



Beyond Growing: Teaching

We're attending – and speaking at – the ALBC Conference.

Founded in 1977, the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy is the only organization in the United States that works specifically to research and conserve rare breeds of livestock and poultry.

Seeking to preserve genetic diversity in U.S. livestock herds, each year they complete livestock census reports, analyze the data collected and release conservation priority lists for all the major livestock species. These lists aid farms like ours in choosing breeds to work with while bringing attention to those breeds whose numbers are of special concern. Our American Guinea Hogs, for

instance, are an ALBC critically endangered breed. And the censuses are just the tip of the iceberg. The organization also works year round to develop initiatives that help us to better understand the rare breeds they've listed as endangered and to re-create markets for those breeds' products.

They've partnered with Universities here and abroad to study the DNA of many breeds in order to pinpoint their unique attributes and individual value to the species. They've partnered with chefs and farmers to bring rare breed products – such as American Guinea Hog pork – into mainstream restaurants and cultivated media coverage to garner awareness of the products among consumers.

Each year they also host a conference in the heart of America's farm country. There,

farmers and rare breed enthusiasts gather to discuss the future of agriculture with rare breeds.

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Old Time Wisdom:

Food Before Farrowing

Constipation can be a serious problem for farrowing and post-farrow gilts and sows; one that can cause discomfort at best and pig losses at worst. Today, many farmers remove food from a sow or gilt's pen for as much as 24 hours before she is due to farrow – or whenever labor signs present if she delivers early – but old time farmers had a different approach.

They would augment their sows ration with high-fiber feeds beginning as much as a week before her due date. Feed additives, such as bran soaked in water, helped to keep things moving and the sows comfortable.

What We're Planting Now

Planting? Now? That's right. Now is the time for fall and winter garden propagation.

Peas

There's nothing quite like a fresh pods of peas straight from the vine. And with both spring and fall offering the perfect weather to grow them we'd be remiss to let this season go to waste. Little Marvel, an open pollinated, heirloom variety graces a full bed in the north end of the market garden this autumn.

Turnips

Purple topped white. Mashed with butter just like a potato, that's how everyone seems to like them best. But these aren't just for us – and you, if you've reserved a Winter CSA share – they're also adored by the hogs and chickens all winter long. Turnips, as luck would have it, store beautifully in a cool, dark closet.

Corn Mache

Corn Salad, Lamb's Lettuce, Field Salad. Whatever you call it, there is no denying that it's a valuable winter crop. Once a weed, not commercially grown until the 18th century, Corn Salad is a small salad green that grows well in cold, adverse conditions. It's flavor is often described as sweet and nutty all at once.

Spinach

With the cold, wet weather we had this spring our early crop of spinach was an absolute bust. In hopes of gathering a large fall harvest and extending that through as much of the winter as possible we've planted two varieties for optimum production. One of those, Gigante d'Inverno, is a broad leaf variety that is known to grow well even below freezing.

And More...



"Teaching" Continued

This year, during the two-day conference in Wichita, Kansas, we'll be representing not just our own farm but the breeds we raise. And, on day two of that conference, we've been invited to give a one-hour presentation on the ins and outs of Small Farm Pricing.

To say we're honored and excited to be taking part would be an understatement. Besides the wonderful experience and the knowledge of other farmers and speakers we hope to bring back many pictures and stories so stay tuned to the blog later this fall for updates.

In the News: Salmonella and E-Coli and Listeria, Oh My!

Canadian Bacon, chicken and spinach contaminated with Listeria, Beef containing E-Coli, gaping holes in egg handling protocol even after massive salmonella recalls that swept the nation's supermarkets last year. Every day, or so it seems, new recalls, notices and warnings hit the airwaves. At this point American consumers are almost spending as much time returning tainted products as they are shopping for them – and they're certainly dedicating just as much time to worry about what they're putting in their mouths. According to recent history it's only a matter of time before what they choose is carrying one some kind of potentially deadly pathogen, after all.

With contamination now being found in ready-cooked meats and on vegetables meant for raw eating the experts' standard old response doesn't bring much comfort these days; cooking your food well isn't necessarily a guarantee of safety – especially when it's food you didn't intend to cook at all.

How can your family avoid the recall madness and the pathogens that cause it?

First and foremost, avoid foods that have been mass-produced and packaged. When chicken breasts are flying down an assembly line at 500 pounds of meat per minute the risk of contamination is exponentially increased. It is humanly impossible to work efficiently at the rates currently required of packing and processing plant employees. At high speeds accidents are bound to happen and corners must be cut in order to meet quotas. Avoid purchasing food that is likely to have been handled in high-speed operations.

Wash your food just prior to use. Rinse and pat dry your raw meats, rinse and drain your salads. Even if you're eating organically grown produce from local farms it's a good idea to rinse our foods with running water before eating.