



**Nigerian Dwarf Goats** – though not historically accurate, these goats are known for their gentle & friendly personalities.



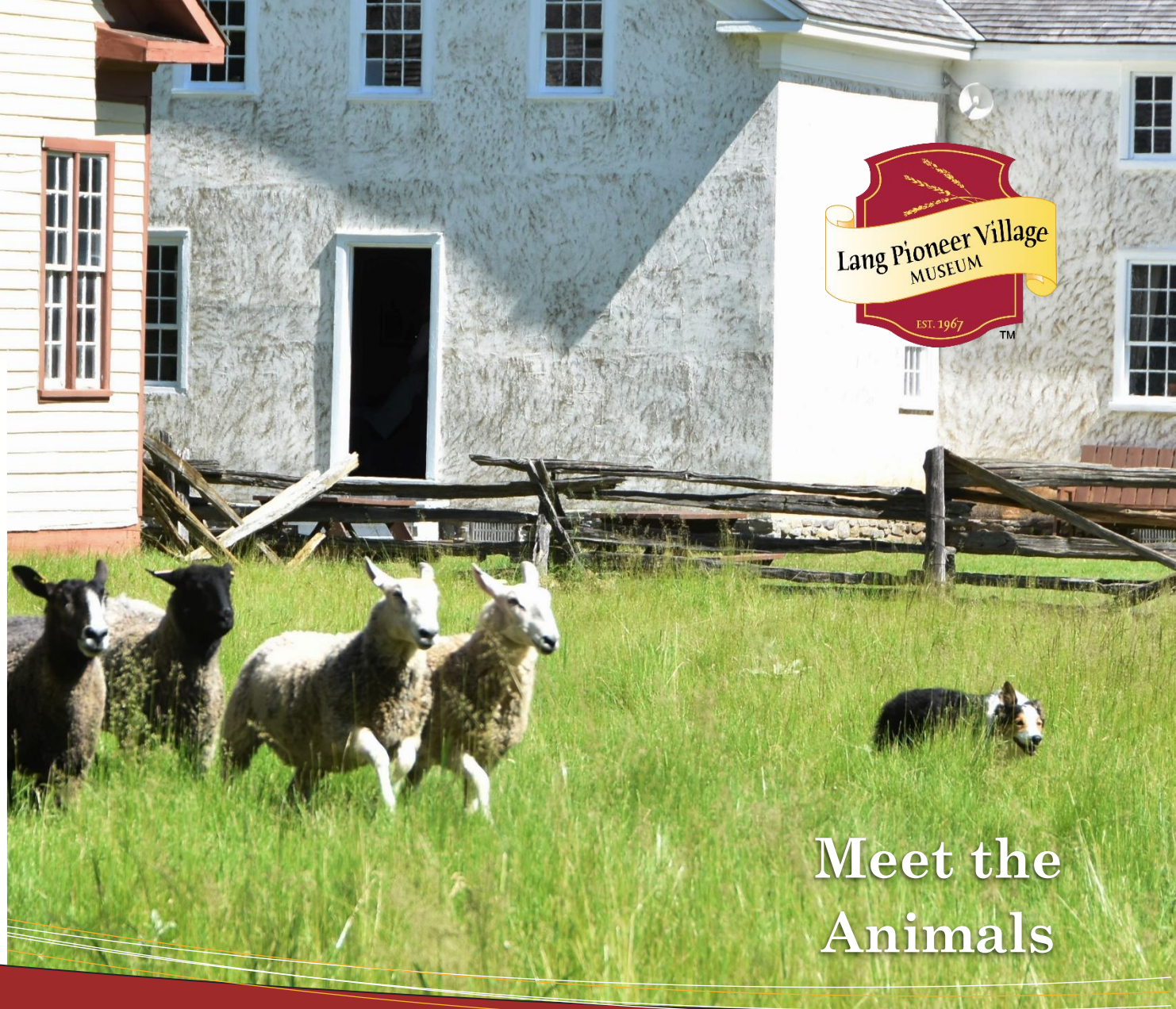
**Tamworth Pigs** – one of the oldest breeds of pigs. Their characteristic red hair helps to protect them from sunburns.



**Wiltshire Horned Sheep** - short fleece that naturally sheds in the spring leaving a short hair coat (a modern feature with the low demand for wool & high demand for meat)



**Nova Browns** - dark red feathers and yellow shanks, beak, and skin.



## Meet the Animals

## Names & Characteristics

All our animals this season were generously provided by Harley Farms.



<https://www.harleyfarms.ca>

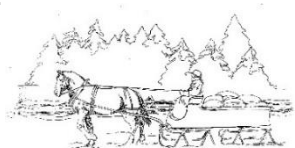
## An Interpretive Guide



# History & Origins

## THE IMPORTANCE OF ANIMALS

From early settlers needing animals to clear the land to Victorians partaking in "Hen Fever", agricultural heritage is deeply rooted. Throughout our site, you will see how animals were critical in working the land, transport, food and income.



## HISTORY OF FOWL

Fowl, better known as chickens, are a key feature of any farm. Catherine Parr Traill noted that, in Canada, fowl are left much to care for themselves, especially during the early parts of settlement, where French & British breeds were popular. Fowl are easily kept with a diet of leftovers such as scaled bran, scraps of meat or vegetables, refuse grain and ashes or gravelly substances. Though fowl provide meat, laying hens would add ample amount of eggs to fill a heritage diet.

From 1845 to roughly 1855 an obsession with owning & breeding the world's finest chickens had taken storm in Canada, Europe & the United States. The trend began when a young Queen Victoria purchased a chicken from China and quickly grew a liking to collecting rare breeds. A craze followed known as "Hen Fever", which introduced a wide variety of foreign chickens to Canada.

## HISTORY OF SHEEP

Sheep are often regarded as the most profitable of stock to be had on a farm because in favorable seasons, their worth doubles. Sheep after 1850 were worth their keep as the demand for wool in Canada grew, increasing the need for herds. Prior to this demand, farmers would keep a small flock (maximum 30) to supply the need for wool & meat. The primary breed in Ontario during the 19<sup>th</sup> century were Costwolds or "Long Wools" because their wool was favoured for spinning to make warm textiles. Champions of sheep raising note that sheep need little care in the summer as they graze & only needed the barest shelter in the winter.

## HISTORY OF GOATS

Like sheep, goats are an animal that provides many resources to a farm such as milk, meat and mohair. Goats are amongst the most domesticated livestock & often resemble characteristics to that of a dog. Due to this good temperament, goats would also be useful for drawing carts or other small objects. Canada had many breeds of goat but the first purebred goats were imported from Europe for their superior dairy stock.

Shearing of sheep usually occurs near the end of May as the weather is dry and warm. The sheep themselves would be washed & left to dry for a day to ensure the fleece was fully dry before shearing. After shearing, fat or oil would be rubbed onto the wool to guarantee soft fibres.

## HISTORY OF SWINE

Swine (pigs) are reflected as the slowest in improvement of stock that farmers kept in Canada. Prior to 1850, Berkshires were the popular breed weighing in around 600lbs. In 1850 though the breed lost its popularity when smaller breeds (weighing 300 lbs or less) became more available. By late 1880, a variety of pigs could be seen around Ontario, showing a considerable growth in swine farming in the region. Notably, pigs are great stock to have as they nibble like a goat but will eat anything from table scraps to snakes; a perfect addition to the pioneer mindset of waste not, want not.

Children were often quite afraid of early swine in Canada, as they did not resemble those we have today. With survival being the utmost importance for early families, livestock were often left to fend for themselves. Pigs were no different resulting in their temperament being mean, their appearance being skinny with long tusks & their home hidden in the bush.



## Did you know?