

Funding Agencies

1. USDA SARE Farmer/Grower Grant. "Open Range" Woodlands: An Untapped Resource for Small-Scale Farms; Grant # FNE08-649
2. USDA SARE Farmer/Grower Grant # FNE06-593. Producing Upscale Pork for Small-Scale Farmers: an Appalachian Application. C.W. Talbott, T. McConnell, R. Wallbrown, D. McGill, J. Rentch. 2006.
3. USDA Rural Development Fund. Producing an Appalachian Dry-Cured Ham from Mast-Fed Hogs.
4. Sustainable Integrated Systems *transforming agriculture* (SiSta).

Technical Support

1. WVU Extension Service
2. WVU Small Farms Center
3. USDA Soil and Water Conservation
4. UK Sustainable Farming Program
5. Woodlands Pork, LLC



Black Oak Holler Farm

Producing West Virginia Gourmet Pork for American Charcuterie



Black Oak Holler Farm, LLC

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Woodlands Pork, LLC

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Black Oak Holler Farm, LLC



Black Oak Holler Farm (BOHF) is located in Mason County, West Virginia in Appalachia's Central Forest Region. We breed and raise pigs on pasture, field crops, and in woodlots. This unique management system reduces dependence on fossil fuels, builds organic soils, and utilizes and may improve the forests.

Finishing our pigs in the woods (on oak/hickory mast) takes advantage of a perennial feedstock that influences the flavor and fat profiles of our meat. Our genetics utilize the breed characteristics of the Ossabaw and Eurasian Wild Boar, and when crossed with Farmers' Hybrid/Large Black, we maximize the meat characteristics required for our own Appalachian Charcuterie - Woodlands Pork. Black Oak Holler Farm is also the training and demonstration site for SISta, a non-profit organization registered by the WV Secretary of State.

Background

Chuck Talbott partnered with Nic Heckett in 2005 and moved the first herd of pigs onto Talbott's 267-acre farm in Mason County. Dr. Talbott, who formerly directed the North Carolina A&T University the Alternative Small-Scale Swine Program, and Heckett, a ham-aficionado, were determined to produce dry-cured hams in the United States that would rival the prosciuttos and Spanish hams of Europe. With Heckett's vision and Talbott's experience, pork raised on BOHF and finished in the woods has produced award-winning Mountain Ham™ under the label, Woodlands Pork, LLC. Our Mountain Ham™, an Appalachian dry-cured ham won the American Treasures Award for 2011.

As the success of Woodlands Pork, LLC grows, so does the demand for this niche market pork. The company is currently working on its own USDA approved and inspected processing facility that will highlight Mountain Hams™ and produce a variety of other



value-added pork products from hogs produced on small-scale Appalachian farms. Woodlands Pork, LLC continues to support Black Oak Holler Farm as its breeding, research and training site. BOHF receives additional support from state and federal agencies and non-profit organizations.

Project Goals and Objectives

With additional funding by USDA SARE, USDA Rural Development Fund, and SISta, as well as technical assistance from the WVU Small Farms Center, WVU Extension Service, and the WV Department of Agriculture, we help Appalachian small-scale farmers find new



markets and higher profit margins by raising swine in ways that enhances pork flavor (diet, genetics and management systems) and the environment they are raised in. Grants are sought for farmers to: 1) identify stocking densities for each individual farm based on the available resources (i.e. acorns, apples, squash) that can be sustainably grown , 2) demonstrate a carbon conscious tillage and production model using animal traction , and 3) determine production costs to produce fresh and value-added pork.

Our project collaborates with processors and nonprofit programs to market value-added products. We educate the public about the advantages of buying the highest quality pork from local farmers who demonstrate that they are good stewards of their land and animals. All participants, farmers, chefs and consumers, understand that food produced locally and sustainably is important for rural re-vitalization and community food security. Participants will collectively develop and support a **"Fair-Farm-Fare"** pricing structure which categorically recognizes (on the label) the small-scale farmer's input into the retail price.