

Large Black Hog Association

Breed Standard and Selection Guide

Updated November 2016

The LBHA is implementing the American standard for the Large Black Hog. The standard will translate the British terminology to American terminology and reflect the hog as we see it today in North America. This standard will help all breeders make better decisions about which Large Blacks to retain as breeding stock or which is to be sent to the processor. It is imperative that we ALL improve our selection process to ensure the quality of the genetics we steward for this breed. The guide is used for both the males and females as each is one half of the genetic equation for successive generations.

It is vital for the long term conservation of our breed to keep only the highest quality of animals for the registered breeding program. One could expect to see only about 10% of litters to meet this standard. For those that do not meet the standard will still have value for the breed as a commercially viable product for pork production. This pork has the ability to be the choice for professional chefs, artisans and family tables. It is superb pork and excels when traditionally cured.

To be eligible for registration these basic requirements must be met:

The offspring must come from both parents that are already registered in either the LBHA herd book or in a recognized registry at the LBHA's discretion.

Ear-notched and birth recorded with the LBHA via litter certificate or birth notification in accordance with current regulations.

History

The Large Black is believed to have been developed in the late 1800's from Chinese breeds brought to England. They are of the "bacon" type, or meat producer, instead of the "lard" type common of that day. They became known as the Devon or Cornwall pigs from their area of origin before becoming just the "Large Black." By the 1900's the Large Black Hogs were spread throughout Britain in outdoor pork production operations. The Large Black Hogs were imported into the U.S. in the 1950's and again in the 1990's where they were bred by a handful of breeders for the exquisite and unique taste of the Large Black's pork.

The Large Black resulted from the amalgamation of black pigs from two geographically separate areas, Devon and Cornwall in the south-west of England, and Essex, Suffolk and Kent in the east. The pigs from eastern England, mainly Essex, were influenced by importations from China in the late 18th century, while those from Devon and Cornwall were probably more closely related to the pigs in mainland Europe, particularly France. The Devon pigs were originally selected for "the length of their bodies, ears, noses, tail and hair, the longer the better, without reference to quality or substance", but selective breeding brought improvements to the breed, and by 1850 the type was small-boned and thick-bodied, with good conformation and constitution. Alternative origins proposed for the black color of the breed are black Guinea hogs imported from Africa (similar to the Guinea Hog of the US) or from Neapolitan pigs.

They were originally favored for many reasons including their hardiness, mothering ability, milk production and prolificacy. The Large Black is a very efficient pork producer because it can glean a large portion of its food from grazing. Unlike many breeds of hog, their black skin protects them from sunburn and enables them to live outdoors on open pastures.

Disqualifications

Is not black in color or has white spots anywhere on the body. Badly deformed legs, broken down legs, low pasterns, extra toes or excessively bent hocks. Free of congenital defects such as umbilical and scrotal hernias, artesia ani (blind anus), cryptorchid boars (undescended testicles) or hermaphrodites.

Detailed Description

Head and Face: Well-proportioned to the body of medium length. Broad and wide between the ears. Eyes set wide apart, large, bright, symmetrical and inline to where the ears connect to the head. Face slightly dished to almost straight. Nose pliable and nostrils symmetrical and large.

Objections: Head out of proportion to the body. Narrow set eyes or at different levels. Crooked nose. Face extremely dished. Narrow forehead.

Jowl & Cheek: Broad, full and smooth. Strong under jaw.

Objections: Loose, flabby or small, thin and wedge like.

Ears: Set wide apart, symmetrical in form and attachment, long and lopped over the face.

Objections: Thick and cabbage leafed.

Neck: Long, thick and well-proportioned to the body.

Objections: Thin and shallow.

Shoulders: Broad, deep and full. Muscle should extend well down and in line with the ribs. Shoulder should not protrude above the line of the back.

Objections: Small, thin and shallow. Protruding above the line of the back.

Chest: Large, wide, deep and broad.

Objections: Flat, shallow or narrow.

Back: Very long and strong, good width that is even from shoulder to ham. Firm not pliable. Surface even and smooth.

Objections: Narrow, swayed or very humped back.

Loin: Broad and strong

Objections: Weak and mushy.

Sides & Ribs: Long and moderately deep. Well sprung, strong and in proportion to the width of the shoulders and hams.

Objections: Shallow, narrow, flabby

Hams: Very broad, firm and full. Well-muscled down to the hock

Objections: Small, thin or shallow

Tail: Thick and set moderately high

Objections: Thin, very short, set too low or too high

Legs: Well set under the hog, straight and strong with a nice taper. Pasterns strong. Feet firm and tough. Toes balanced, straight and of equal size.

Objections: Legs out of proportion to body, Splayed or crooked toes. Toes of unequal size. Badly deformed legs, broken down legs, low pasterns, extra toes or excessively bent hocks.

Coat: Straight black hair with blue-black soft skin

Objections: Curly or bristly-mane

Underline: Full, straight underline with at least 12 sound, evenly well placed teats that start well forward.

Action & Style: Animated, vigorous and easy movement on the hoof

Objections: Dull, wobbling, stiff or awkward in movement.

Condition: Excessive fat to be discouraged. Healthy appearance with no signs of mange, scruff, lice or sores. Well fleshed with good muscle tone. Tissue free of lumps and bumps.

Objections: Unhealthy, thin. Showing signs of disease or parasites. Hair dull, harsh.

