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Preface

The American Livestock Breeds Conservancy

The American Livestock Breeds Conservancy (ALBC) is a non-profit organization working to protect genetic diversity in American livestock through the conservation of nearly 100 breeds of asses, cattle, goats, horses, sheep, swine, and poultry. The organization is supported by gifts from individuals, grants from foundations and corporations, and contracts.

The American Livestock Breeds Conservancy was founded as the American Minor Breeds Conservancy in 1977 in New England. Agricultural historians, while seeking authentic period livestock for interpretive programs at Old Sturbridge Village and other historic sites, discovered that many heritage breeds were nearly extinct. The historians joined with farmers and animal scientists to form AMBC, and set its mission as the conservation of endangered breeds of livestock. The organization moved to Pittsboro, North Carolina in 1985. The name was changed to the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy in 1993 to reflect the increasingly serious threat to all livestock breeds, and a consequent widening of the organization's sphere of activities.

The American Livestock Breeds Conservancy directs many conservation and research programs. A periodic census of livestock breeds, which includes the monitoring of bloodlines within many of the rarer breeds, provides the knowledge base for developing these programs. Conservation projects include a gene bank, blood typing and DNA fingerprinting to characterize breed identity, rescues of threatened populations, and the development of genetic recovery breeding programs. ALBC provides technical support for conservation breeding, registry operation, and livestock use to breeders, breed associations, and agriculture organizations. Outreach programs educate the public and policy makers about the importance of genetic diversity in livestock.

The American Livestock Breeds Conservancy is the national leader in livestock conservation and the clearinghouse for information on endangered breeds of livestock. ALBC is also a founding member of Rare Breeds International, a global network of livestock conservation organizations. For more information about the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy and Livestock Genetic Conservation, write to ALBC, PO Box 477, Pittsboro NC 27312-0477, USA.

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