

# The Lincoln Letter

Publisher-North American Lincoln Red Association

Winter 2020

## President's Report

2020 will be a year to remember with our normal routine altered by COVID-19. School has been from home in the Spring and I am not sure how I managed without the kids' assistance on the farm before. They have been great watching for the cows calving and we have never had a quieter group of yearling heifers from all the attention they receive.

With a nice Fall in Southern Ontario, the cattle were able to utilize a hay field for extended grazing into the Fall which has carried themselves and their calves in great body condition into the winter. Even had a few calves out in pasture this year which was stressful when one calf decided to go through the fence and lay in the ditch across the road. With persistence, we found him at midnight and he has never looked back since.

I was asked a few years ago by a respected cattleman if I have seen improvements in our Lincoln Red herd. To answer this, I had to remind myself of my long-term breeding goals of improving udder quality, tighter calving interval and select for easy keeping cattle that will perform well in grass fed operations. Over the past 15 years, we have seen improvements in these traits while maintaining our distinct cow families. There are always hard culling decisions but the results of improved quality and performance of our Lincoln Red herd is gratifying.

Wishing you a great 2021!  
Scott



Our deepest condolences go out to the family of Sheldon Schmaltz of Worsley, AB who unexpectedly passed away on February 23, 2020. Life is short; cherish your family, friends and animals.

**Annual General Meeting**  
**March 6, 2021**  
**Via Teleconference**



**It's Twins!**

Photo shared by Lenoard Beddoes



Photo by Kate Lussier Photography



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## Bloodlines & Strains

D. P. Sponenberg

Bloodlines and strains are subgroups within a breed, and often are important reservoirs of variation and genetic diversity. While definitions vary, these usually designate a subpopulation that has been isolated from the others of the breed for several generations (usually four or more) with the consequence that they are somewhat genetically distinct from other bloodlines. Bloodlines are usually linked to certain breeders or farms, and can be distinct historically and genetically. The link of bloodlines to breeders is a reflection not only of their genetic isolation, but also of the selection practices of that individual breeder. The degree of distinction of bloodlines can be problematic, for it is easily possible to come back to the question of “what is a breed?” and the specific degree of genetic distinction that should be included or excluded as a single breed.

The bloodlines within a breed can be very important reservoirs of genetic variation, and managing these within the overall breed is important to long term breed survival. Bloodline conservation can lead to fads and shifts in popularity of one bloodline versus another. Some of these shifting fates may be related to production potential or to breed character, in which case these shifts may be warranted. Many times, though, the popularity of a bloodline is related to the advertising or show ring success of a capable promoter. In those cases a bloodline can easily swamp a breed with little underlying genetic reason for doing so. In nearly all cases it makes sense for a breed association to work to effectively conserve all of the component bloodlines of a breed.

One strategy to avoid is for breeders to all recruit males of a single bloodline. This only assures that the genetic diversity of the breed will soon be completely swamped by that one bloodline, and that little or nothing from the other bloodlines will survive. While this can be an attractive short-term situation for the breeder with the popular line, it is almost invariably bad for the long-term future of the breed.

Setting out to make your own bloodline appeals to many breeders. The key here is selection of original stock, and then closing the group to outside breeding for at least about four generations or so. This usually involves linebreeding or even inbreeding, so breeders need to be

sure to start with enough genetic variation that they can manage linebreeding without experiencing inbreeding depression. Different groups of animals resist inbreeding depression at different levels, and it is impossible to predict the relative resistance beforehand. It is wisest to try to avoid multiple generations of half-sibling matings, but matings more distant than that are usually safe. As a practical issue it is usually necessary to begin with two or more males, and at least four females. This allows for breeding back and forth between the original founders and the offspring in different ways to keep the inbreeding low. For example, the gilt of one pair could then be mated back to the other original boar (not her sire), and those piglets could then be potential mates for yet other offspring from the other sows.

Importantly, bloodlines remain a part of their breed! Breeders should be diligent to always keep in mind the breed standard, and the traditional form and function of the breed. When breeders favor extremes, it is easy for the animals to no longer be typical of the breed, and the original form and function are lost. This is true not only of physical form, but also of temperament and other mental traits that make stock either a delight or a real headache.

Once the bloodline is established, it is usually necessary to periodically add in new breeding in order to avoid the inevitable advance of levels of inbreeding. This, of course depends on the size of the herd, and in some Spanish goat herds of thousands the issue will never arise! In most other situations, outside genetics are occasionally needed. The problem is that this immediately changes the bloodline, so that it is no longer “original.” One strategy to avoid losing the strength of the bloodline is to select the outcross animal to be as similar in type as can be found. That animal can then be mated to animals of the original bloodline, and then the offspring mated once again back to the original bloodline. At this point the products will be  $\frac{3}{4}$  the original genetic material, and will likely perform like the originals. Most breeders might prefer to take it one more generation, to  $\frac{7}{8}$  original breeding, before calling the animals their own bloodline.

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## Don't Blame The Cow

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Americans have had a long love affair with members of the genus *Bos*. The cow has been intimately woven into the fabric of this country from the very beginning. Oxen pulled the wagons west, plowed our fields, threshed our grain and powered millstones to grind the wheat for bread. Their meat has fed us, their milk has nourished us and our children and their hides have clothed us. Early US history produced terms like “cow chip”, “cow pie”, “cow town”, “cow bell” and “cow birds”. As the West developed, new terms emerged like “cow boy”, “cow girl”, “cow poke”, “cow hand” and “cow catcher” as trail drives and rail heads became common. More recently terms like “until the cows come home” and “the cow jumped over the moon” became part of our language. We even have a percentage of the population sporting “cowlicks” in reference to the cow’s large, sandpaper-like tongue. Other modern contributions include pharmaceuticals which have had a tremendous impact in the medical field. I, myself, am the proud recipient of bovine tissue used to repair two damaged heart valves. I’m fully recovered now, but continue to have an insatiable craving for salad!

Yes, the cow is an American icon and the benefits she provides are obvious. However, there are other valuable contributions she constantly delivers, and unfortunately, most all of it goes unrecognized by nearly everyone in the country. The bovine is an herbivore that belongs to the ruminant family which includes sheep, goats, deer, elk, bison and others. All of these species have a rumen, or fermentation vat, that digests cellulose, which is a mostly fibrous material from plants. It is an insoluble product made from complex glucose chains and is contained in hay, grass, corn stalks, leaves, twigs and other products. Ruminants have the unique ability to break down any form of cellulose to cellular carbons. Their unique digestive system then uses the carbons as a backbone to form amino acids by attaching hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen and sulfur atoms to the mix. These amino acids become the building blocks of protein which is found in the end products, milk and meat. So the ruminant is a “factory” that transforms products non-edible for humans (forages) into high quality food products that can satisfy all of the human nutritional requirements. Forty percent of the world’s land base is used for agriculture, but only 11%

worldwide is tillable. The US is slightly higher at 17%. So the ruminant can graze the non-tillable areas (hillside pastures) and make them very productive. Joel Salatin, a Virginia farmer and grazer authored a book entitled “Folks, this ain’t normal”. He pays tribute to the cow stating “she is the most efficacious soil-building, hydrology-cycling, carbon-sequestering tool at the planet’s disposal”.

So if the cow is such a superstar, why is she so maligned today? Why do we have “Meatless Mondays”, “Impossible” plant-based burgers and other misguided attempts to increase plant-based foods and reduce our meat consumption? Biased and misinformed organizations have equated the cow to a villain that is destroying the environment by increasing green house gases (GHGs) which are causing climate change. They blame “farting” cows for much of the problem. The major GHGs are water vapor, carbon dioxide, methane and ozone. Ruminants contribute only small amounts of methane through eructation (belching, from chewing cud, not farting) which is only 4 to 9 % of the total GHGs. Dave Sjeklocha, Beef Magazine contributor, recently identified the biggest culprits contributing to GHGs according to EPA figures: Transportation, 29%; electricity industry, 28%; manufacturing industry, 22%; commercial and residential, 12% and agriculture, 9%. Of the 9% attributed to agriculture, livestock make up only 3%. In the last 50 years vehicle numbers have increased by 150 million cars and trucks, fuel consumption has increased nearly 140 million gallons a day to 385 million. Additionally, there are 87,000 flights each day in US airspace that burn nearly 18 billion gallons of fuel annually. He goes on to point out that in the same 50 year time period there has been a 28% reduction in the national beef herd and a 65% reduction in dairy cows, yet we are producing more milk and meat than ever before with these lower populations. The point is that efficiency in the livestock industry has “improved drastically”. He ends his article stating that to reduce GHGs “shouldn’t we focus more on the sources of GHG that are expanding, rather than the sources that have a proven track record for reducing GHGs?”

Another slam on the cow and other ruminants is that they are wreaking havoc on the ecology through over grazing. Joel Salatin contends that “the acceleration of environmental degradation in the last century is not because we have too many cows, but because we have too few”. This bold statement is factual and based on a

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simple reaction you may have learned in high school chemistry; photosynthesis. This process is where green plants use sunlight to synthesize carbohydrates from carbon dioxide and water while oxygen is generated as a byproduct. Much of the carbon dioxide removed from the air is sequestered as carbon in the plant's root system. In order to do this, the plant must be growing, or in its vegetative state for this process to work. Dead or decaying plants actually give off carbon dioxide which only increases GHGs. Grazing animals are a necessary and indispensable part of the ecological cycle, in fact, acting as "pruners" which ultimately stimulate plant vigor and improve a denser root system. This in turn builds soil when combined with the manure generated by animals in a "managed" grazing system. Perennials are more desirable for generating new soil rather than annuals which require tilling, which, in turn, release carbon back into the air. That is why constant tilling to produce plant-based foods is a problem. Salatin admits that cows "have done a tremendous amount of damage" but he contends that we "managers" are, and continue to be, the problem. He continues to say "the same animal mismanaged to abuse the ecology is the greatest hope and salvation to heal the ecology". Grass management is perhaps the most important aspect of profitable and sustainable beef production. After all, we cattle producers are actually all "grass" farmers and the cattle merely the harvest machines.

The bottom line is that cows must be an integral part of any "Green New Deal" legislation being touted by some well-meaning but naïve congressional members. Unfortunately, misinformation and hysteria capture the headlines rather than facts and figures that offer proof of a very compatible and necessary existence between the environment and the cow. Our legislators are listening to the wrong people. Arm yourself with knowledge and spread the word! We, as livestock producers, have a great story to tell and we need to tell it, because no one else will.

Photo Credits on pages 4-6 go to  
Kate Lussier Photography and  
Bread and Beast Food Photography.



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## Veteran Ryan Salvas' New Mission: "Radical Roots Farm" by Morgan Ingram

Both Ryan Salvas and his wife, Alycia grew up in inner-city Rhode Island. Ryan joined the Army in 2009, and during his service, they were relocated to Tennessee where they fell in love with the open space and more simple lifestyle. Ryan and his family served four years of active duty and an additional four years in the National Guard. It was a deployment that would be a huge turning point for him though. Ryan explained, "We were responsible for gathering intel and watching villagers in Afghanistan on the Pakistan border to differentiate between friends/enemies. We spent a lot of time just watching people's movements and observing the way they lived. It seemed as if they were just stuck in a more simple time. Everyone had their own job in their village and took care of their community's needs. It really had me reflecting on the way we live in America. There is always this rush to get nowhere and it seems that people just have no purpose other than the almighty dollar. It reminded me that we have to get back to the basics here; caring about one another and focusing on our communities' needs." That's when Ryan decided that he wanted to get back to the basics.

Now living in Connecticut, the Salvas family owns the Radical Roots livestock farm. And it has become a form of alternative therapy for Ryan. Originally, they only wanted to have a small backyard farm to meet the needs of their family. But they fell in love with their animals and new lifestyle. They raise all heritage breeds of livestock. These endangered breeds include Highland and Lincoln Red cattle, Mulefoot and Mangalitsa hogs, and Narragansett turkeys. Ryan and Alycia did a lot of research before starting and found the breeds that best fit their location. Alycia commented that the mothering instincts are amazing, and they are "easy keepers" and so different from commercial breeds. "Once we tried our meat we knew we had something special that more people should have the opportunity to try," Alycia said. So Radical Roots became officially established in 2018.

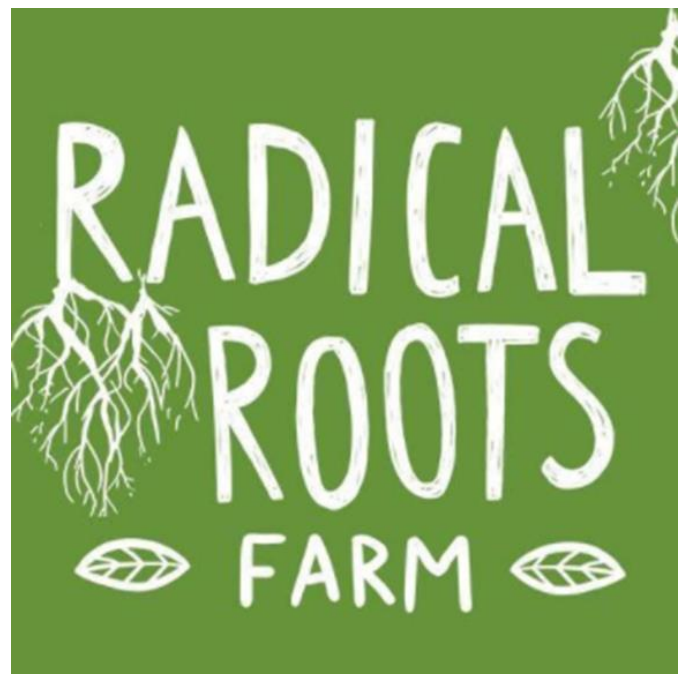
Ryan is a recipient of the 2020 Farmer Veteran Fellowship Fund from the Farmer Veteran Coalition (FVC). Ryan said, "Livestock and humans both face challenges, but for veterans and endangered animals those challenges can be



photo credit: Lisa Nichols/Bread & Beast

**Ryan and Alycia Salvas started a successful rare breeds livestock farm called Radical Roots.**

critical to overcome. The Farmer Veteran Fellowship Fund awarding my farm a \$5000 grant for rare Lincoln Red Cattle has helped me feel like I belong to the herd again, just in a different way." They have used this grant to purchase five new heifers. In addition to the growth in livestock, Ryan and Alycia are looking to purchase a larger property.



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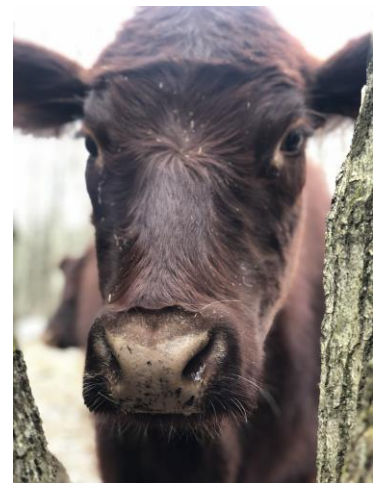
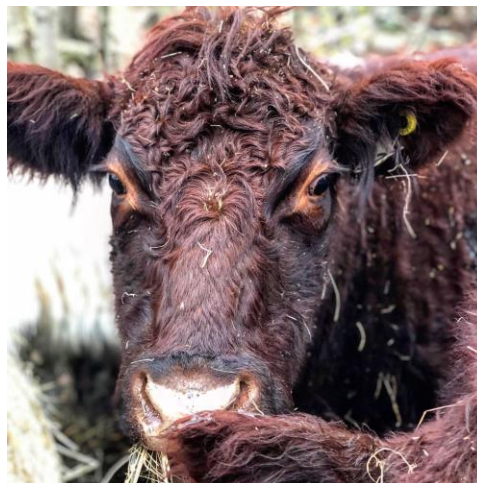
And they are in the process of starting a non-profit called ContemPLATE, Inc. The non-profit offers training programs and assistance to veterans as a form of rehabilitation through agriculture. They also want to reach out to law enforcement and others with mental health needs. Ryan talked about how difficult it was to come home and readjust to civilian life. Having been in an environment where you were constantly engaged in high-risk activities and meeting the physical and mental requirements of those tasks. He needed to find the release, which he discovered through agriculture. He wants to offer not only an understanding to fellow veterans but also the opportunity to experience the same satisfaction that he found through agriculture.

Ryan and his wife have found a life they love. And they want to share this love with others. Either by way of quality meat from their farm or by sharing their wisdom and passion with others through ContemPLATE, Inc. Their story is amazing, and their success proves that anyone with a true passion can do anything, even without previous experience or background.

## About the Author:

*Morgan Ingram is a work from home Army wife. She likes to multitask in her personal and professional life. She has hands in many pots and is the content manager for Growing America, marketing assistant for Mad Llama Marketing, and a freelance writer. Drop her an email or call her at 804.892.9501.*

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## **SEEING IS BELIEVING!**

Take a look at Lincoln Reds at one of these farms:

- **Scott & Heather McClinchey – President**  
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- **John & Lorraine Ashby**  
Stonehedge Farms  
Prescott, ON  
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- **Sarah Band**  
Mohill Farms  
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- **George McQueen**  
McQueen-Vue Farms  
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[info@mcqueenpaving.com](mailto:info@mcqueenpaving.com)  
(705) 445-7065
- **Wallace & Patrick Milner**  
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[patrickmilnercattle@hotmail.ca](mailto:patrickmilnercattle@hotmail.ca)  
(902) 667-8815
- **Eric Pierson**  
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Take a look at Lincoln Reds at one of these farms:

- **Larry and Sarah Pedelty –Secretary**  
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[sarahpedelty@gmail.com](mailto:sarahpedelty@gmail.com)
- **Rose’s Lincoln Reds**  
Amherst, NS B4H 3Y1  
(902) 667-9834
- **Alycia & Ryan Salvas**  
Canterbury, CT  
[radicalroots.llc@gmail.com](mailto:radicalroots.llc@gmail.com)
- **Colby & Ellen Sutenfield**  
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- **William Vancise**  
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### **Walnut Drive Farms – William Vancise**

Bull Calf: WDF Hemingway Daiquiri 9 H was born on April 25th 2020. He is pictured minutes after he was born with his Dam: Hill Haven Cumberland Skye 9 C (She is Shorthorn and a ¼ Lincoln Red, grand sire Claydene Gold). The calf was up and nursing in under 5 minutes, no assistance in any manner, all instinctive. Birth weight 80 pounds. Sire is: St. Fort Squire P4259



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