

THE BERKSHIRE NEWS

The Official Newsletter of the ABA



AMERICAN
BERKSHIRE

THE BREEDER ISSUE 2021

WE ARE VERY EXCITED TO PRESENT

“Old School”



HBF9 ALL YOU WANT 6-2 (NAME CHANGE PENDING)
REG # 159648002

“Old School” **PROVIDES:**

- NATURAL ANGLES TO BREED SOWS NATURALLY
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- AN EXTENDED PEDIGREE WITH SOME OF THE FINEST, OLD SCHOOL HERDMARKS IN THE ABA!!

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A Message from the Board of Directors:

Pete Brummer, President



Greetings fellow ABA members,

It is safe to say, we are all glad 2020 is in our rearview mirror! However, as crazy and messed up as the year was, the ABA finished 2020 with an increase in litter registrations and is in a solid financial position. Thank you to all that have supported the ABA in anyway, this past year!

As we look forward, it has become very evident that the Berkshire breed is the only breed that has profitable value to the independent hog producer. We, as a Board of Directors, must focus on ways to ensure high-quality Berkshire pork and supply resources to our members that help them merchandise their product and add value to their operation.

With that said, the Board of Directors has agreed on the following:

- a.) Carbonate Marketing Group: A company to assist with general branding and telling the story of the ABA to the public and assist our membership in providing tools for success.
- b.) Direct to Consumer Program: A more local marketing idea that is being piloted currently.
- c.) A more concerted effort to educate and eventually rid the breed of the Napole gene.
- d.) Continued support of the ABA Progeny Test in 2021
- d.) We also look forward to promoting and supporting the 2021 show season with The Recovery in Des Moines, Iowa, and our Summer Type Conference in Springfield, Illinois.

As we have gone further into 2021, the ABA is poised to have a great year with Cory Edge as Director of Berkshire Operations and Rose Criswell as Member Services Coordinator.

I, as President, encourage all ABA members to be supportive and open-minded to all aspects of the Berkshire breed.

Sincerely,

Pete Brummer
ABA President

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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FROM THE AUGUST 1947 BERKSHIRE NEWS...

“Dean Curtiss was a great believer in Berkshires to the last. Perhaps no man was ever more sold on the merits and ultimate future of the breed than the great Dean. Probably no man had a greater appreciation of the supreme carcass qualities of the breed, and the ultimate need for just that type of hog on American farms.”

Charles F. “Dean” Curtiss was a pioneer in the Berkshire breed. Read more about his impact on Berkshires on the blog at americanberkshire.com.

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AMERICAN BERKSHIRE ASSOCIATION PEDIGREE F.A.Q.

How do I get set up to register litters online?

One of the best and most efficient ways to complete a litter registration is online. To register online, you first, must make sure you are on the American Berkshire website. To complete an online litter registration, you will need your breeder number, herdmark, and username, and password to log in. If you do not know your log-in information, contact the ABA office and we can give you the information.

What causes online litters to not be registered?

The most common issue for online litters not being registered is the dam is not in the breeder's number. This happens when leased animals are not returned to the breeder's number. Another common issue is that numbers are mistyped. Please make sure to check overall registration numbers and ear notches. All registration numbers will have 9 numbers and registration numbers must match the ear notch.

How much does it cost to register a litter?

To register a litter, as an ABA member, the price bracket is \$18 for litters under 90 days and \$36 for litters over 90 days. The 90 days are determined from the date your litter was farrowed.

What is the cost of a transfer?

The cost of a transfer is \$5 within 60 days of the sale of the pig, and increases to \$10 if the transfer is done 60 days after the sale of the pig.

I used a herd boar as my litter's sire, is there anything I need to do?

All sires must have their DNA stress tested and banked. If you are unsure if a boar's DNA has been tested, the ABA can check it. If you need to get the boar tested, the office has DNA blotter cards available for purchase, at \$5 a card that is for the collection of blood or semen. Once the DNA sample is collected, you can send it to the ABA office, and we will send the DNA into the lab for the stress test that costs \$25.

What is the best way to submit a transfer request to the office?

The easiest way to complete a transfer, if you have not tried it by now, is the online transfer. On the online form, options are available if you are needing an email copy of your pedigree or there is a special request box. After you submit your online transfer, you will receive an email back once your transfers are completed. Pedigrees are mailed directly to the new owners unless stated otherwise.

I have not received my pedigrees, what is going on?

If your pedigrees are taking longer than expected to receive, please contact the office. A possibility is that your A.I. Certificate was not received, we need DNA, or your online litters were not registered, due to an error.

For a step-by-step video explanation of how to register a litter or to collect DNA, visit americanberkshire.com.



QUESTIONS?

(765) 497-3618 | office@americanberkshire.com | americanberkshire.com

CUSTOMER CARE

By Terry Shaffer,
Shaffer's Goldrush



Customer care is the backbone of this industry. It can make or break your business. To be successful at this, make your customers a priority! We live by a few mottos here at Shaffer's Goldrush.

If you can master the basics of customer care, you will see your business take off. If you disregard your customers, you will spend years gaining their trust back.

MOTTO #1: “Work as if you’re working for the Lord, not for man.” – Colossians 3:23

When you concentrate your work to do your very best at all times, you find the best results. Customer care goes beyond just being kind, it is offering your best to set your customers up for success. Each day when you go into the barn, your customers deserve you to work honestly, passionately and holding your herd to a high standard of care. This includes have a breeding plan, a farrowing plan, a vaccination plan, a health plan, a nutrition plan, a training plan, a sales plan, and a customer care plan. Being prepared will set your herd up for success and in turn set your customers up for success. When you work for a greater purpose, success and blessings flow downhill. Your customers will notice the quality care in your herd and want to be a part of that.

MOTTO #2: Treat others as you would want to be treated.

I know that the Golden Rule can sound a bit cliché, but isn’t it true? People do business with someone who treats them with respect, honesty, and kindness! Good people are contagious! People don’t always remember what you say, but they do remember how you make them feel. Making every customer feel valued and significant will create a lifelong customer and friend. Sometimes that is as simple as providing a follow-up call to make sure that they are happy with a show pig they purchased. Other times, it’s taking 5 extra minutes to talk with them on the phone. Envision what type of assistance you’d want to experience and do your best to provide that. Here at Shaffer’s Goldrush, we love talking with and becoming friends with our customers. It is our goal to answer the phone on the first ring, listen to our customers first, and then reply with our honest answers and thoughts. We understand that different people have different goals and we want to know what their goals are, in order to best help and guide them. Customer care is truly being kind and treating them with respect.

In short, here is a quick list of do’s and don’ts in customer care:

DO...

- Answer the Phone – Communication is Key! People feel valued by how quickly you respond to them.
- Answer the Phone – Just in case you missed it... answer your phone.

- Listen to Your Customer – hear out their goals and their concerns
- Respond kindly and politely
- Offer your honest opinion
- Provide the best product you can! – Your customers deserve high-quality livestock so you owe it to them to buy the best females, match them with the right boars, feed them quality feed, and provide a healthy environment.
- Handle concerns quickly – Although uncomfortable, handle any negative issues promptly and in a fair manner for both the customer and your business.
- Be Kind, Be Cheerful, Sound Happy to be working with the customer
- Say Thank You! – A little thank you goes a long way!
- Work Hard and Be Honest – Again your customers deserve the very best, knowing they can come to you for a reliable animal is key
- Answer Your Phone – Just a reminder

DON’T...

- Don’t allow issues to go more than a day unsolved.
- Don’t forget to call back and follow up
- Don’t pass the blame for undesired outcomes – work together for a solution instead
- Don’t think you are more valuable than the customer; they make you who you are
- Don’t forget the little guy, often he is the most loyal.

At the end of the day, customer care can either make or break your business. Communicating and being kind will truly take your business a long way. Everything you have read to this point seems so simple and common and most likely you already know it, but do you do it? Do you answer your phone on the first ring or immediately call back if you’ve missed the call? Are you hustling and creating a plan for the best breeding stock? Do you handle conflict in a tactful manner that is fair to all? Do your customers feel like you are excited to talk to them or do you make them feel like an inconvenience? Do you give your honest opinion or say whatever just to make the sale? Customer Care is like showmanship... We all know the basics that it takes but those who implement a customer care plan and master these basics will succeed! If you make your customers a priority, they will come back year after year. •

FOO

IF YOU CHASE TWO RABBITS,



**FLY'N K BERKSHIRES HAD THE #1, #2, AND #3 PRIME
PORK INDEX SIRES IN THE 2020 ABA PROGENY TEST**

ELITE BOARS, BRED FEMALES, AND OPEN GILTS AVAILABLE

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Tom Conover - Bonnie Acres Farm A BERKSHIRE LEGEND

By Merrill Smith



What an honor. The Berkshire Board of Directors sent me on assignment to gather Berkshire history. My first stop was Holstein, Iowa to learn about Bonnie Acres Farm and visit with 96-year-old Tom Conover. It would take volumes of books to print all the information I was given in writing and by my interview.

Clifton Conover (Tom's dad) along with his brother, Clark, bought a farm in 1912. Clifton's wife, (Tom's mother) was from Scotland and loved how "pretty" it was in western Iowa. In Scotland, the name "Bonnie" means pretty, fine, or pleasant. So, the farm was called "Bonnie Acres."

Tom was born in the very house he still lives in today on March 15, 1924. It was -10°F that day and it was

difficult to get the Doctor to the house because of the snow and cold. Tom's dad met the Doctor on Highway 59 (which was a gravel road back then) with a horse and sled.

Tom went into the military right out of high school as World War II had begun. He could have gotten a deferment as farmers were encouraged to stay home and provide much-needed food. However, all of Tom's high school buddies were city boys and they all went to the military. Tom did not think it was fair for him to stay home while his buddies went to war. He told his dad; he was going to the military. His dad was not happy with that decision, but Tom went on to the military.

Tom fought in five major battles in World War II. He was a part of the third outfit to arrive at Normandy Beach. He said he survived that because he wasn't

part of the first troops to arrive at Normandy Beach. He fought in Northern France, Rhineland, Central Europe, and the Battle of the Bulge. His group was completely surrounded at the Battle of the Bulge and he survived that by hiding in a church steeple with two other soldiers for 2 days and 1 pack of food. Tom received 5 Battle Stars and a Bronze Star for his heroism in World War II.

Tom arrived back home after the war in September 1945. He knew Phyllis (his wife) from a high school dance before the war and returned to marry her. They lived in the house at Bonnie Acres after being married. Tom has lived in this house his entire life. Even though Bonnie Acres Farm was first purchased in 1912, Registered Berkshire hogs did not arrive on the farm until 1931. Berkshire females were purchased from George DeBar and Sons, Aurora, Iowa. The first Registered Berkshire boar was Rookwood Raider 14th from C. F. Curtiss, Ames, Iowa.

By the fall of 1939, Bonnie Acres had sold 64 Berkshire boars for the year. At the 1939 Chicago International, the Grand Champion carload of barrows over all breeds was shown by Karl and George Hoffman, Ida Grove, Iowa, and was sired by Bonnie Acres boars.

In 1940, the first Bonnie Acres Berkshire hog sale was held at the Holstein Sale Pavilion, Holstein, Iowa. Alex Conover also had Berkshires in this sale. The

auctioneer was a local person, Col. Hugh McGuire. Most hog sales back then were held in the early spring and Col. Hugh McGuire sold the first few sales for Bonnie Acres.

By the time the fourth sale was scheduled for February 18, 1943, Tom was enlisted in the military. However, they continued to have sales each February. The 1944 sale listed Wilbur Phaser for The Berkshire News. The Conover's were selling 100-125 Berkshire boars a year by this time.

By January 1946, Tom had returned home from the war. As a result of all his travels before the war, during the war, and after the war, he had been in 26 states and 10 countries and saw a lot of Berkshires during his lifetime. He exhibited Bonnie Acres Berkshires at the 1946 National Western Stock Show in Denver. In 1948 Bonnie Acres exhibited Berkshires at six state fairs including Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, Kansas, South Dakota, and Colorado.

They continued to have annual sales and in 1950 they had their first fall production sale. It was held on October 2 1950 at 8:00 pm at the Holstein Sale Pavilion. Bonnie Acres in 1950 had five living state fair Grand Champion females in their herd. In 1951, Bonnie Acres sold the top-selling litter of the breed at \$2,110. By 1952, Bonnie Acres had bred the sires of eight Chicago International Grand Champion carloads of barrows.



STARTING OFF 2021 RIGHT



MCF9 Anchor 3-3 x WTX8 Deep End 66-1, NOW CALLED:
MCFO BOJANGLES 11-1

Our 2021 SWTC boar entry was sired by our line-bred herd boar MCF9 Anchor 3-3 back on a WTX8 Deep End 66-1 dam. Bojangles is both Stress Negative and free of the Rendement Napole Gene!

**RAR Genetics purchased our boar at
the 2021 SWTC in Belton, TX and
McCasland Farms wishes to thank them.**

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The 1955 production sale featured a new sales staff. The auctioneer was Col. Keith Goode; the ABA was represented by Willard Brittin and Jim Baldridge was the herdsman and later a Berkshire Fieldman. 1955 and 1956 were drought years and very low hog prices. The October 1957 sale was a poor sale the top boar bringing \$90. Because of poor ag economics, Bonnie Acres had no sales from 1958 till September 1969. That sale featured the offspring of Lynnwood Record, the Grand Champion boar at the 1968 Summer Type Conference. All the pigs in the sale were scanned for backfat, loin eye, and weighed for days to 220lbs. There was also kill data from two littermates for many of the hogs selling. This was known as Certified Lean Meat litters. Production sales were again held annually and semiannually from 1969 thru 1983. After 1983, sales were made by consigning to sales like Summer Type Conference, National Barrow Show, Iowa State Fair, and private treaty.

Tom Conover's dad, Cliff passed away in 1963, and his mom, Cora, passed away in 1973. They were responsible for naming and helping Bonnie Acres to become a successful agriculture farm. This provided for Tom's start and his leadership not only led to the future of Bonnie Acres but also the Berkshire breed. Tom was elected to the ABA Board of Directors for many years. Tom was the only man to be President and have a son also serve as President. Many of Tom's sons, grandsons, and nephews have served on the ABA Board.

Tom Conover has judged swine shows all over the United States. It is estimated around 250 shows. Some include the Cow Palace and Orange Country Fair in California; Pennsylvania Farm Show; S.W. Berkshire Winter Type Conference in Kansas and Texas; Red River Valley Fair, North Dakota; Sioux Empire Farm Show, South Dakota; and at least 11 different state fairs. He also judged in at least 19 county fairs in Iowa multiple times.

Tom's awards and honors are too numerous to list in this story. Both he and his wife, Phyllis, were honored by the ABA with the Distinguished Service Award. Phyllis passed away in 1992 after a long battle with cancer. She gave Bonnie Acres Farm the feeling of wonderful hospitality and a most cordial welcome to all visitors. She was loved by all. In August 1993, Tom married Shirley and she has only added to the

comfort and joy you receive at Bonnie Acres Farm. She has embraced the Conover family and their traditions and she is so much loved by them. Sitting at the kitchen table with Tom and Shirley was a thrill for me.

Tom Conover exhibited Grand Champions, Reserve Grand Champions, and Premier Sires at state and national shows all over the country. I received a list of these winners with names of the shows and the dates they were exhibited that were nine pages long. Tom was a 4-H leader for over 25 years and served as the swine superintendent at the county fair. He influenced more than 1,000 Ida county 4-Her's by helping with 4-H demonstrations, livestock judging, and the 4-H swine show. He was inducted into the Iowa 4-H Hall of Fame in 2015.

Vince Branigan was the Western Berkshire Fieldman from 1946-1951 and was very involved in Berkshires and the ag industry (especially in Iowa) until his death in 2007. Vince wrote about many of his Berkshire experiences and people he met during his later years of life. He wrote one of the best tributes to the Conover family, when he wrote, "The descendants of Cliff Conover have had the greatest influence on a single breed of livestock of any family in American Livestock Breeding." Tom Conover is a big part of this statement. The Berkshire breed is forever grateful to Tom Conover and the Conover family. Tom's son, Allen Conover, is carrying on the 89-year Bonnie Acres Berkshire membership. This may well be the longest continuous Berkshire herd in existence today. •

The American Berkshire Association would like to thank Merrill Smith for his efforts to get Berkshire history in writing. The ABA's 150th Anniversary committee tasked Merrill with collecting stories from some of the longest-standing, historied American Berkshire Association members that have left a lasting impact on the breed. We are thankful and proud that Merrill has dedicated his time to preserving the legacy of these legendary Berkshire breeders. The story of Tom Conover and Bonnie Acres Farm is one of many that will be written for years to come. We hope you enjoy these stories and join us in recognizing those that have been dedicated to living, breathing, and eating Berkshire!



UPCOMING DATES+DEADLINES



The ABA is teaming up with CPS and Team Purebred to host The Recovery at the Iowa State Fairgrounds May 24-28. The entry deadline is May 3.



This year's Summer Type Conference will be held at the Illinois State Fairgrounds June 21-26. The entry deadline is June 2.



We're excited for the return of the National Barrow Show! This 75th anniversary celebration will be Sept. 12-14 in Austin, Minn. The entry deadline is August 11.

146th Annual Meeting of the American Berkshire Association

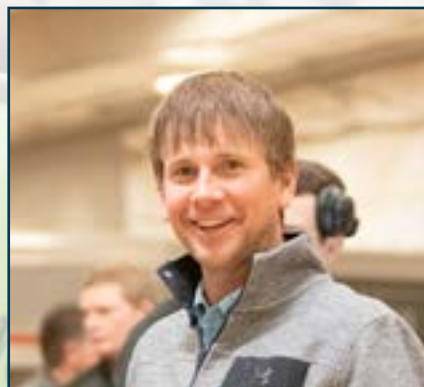
Thursday, June 24th at 5pm

Held in conjunction with the Summer Type Conference in Springfield, Ill.

The American Berkshire Association nominating committee is excited to announce candidates for the 2021-2022 Board of Directors. Members will receive their meeting packets in May with more information.



Allen K. Conover · Baxter, Iowa



Brice Conover · Baxter, Iowa



Ben Schmaling · Prescott, Iowa



Steve Stassen · Kirkhoven, Minn.



Jeff Smith · Princeville, Ill.



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