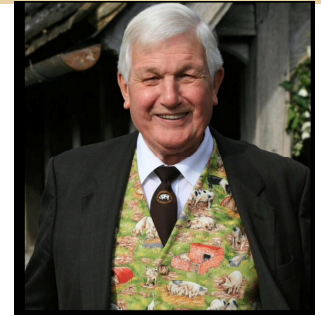
Registration = a passport to show or breed

In order to market the progeny and produce of your pigs by breed name—whether GOS or any other breed—both parents must be registered and the litter Birth Notified & properly identified in accordance with BPA or other breed society rules. If pigs cannot be identified as pedigree, then they are just pigs and you and your customers cannot claim that the pork or bacon is GOS. To do so may leave you open to a visit from your local trading standards officers. So Birth Notify your litters, earmark every pig and have the advantage of selling real Gloucestershire Old Spots Pigs and produce! Remember without its birth certificate its just any old pig!

Birth notes are included in your BPA membership package, you only pay extra to transfer or register pigs. (See above) If you have any queries regarding the breeding of your pigs you can use the Kinship Service developed by the BPA, Grassroots and the RBST. When buying in stock you can ask for an analysis on how it will affect your herd or you can ask for an analysis of how your herd stands against the breed mean (average). Please note you can only ask about your own herd or pigs you are going to purchase or add to your herd and give as much information as possible about the pigs including owner/breeder HDL's, ear or reg numbers and date of birth if known. Please contact your breed rep Teresa Cook or Guy Kiddy.

The Ultimate Showman David Overton

Honorary Vice-president David Overton passed away at home surrounded by his family. The Exfold herd of Gloucestershire Old Spots Pigs was one of the leading herds in the country and many a herd was founded from its stock of prize winning pigs. David was a great advocate for the Gloucestershire Old Spot pig, a long standing interbreed judge and a well respected man. He wrote the following in 2014 for Spot Press.



“As some of you will have read before, I purchased my first GOS in-pig gilt, Diklers Josephine 3rd, in the spring of 1982 at the NPBA Sale at Gloucester. She farrowed in July a litter of 11, out of which I decided to rear 4 of the gilts. At the beginning of 1983 I thought I should try and find a boar. Vikki Mills found a boar for me and during a conversation about the boar she asked was I going to show any of the gilts, and I said I had not thought about it to which she replied “I think you ought to”. There was a nice little show in May at Lambourn, Berkshire. This is how I got into pig showing. It had been a very wet spring 1983 and so was the first Sunday in May but we still had a lovely day and a 3rd Prize Card and made some new friends. As we walked back to the trailer we had our first of many embarrassing show moments, my friend Aus tin and I pleased with our day walked and talked with the pig between us, or so we thought! We noticed that every body was laughing and wondered why. The gilt had stopped for a convenience stop, we hadn’t noticed so kept walk ing and talking but no pig between us. But never mind, I had been bitten by the Showing Bug and as they say the rest is history. We showed locally for the next 2 or 3 years - Singleton Rare Breeds, Chertsey, Bishops Waltham, Hamp shire and persuaded Cranleigh to have pig classes again. These shows gave me good showing experience. In 1986 after going to the RBST Show & Sale for the last 10 years as a spectator, I decided to enter two Jan Gilts. We were now with the Big Boys of the GOS world and what a surprise it was when the judge, the late Geoffrey Cloke, made them 1st & 2nd in the class not only that but we got Breed Champion as well. That called for a celebration that night.

By 1987 Anne (Nicholls) had joined the showing team and we started to exhibit at a few county shows including the South of England. It was here in 1988 that we won our first Interbreed Championship. It was in the early 90s that we started doing a lot more showing. Devon Show being one - this show we always enjoy being the first one of our season, and it was at this Show in 1997 that our sow Exfold Princess 31st was made Reserve Interbreed Champion, and then went to the Royal Show and won the Elwes Trophy for Champion of Champions. The next year the same sow was Interbreed Champion at Devon Show, and this year she was only reserve in the Elwes Trophy, beaten by her daughter, Exfold Princess 54th. This was one of our proudest moments

Hatfield Show in 2004 is another one of our great moments when another of our Princess gilts, Exfold Princess 122, came good, winning Breed Champion, Best July Gilt and Interbreed Champion. These are just a few of the moments in my 25 years of showing, there were many more i.e. the Elwes trophy wins, being Interbreed Champion at the South of England 2 years running, making a total of 4 times in all, and in 2005 win ning Interbreed and top price at the BPA Show & Sale and many more. 2010 was my last show season , with Exfold Princess203 at GYS, after which I hung up my show coat for good. Anne Nicholls continued to take a reduced Ex fold show team out for some years. “



Campaign For Small Abattoirs Update

A sharp decline in smaller abattoirs is reshaping the beef and lamb supply chain, with major implications for all livestock farmers, rural communities and consumers.

In a new report, researchers at AHDB warn that the shift is squeezing smaller processors while leaving the industry more exposed to disruption. The sector – covering abattoirs, cold storage facilities, cutting plants and other processing sites – remains a critical link between livestock producers and consumers. According to the Food Standards Agency, the UK meat industry supported around 50,000 farmers and employed 97,000 people directly in 2023.

It also underpins interconnected sectors such as dairy, which supplies more than half the cattle slaughtered for beef in Great Britain. Between 2019 and 2024, the number of English abattoirs processing cattle fell by 16%, while those handling sheep dropped by 15%. Most of this decline has come from small and medium-sized plants, with larger facilities increasing their share of throughput. In 2024, almost half (46%) of all cattle slaughtered took place in just 13 of the largest abattoirs. By contrast, the smallest 50 accounted for only 3%.

The sheep sector is even more concentrated, with 62% of sheep processed in 23 large plants, while the smallest 27 handled just 1%. This restructuring reflects broader livestock trends. Between 2019 and 2024, cattle slaughter in Great Britain rose by 5.4% to 2.2 million head, whereas sheep slaughter declined by 13% to 11.4 million. While consolidation brings economies of scale, the report warns that relying on fewer sites for slaughter, cold storage and processing also raises the risk of disruption.

Annabel Twinberrow, livestock and retail and consumer analyst at AHDB, explained: “Despite overall capacity being maintained, the closure of small abattoirs is detrimental to the wider supply chain. “As well as the social and welfare benefits they bring, smaller and localised abattoirs provide vital business to farmers, butchers and rural communities, including private kill services that support direct sales to consumers.”

The study emphasises the importance of facilities such as cold storage and cutting plants in balancing supply and demand, particularly for lamb, where demand fluctuates throughout the year. Greater integration can improve efficiency and coordination but also concentrates risk, according to the levy organisation's report. It suggests both large and small processors can adapt to the evolving landscape. Large abattoirs are increasingly investing in automation and technology to address labour shortages and drive efficiency. Smaller plants, meanwhile, have opportunities to diversify their services and strengthen ties to local markets.

Ms Twinberrow added: “Small abattoirs should make the most of their unique selling points and communicate their benefits. While expanding capacity may be costly, offering additional services – such as opening a butcher's shop – can create new income streams. Collaboration with larger processors could also provide access to butchery training, waste management and transport resources.”

The report concludes that a resilient processing sector is vital for safeguarding food security and supporting domestic production. With livestock numbers forecast to decline by 2030, it argues that finding the right balance between efficiency, resilience and sustainability will be essential for the long-term health of the supply chain.

Club Chairman Teresa Cook reports C&K Meats in Suffolk have changed their dropping off ramps at the abattoir and can no longer accommodate trailers, only big lorries. This means smallholders will no longer be able to get pigs killed there. Another abattoir lost to small producers.

Campaign For Small Abattoirs Update

The future of the 47 remaining small abattoirs in England and Wales appears more secure following a significant decision by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) Board to recommend the retention of the Small Abattoirs Discount to the Defra Minister.

This discount, which has been in place for many years, covers up to 90% of charges for smaller abattoirs and, due to charges being per hour of vet time rather than based on throughput, larger operators have a much better economy of scale, whilst the cost for smaller operators per animal is nine times greater. It is therefore a significant amount of money, and without the discount smaller abattoirs would have to close down or pass costs on to customers.

Soil Association Organic Sector Development Advisor Adrian Steele said: “We welcome today’s decision by the FSA board and its recommendation to the Defra minister that the Small Abattoir Discount is essential to allow small scale and organic farmers to connect with local customers and to support a diversity of livestock, including rare breeds, and higher quality grade fresh meat. For the first time the FSA has recognised the valuable role that small abattoirs play in the rural economy and in local communities.

“We simply cannot afford to see anymore abattoirs disappearing – with fewer than 50 still operating in England and Wales they have their work cut-out to support the growing organic sector and demand from consumers for greater choice when it comes to quality and where they buy their fresh meat. Small, local abattoirs are crucial to building resilient local supply chains and ensuring higher animal welfare standards.

“And thanks to the Farmer and Grower Board for their help in securing this win for the sector.”

Research among small scale and organic farmers

The Association of Independent Meat Suppliers estimate that without the discount, 40% of smaller abattoirs would have to close. The review of the discount therefore set alarm bells ringing across the industry and for the past six months organisations concerned by the potential loss of this discount have been working to build evidence and feed into the FSA’s consultation process.

The impact of any removal or reduction in discount would have a devastating impact for those who rely on small abattoirs and for the local meat sector as well as wider UK food security. A recent survey by the Sustainable Food Trust in collaboration with the Soil Association and Rare Breeds Survival Trust of 850 UK farmers who use abattoirs found that a third had already seen the abattoir they were using close down in the past five years, and if their current abattoir were to close, 43% said they would no longer sell meat locally, and 29% would have to close their business.

The survey also found that if abattoir charges increased by 10%, a third said they would have to pass this cost to consumers, a quarter would absorb the cost reducing already tight margins, and 11% would seriously consider the overall viability of their business and consider closure.

Getting the Minister to agree with these proposals from the FSA will be the next hurdle given we have two new DEFRA ministers who have absolutely no background in agriculture whatsoever this may be an interesting time.

With thanks to The Sustainable Food Trust for Information. [Local Abattoirs](#) | [Sustainable Food Trust](#)

IMPORTANCE OF REGISTRATION

In the Autumn 2025 issue of The RBST Ark magazine CEO Christopher Price makes the case for pedigree registration as a strong and robust conservation measure. In the case of rare breeds registration is a vital part of saving them from extinction so following on from the BPA membership article on page 8 we explain why its important to continue birth noting and registering your pigs.

By registering the best examples of our breed you are enabling the BPA to to determine an accurate picture of our breeds position, trends, outlook and threat level. This analysis informs and underpins the conservation plans for the breed. Sadly some breeders choose not to register their stock generally seeing it as too burdensome and expensive in comparison to any benefit registration brings.

Your pigs carry generations of genetics, history and hard work by breeders from days gone by. By birth noting and registering your best stock you are recognising these qualities and ensuring bloodlines are recognised, preserved, recorded and respected. Undocumented animals are lost forever to history whereas recorded pedigree animals become part of it.

One of the benefits of having your pigs officially documented is in the event of a serious disease outbreak you have proof that your stock is genetically valuable and part of a national conservation effort. Registered pedigree animals are in the best position to qualify for protection in the event of a cull situation for a notifiable disease outbreak and the government will consider sparing animals on the Native Breeds at Risk (NBAR)register (soon to be Native Breeds Support (NBS) in 2026).

Documented pedigree pigs have proof of their ancestry, lineage and breeding so informed breeding choices can be made and and rare or endangered lines can be distributed around the country to ensure genetic diversity.

Birth noting and registering your best pigs shows tou care about your chosen breed. It is recognition that you respect the work of the generations that have gone before and that you are ready to pick up the baton to ensure your breed will continue on into the future with a healthy genetic base.

This table shows the breed survey numbers taken in 2024. The next breed survey takes place 1st Nov 25–14th Nov 25 so please ensure you update your herd so we get a true picture of how the breed is faring.

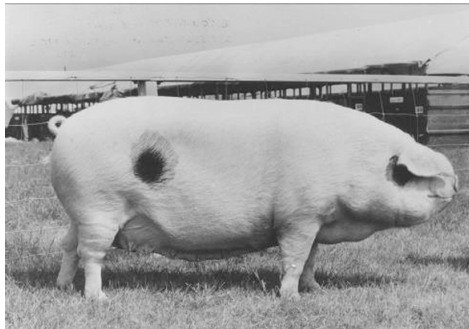
The Gloucestershire Old Spots future is in your hands.

Members keeping this sow line					Sow Line	Total Sows				
2024	2023	2022	2021	2004		2024	2023	2022	2021	2004
6	5	9	10	37	Bluebell	23	21	38	29	61
10	9	10	12	15	Countess	13	18	23	24	26
9	11	12	20	15	Dahlia	20	23	33	53	26
21	20	20	26	23	Dolly	44	44	53	57	43
15	18	20	24	46	Ellen	42	51	54	58	107
10	14	14	14	31	Josephine	19	25	38	42	56
7	6	10	10	24	Muriel	16	14	28	22	42
17	15	16	15	12	Primrose	28	36	31	26	22
16	20	31	38	47	Princess	66	62	80	103	83
7	9	9	10	34	Princess Ann	45	41	36	38	61
11	20	22	25	14	Princess Freda	15	39	49	52	24
8	11	13	12	31	Princess Joan	17	23	31	25	63
13	13	14	17	37	Princess Mary	44	43	46	41	55
6	5	7	10	24	Star	18	19	26	22	45
9	9	7	11	15	Star Antoinette	14	13	11	20	22
					Total	424	472	577	612	736
Percentage of sows with purebred litters						62%	60%	57%	56%	58%

Members keeping this boar line					Boar Line	Registered Boars				
2024	2023	2022	2021	2004		2024	2023	2022	2021	2004
17	18	19	23	46	Gerald	27	27	28	33	51
20	25	29	31	31	Patrick	24	29	34	43	35
17	15	17	15	39	Rufus	24	17	23	25	40
23	25	29	35	43	Sam	29	30	38	42	47
					Total	104	103	123	143	173
Members keeping registered pigs						82	102	115	135	231

Best of Breed

Following on from our recent newsletters regarding Selecting your stock and maintaining breed standards we thought it might be an idea to show you some of the best GOS pigs that have been bred over the years so here goes.....



Bixbury Muriel 3 who won the Royal Show Breed Championship for Joy Ham (née Withers) in 1965.



George Styles with Ribbesford Josephine 87 at the Three Counties Show 1985.



Frampton Bluebell, Breed Champion at the Three Counties Show in the 1950s for Vic Withers - before lawn mowers were invented!



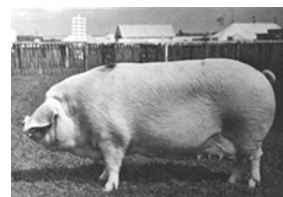
Foston Ellen 83, Breed Champion RASE 2009 for Andrew Robinson and Maggie Wilson



Nashes Josephine 68, Breed Champion RASE 1957 for Jim Sherriff

Some good examples to give you a guide as to what you should be aiming for. There's lots of breed information on the website and you can ask Secretary Mandy Garbutt to send you by email breed selection leaflets.

Today you can video your pigs and send them to a committee member to advise if you need help in selection.



Poundbury Muriel 8, Reserve Breed Champion RASE 1960 for Cecil Painter



Foston Princess Joan 11, Breed Champion RASE 1985 for Andrew Robinson



Windmill Princess Mary 9, Breed Champion Great Yorkshire Show 2006 for Malcolm Hicks



Windmill Star 22, competing at the RASE 2009 for Malcolm Hicks



Dave Overton's Exfold Gerald 58 was Breed Champion at the 2005 BPA Show & Sale



Endsleigh Sambo 2562, Senior Boar, was the top-priced GOS selling for 360€ns for Joan & Ann Uelow from Devon. Supreme Champion and top-priced pig was Stephen Booth's Chapel Patrick 11 which sold to Charles Martell for 580 gns.



Stonegrove Star Antoinette, Breed Champion at the BPA Show & Sale 2010 for

Producing Quality Meat by Richard Lutwyche (2010)

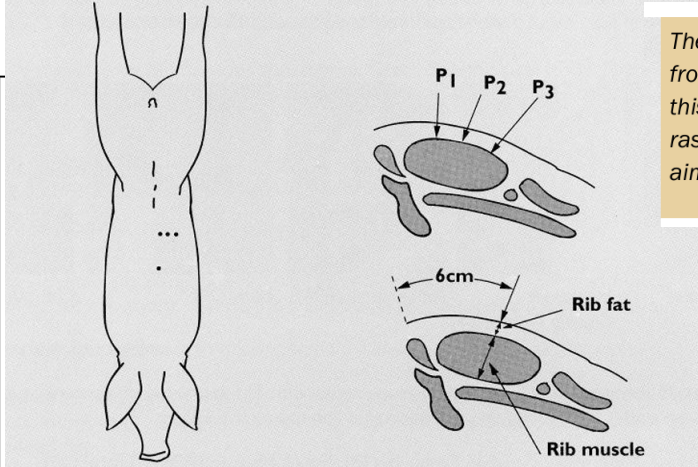
The Traditional Breeds Meat Marketing Scheme operated by the RBST ran until 2002 and was first established as a means of conserving rare breeds by creating a market for them in 1993. Since that time, literally thousands of GOS have been processed by butchers from Northumberland to Cornwall and a large database of information was built up relating to the breed. Before 1993, the rare breeds were effectively unsaleable into the commercial meat market. Buyers at cattle markets would scoff at primitive or longwool sheep, horned cattle or small breeds such as Dexters or any pigs other than pink commercial types. Whilst the rare breeds movement flourished, many keepers did not stay long when they experienced the humiliation and financial hardship of trying to sell their surplus stock. No breeds had become extinct but nearly all were bumping along without any real growth, maintained by enthusiasts and farm parks as living museum pieces. The concept of creating a specialist market for them grew out of the hugely enhanced eating quality of the meat derived from them. As the commercial market, driven by the supermarkets, had pursued consistent, lean carcasses that were easy to butcher and sell, so the eating quality had fallen to the point where such meat was effectively tasteless - little better than cardboard. The scheme deliberately spurned the supermarkets who were all far too big to accept terms that suited the producer and instead targeted small, independent quality butchers - a rare breed in their own right. A pricing structure was created based on the quality of the finished carcass that paid a considerable premium over commercial prices. Finishing Units were established to take in weaned stock from small producers to provide butchers with a consistent supply to meet their requirements in terms of weight and finish. It was worked on averages which with 1000+ GOS a year means that the occasional poorer animal does not hugely alter the figures.

Ave Liveweight kgs	Ave Deadweight kgs	Age in Days	Daily l/w Gain
76	57	177	0.45

Whilst all the rare/traditional breeds have the capacity to put down fat, it is not necessary to produce fat pigs or pigs with poor conformation. Commercial breeds/hybrids are idiot-proof (almost) as they have been bred for leanness. The TBMM operation paid top price for good conformation pigs with a backfat level measured at P2 of 10-15mm. (see diagram next page) This is around 1/2" of backfat, much more than would be **seen** in a supermarket but this gives a good level of flavour and succulence and is generally acceptable to a discerning customer looking for quality. Higher levels than this and the meat/fat ratio looks out of balance. There are almost everywhere backwoodsmen who will come to the butchers to buy fatter than normal meat but they are few and far between and you cannot base a business on attracting such customers only. Higher levels of fat have to be trimmed by the butcher. This is extra labour cost and he ends up with a product that just doesn't look as good and incurs extra costs in the disposal of the extra fat which is why there is a price penalty for such meat. The diagram shows where the P2 measurement is taken from at larger abattoirs, smaller ones tend not to grade this way. If you picture the diagram as a loin chop or rasher of bacon you can envisage what you should be aiming for. Leaner gradings also incur a price penalty because we are trying not to produce coloured Landrace-type pigs but pigs that will offer the best eating experience. Sometimes we see carcasses with hugely more fat and the butchers have the right to reject such poor quality stock as it becomes almost unsaleable. This is always down to poor husbandry/management usually associated with bad feed practices. Good conformation is best described as having a good, large piece of meat as the eye-muscle in the chop. If through poor management this is under-sized, then the fat, even within the 10-15mm parameter looks out of proportion to the lean and again there is a price penalty. Pigs have a digestive system similar to ours. They are naturally omnivores as opposed to herbivores such as cattle, sheep and horses. As such, they require a balanced diet and if you try and mess around with this premise, then the quality of the carcass deteriorates.



Chops need a good quality eye muscle to carry off the greater levels of fat cover compared with meat in the supermarket. Photo by Richard Lutwyche



The diagram shows where the P2 measurement is taken from at larger abattoirs, smaller ones tend not to grade this way. If you picture the diagram as a loin chop or rasher of bacon you can envisage what you should be aiming for.

Leaner gradings also incur a price penalty because we are trying not to produce coloured Landrace-type pigs but pigs that will offer the best eating experience. Sometimes we see carcasses with hugely more fat and the butchers have the right to reject such poor quality stock as it becomes almost unsaleable. This

is always down to poor husbandry/management usually associated with bad feed practices. Good conformation is best described as having a good, large piece of meat as the eye-muscle in the chop. If through poor management this is under-sized, then the fat, even within the 10-15mm parameter looks out of proportion to the lean and again there is a price penalty. Pigs have a digestive system similar to ours. They are naturally omnivores as opposed to herbivores such as cattle, sheep and horses. As such, they require a balanced diet and if you try and mess around with this premise, then the quality of the carcass deteriorates.

Whilst you must try and keep the economics of feeding your finishing pigs under control, there is no point in achieving this at the cost of not having a high quality product to sell at the end of the exercise. The following notes were prepared by Rex Montgomery of Gilt Edged Recording & Analysis specifically for keepers of rare breed pigs. **Quality of the Food Source** from reliable compounders giving an 'open declaration' of the raw materials included. Try to select suppliers using good quality ingredients—not a lot of by-products. Don't dilute the quality of the diet. Minimum daily requirement—700gm of protein and 30gm of lysine. Compound diets designed to be fed at the recommended daily amount will provide the required level of nutrients, minerals and vitamins. Pigs are not ruminants so they cannot make as much use of grass as other species. Sows can benefit from a good supply of fresh, young grass which can replace up to 0.5kg of sow nuts in early pregnancy. A well-grown pig will not eat much more than 5kg grass/day so don't reduce nuts too much. **Feed Requirements Weaners** ad lib up to 40kg l/w. Try to calculate the pig's daily intake just prior to change and then don't cut back too quickly if you are going to restrict feed to 2.5kg/day. **Finishers** About 2.5kg/day. Feed twice daily once ad lib regime is finished. **Water** 3 pints a day at 15kg l/w to 1 gallon/day at 90kg l/w.

To put some of these comments into context, many newly established keepers, look to cut costs by sourcing vegetable/fruit or bakery waste to take the place of part of the compound feed. Doing this to a level more than just giving the pigs a few apples or the occasional cabbage as a treat can upset the balance of nutrients and result in more fat/less lean and thus a less desirable carcass. And let us just add a reminder here that it is illegal and dangerous to feed pigs anything that has been in a kitchen (of any sort) that may have been close to meat or meat products of any kind. If growing pigs are still hungry after being fed, you can supplement with sugar beet pulp. This has the reputation of reducing the incidence of skatole, one of the causes of boar taint in entire (uncastrated) boars. It also, whilst filling the pigs' appetites, does not lay down excessive backfat. Compound feeds of higher than 16-18% protein are generally suited for more commercial type pigs and GOS and other rare breeds are best kept on the lower levels which are generally sold as Sow & Weaner rations. Try to aim for 1.1% lysine in the compound. Lysine is one of the amino acids that forms the protein molecule and has been identified as

Maintenance & Housekeeping

Maintaining your herd through good housekeeping practices is the best way to make sure your herd remains healthy and happy. When you keep pigs all year round there is always work to do; maintaining your land and accommodation, managing your pigs' health, making plans for farrowing, making arrangements for when you might have to be away from your herd, organising feed requirements, emergency planning and dealing with official paperwork.

Land and Building Maintenance At Fowgill we do most of our land and accommodation maintenance in late autumn and early spring. After having pigs outside at the beginning of our pig journey through North Yorkshire winters on heavy clay ground we soon discovered that our paddocks ended up as quagmires and our pigs were not happy belly deep in cold wet mud, (nor were their keepers!), so we decided it would be wise to make arrangements to bring our stock in over the worst of the winter weather,



roughly clock change to clock change, depending on conditions. We are lucky in that we had old farm buildings that could be used. We now have a purpose built shed and two stables, (one of which is used a

farrowing house), which we utilise. . The drinkers do freeze in sub-zero conditions but there is access to warm water from the nearby house and we know the pigs are happy and snug in deep straw beds. Whilst they're inside, weather permitting, the paddocks are rotavated and re-seeded and rested. We also clean, disinfect and repair the housing and check, repair and strengthen fencing.

Through regular maintenance some of our wooden arks are now going into their 20th season! During the summer harvest period we make arrangements for a delivery of straw to see us through the year. Previously we had to store our straw under tarpaulins so it did get damp but we now have our new building for it to go in which will ensure it remains dry and hopefully will result in less waste.

Your Pigs' Health Your pigs' health is important so one of your major choices will be your vet. A good relationship with your vet is useful. He can help you with a health plan for your pigs and he will get to know you and your herd. It can be difficult finding a good vet who knows about pigs so ask around your area. We worm our breeding stock twice a year generally coinciding with when they go out for the summer and when they come in for the winter. We also worm weaners at eight weeks and sows a week before they farrow. Your vet will also advise if you need to inject for any other problems such as erysipilys or parvo virus. You hope that you do everything that you can to keep your pigs happy and healthy but from time to time it helps to have a fresh pair of eyes to take a look around at your set up. Other pig keepers may do things differently from you and it's always good to look at new ideas and practices which you can adapt to your own set up.



Maintenance & Housekeeping

It's also worth thinking about how much you can take on as regards pig numbers; your herd can quickly increase either by breeding or by some spur of the moment purchases at sales! And before you know it you've got more pigs to cope with than you have time or money, it's at this point that standards can slip as you are constantly rushing around trying to save both. Calamities seem to be more frequent; a pig gets ill, you injure yourself, and then you sell a pig that was below par or got poorly and for every good pig you ever sold this is the one everyone will hear about.



Constant Planning Keeping a breeding herd of pigs requires some amount of planning. Generally you tend to work a six months to a year ahead depending how many sows you keep. We work on 3 or 4 litters a year because this suits us and our pigs are our hobby. if you have a commercial outlet for your pigs' produce, you will probably be able to have many more and plan accordingly. We aim for mostly for January, Easter, July and September litters depending on how things are going. We also have to factor in other household events and activities such as holidays so a big wall calendar (like the GOSPBC Year Planner – Ed) comes in handy. We also mark on the calendar show dates so we can see when we may need help with letting the dog out and feeding. You will also need to plan your feed requirements so you don't run out at a crucial time; at present we use roughly a tonne of feed every 40 days so it's quite handy to mark in the diary when to order and note if there's a bank holiday or you're away etc.

The Emergency List As ever there are always things that will take you by surprise or throw a spanner in the works of your plans. Illness, unplanned work commitments, and family all come into the mix. On our 'Emergency List', it has the phone numbers of 2 or 3 people, (with their permission of course), who will step into the breach and help out .A map of which pigs we have and where they are, what they get fed, where the taps are, the vet's numbers and our mobile numbers too. Its regularly updated and kept on the inside door of the feed house. Paperwork is another area which will demand your attention and however much we loathe red tape it's a fact of life for stock keepers. The most regular items you will come into contact with are AML's (Animal Movement Licences) This is electronic of course. Your medicine book should contain all the details of any veterinary visits and any medicines issued to your pigs this includes worming products. Regularly update it - it's easy to forget. Although our pigs are only a hobby they have their own bank account too and a basic set of accounts so we can keep track of piggy finances. We also keep ear number records, sow service records, porker weight charts, a file with all our pedigrees and birth notes, a file for all the 'bumpf' you get sent by Defra, BPA, RPA etc. A box or filing cabinet is invaluable. It's amazing how much paper pigs generate!



Most of all enjoy your pigs, although it is hard work, it's extremely rewarding when you know you've given your pigs a good life and a job well done. Updated from Spot Press Winter 2011 Mandy Garbutt

FEEDING & NUTRITION

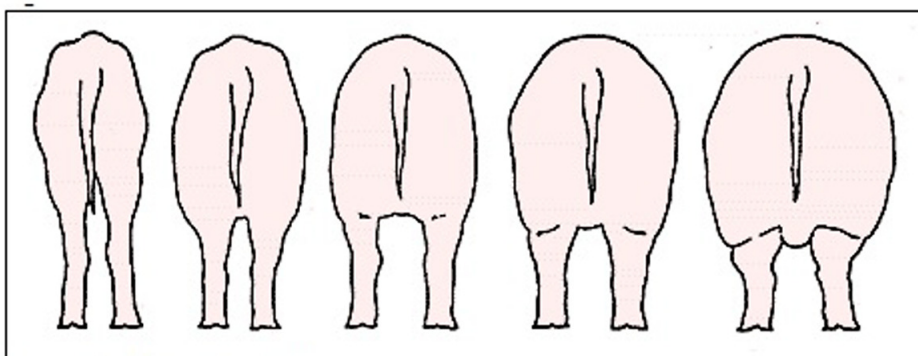
Feeding pigs is not complicated but it does need to be appropriate. If you overfeed your pigs they will get become overweight, giving fatty meat and joint problems. If underfed the meat will be too lean, giving less flavour and your pigs could suffer from ailments relating to malnutrition or nutritional deficiencies. So knowing what and how much to feed is important.

Pigs need a diet that is nutritionally balanced. They require adequate protein levels plus vitamins and minerals. Pigs on pasture will be better able to get minerals from eating grass and small amounts of soil as they root.

Commercial pig feeds sold in pellet form contain all the nutritional elements required but check for protein content and Lysine and beware of feeds containing high content of commercial bakery waste so read labels. It generally comes in sacks of 20 or 25kg depending on your preferred supplier but if you have a larger herd it can be 'blown' in loose to a storage silo. Most commercial feeds have a shelf life of approximately three months.

Obviously there are variables in how much feed a pig requires including its access to outside pasture, amount of exercise and size of breed but the general principles are the same though as you become more experienced you will learn to feed by eye. You will also see who are slow eaters and who are the gulpers and bullies!

Piglets—Initially they will start taking bits of their mothers ration at 7-10 days. When weaned they should be fed approx. 450g (1lb) of pig pellets per day for every month of their age so piglets at eight weeks will be on 900g (2lb) pellets per day spread across two feeds moving up as the piglets age so 1.4kg (3lb) at three months and 1.8kg (4lb) at four months and so on up to six months. Piglets ideally should be on 18% protein for the first three months then go onto 16% protein. This early weight gain is the best that pigs make as it determines their body score and conformation as they grow older particularly if you are growing on to breed. You will read in some books that 1.8kg (4lb) of vegetable matter is equal to 450g(1lb) of pellet food and whilst this can keep costs down for older stock, young stock and lactating sows need the growing and conditioning properties of pelleted food and any additional vegetable matter should be seen as a supplement rather than replacement for pellets. If you are feeding only a handful of pellets with substantial amounts of vegetable matter



Score	Condition	Body Shape
1	Emaciated	Hips, backbone prominent to eye
2	Thin	Hips, backbone easily felt without applying palm pressure
3	Ideal	Hips, backbone felt only with firm palm pressure
4	Fat	Hips, backbone cannot be felt
5	Overfat	Hips, backbone heavily covered

(Patience and Thacker, 1989.)

your pigs will not thrive as they are not getting the nutrition and protein they need to sustain their growth and condition. As a guide a pig should clear its ration in about 15mins .

The table here gives a good guide as to how your pigs score body and condition wise

FEEDING & NUTRITION

Gilts Feeding is probably the biggest influence on the growth of your gilts, whilst she will inherit size characteristics from her parents it is how she is fed that will determine how well she grows. Gilts kept for breeding should receive a supplementary ration from the time they learn to eat independently ideally a grower ration 18–19% protein. Gilts outdoors on good pasture can be put on 16% sow nuts but if indoors it is a good plan to provide them with an amount of vegetable matter as a supplement ideally 3-4kg a day. Gilts should receive sufficient feed to keep them growing steadily and evenly. Keep them in good condition (Body score 3 above) and don't let them get fat. Ideally feed gilts in separate feeding receptacles so you can see who is slow, picky, bullied etc. A too fat gilt will make an uncertain breeder likewise a too thin gilt will experience fertility problems as her body will not be able to cope with or maintain a pregnancy.

Boars after following the piglet rules to six months of age boars are usually fed between 2-3kg of a balanced diet which as a rule comes from bought in complete feed in the form of pellets or rolls. The amount fed depends on age, weight and the amount of work a boar is doing. Generally boars can be fed as per gilts/sows of a similar age. Supplementing the diet with Omega 3 and Vitamin E can improve sperm quality and production, resulting in improved fertilisation and litter size. This can be found in 'green' foods and will be gained if outdoors on pasture, indoor pigs will need access to 'green' food and some exercise. It is important that the boar is kept lean (but not too thin) and not allowed to become lazy and overweight.

The value of feeding your pigs well can never be underestimated. This year in the show ring there were pigs of all breeds who were clearly poorly fed being small for their age and having a low body score (2). From time to time it's a good idea to review your pig numbers and their body scores and decide if you have them at a level you can comfortably afford to feed rather than have pigs that are undernourished and not thriving. It does your reputation no good to be seen selling inferior pigs due to your inability to feed them well. Feed is of course not the only input to your pigs and keeping them warm during the colder months with plenty of bedding. If they are burning fat to keep warm through lack of sufficient bedding feed is not converted to weight so you're effectively burning money. Straw should be plentiful enough for them to make nests.



Getting value from your bought in pig feed is how it is fed, if you're chucking it over the fence onto the ground in bad weather you're encouraging the pigs to dig for feed and turn the ground into a quagmire where feed will be lost and your pigs will be hungry. Feed in troughs or trugs in bad weather (ground feeding is ok in the summer when its concrete dry ground) saves your pigs hunting for their food, inexpensive bowls or garden trugs can be purchased from Home Bargains or B&M et al. Outdoors a concrete pad can keep feed out of the mud or make a straw lake to feed on in troughs or trugs.

Time is an unaccountable expense but its as important. A time poor keeper will miss issues and not be as diligent in housekeeping so consider the time you spend on your pigs, is it enough? (my husband says too much ...Ed!!)

With pigs its very easy to get overrun with numbers quickly with enthusiasm to create a decent sized herd so its worth having a reality check and possibly rethinking your plans. Its better to have a small quality well fed and looked after herd than a poor undernourished badly kept large herd.

What Happens If Your Pigs Don't Drink Enough Water?

Water is one of the cheapest inputs on your farm—yet often the most taken for granted.

But without enough water, your pigs will struggle, no matter how good the feed is.

Here's what really happens when pigs don't get enough water:

1. Poor Feed Conversion—.Pigs need water to digest and absorb nutrients. Without it, feed passes through poorly, and feed then doesn't translate into weight gain making slow Growth
2. Water makes up more than 50% of a pig's body weight. Dehydrated pigs grow slower, lose muscle, and become weak—turning your fattening project into a loss.
3. Reproductive Problems -.Boars produce less and lower-quality semen especially in hot weather
4. Health problems such as Constipation and gut blockage and Higher risk of urinary and kidney infections or disease
5. Salt poisoning see Spot Press Spring 2021 for info
6. Heat stress in hot weather
7. Death in Severe Cases of dehydration
8. Young stock can die within hours if they lack water, especially during hot weather, freezing weather or dysentery outbreaks.

How to Prevent This:

- *Provide water 24/7, not only at feeding times.
- *Use clean containers (preferably heavy enough not to be continually tipped out) or nipple drinkers.
- *Check daily that water points are not blocked or dirty.
- *Increase and check more often water availability in hot weather—pigs drink more when it's warm. In hot weather wet feeding can help increase intake.
- *In cold weather break ice—using warm water in feed can help too
- * Provide wallows in summer months (photo right)

Bottom line:

Water is not just for thirst. It's a vital part of your pigs' nutrition, growth, health, and survival.

Keep the water flowing, and you'll keep your pigs happy and healthy.



Pork to Fork

Coming up to Guy Fawkes night on November 5th it time to celebrate sausages.

Sausage & Baked Bean Cobbler

Crumbly cheddar scones top a tomato-rich sausage & bean stew.

Ingredients For the Stew

1 pack approx. 680g sausages of your choice (pref GOS!)

1 tbsp olive oil 1 onion finely chopped
1/2tsp garlic granules 1tsp smoked paprika
1tsp thyme 1tbsp tomato puree

800g passata 2tsp cider vinegar 2tsp brown sugar
2 x 400g tns cannellini beans drained

Fry the onion until softened, stir in garlic, paprika, thyme & tomato puree cook for 2 mins,

Add passata, cider vinegar, sugar & beans bubble gently for 15mins

Meanwhile cook sausages until browned. Once cooked cut sausages into chunks and add to bean mixture then spread in a heatproof dish approx 26x20x6cm, set aside to cool for at least 30 mins.

Meanwhile make scones

340g Self Raising Flour 1 1/2 tsp baking powder 1/2tsp salt 1 egg beaten

175g chilled butter cubed 80g cheddar cheese
70ml milk Black pepper to taste

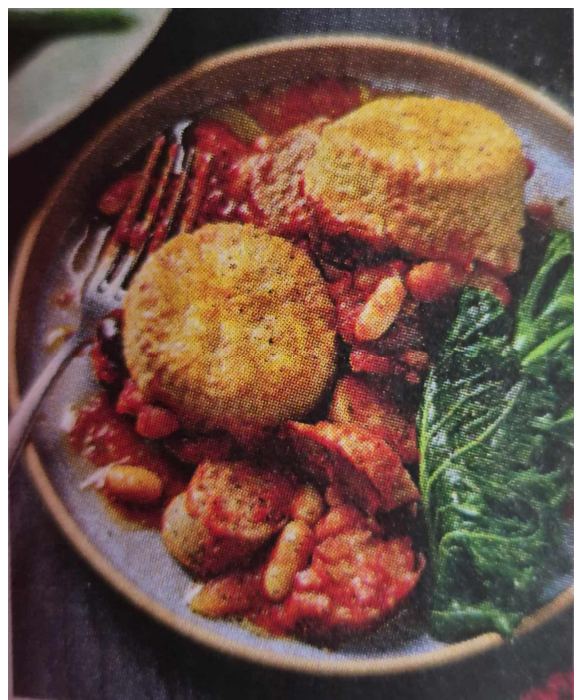
Combine flour, salt, pepper, baking powder and butter to make fine breadcrumbs

Stir in cheese Add milk to make a soft dough then roll out and cut out 10-12 rounds reroll as needed.

Top the sausage mixture with the scones, brush with beaten egg. Place in a hot oven 200c or gas 6 for 25-30mins until cobbler is bubbling and scones are puffed and golden.

Enjoy!

Courtesy Sainsburys Magazine





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Answer to Wordsearch

Plantation Wasteland



Ed's Note

An exciting finale to the year with a record breaking number of pigs and breeders forward for this years Champion of Champions. Good to see there are some good quality GOS around.

It will be interesting to see the next breed survey results as to how we are faring, we have gained some new breeders this year so hopefully this will show through in the new figures.

Make sure we have an up to date e-mail address for you as this is the most speedy and cost effective way of letting you know what's happening in the GOS world through our monthly newsletters.

Here at Fowgill our world has been turned upside down with Paul's diagnosis, treatment is making good progress and we have everything crossed for good news next year.

We consequently haven't been far with a reduced show team Ryedale, Thornton-le-Dale, Tockwith and Westmoreland were managed between chemotherapy and hospital appointments. The value of these outings couldn't be underestimated for the good cheer and support given by our piggy friends and show family. (A flying Ginny right)

Look forward to seeing you at the agm.

With very best wishes **Mandy Garbutt**

Secretary GOSPBC



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Thank you