

# Gloucestershire Old Spots News

## Gloucestershire Old Spots of America

### HOGGING THE ROAD

Melanie Owen: Cross My Heart Farm, Florida

Transporting your pigs across state lines can be a very simple process. If you check the state swine transportation regulations well ahead of time for each state line that you will cross, you will be able to proceed with no problems. Many times you will not even be required to present the paperwork, although there are a few states that have a mandatory agriculture inspection site as you enter the state. I live in Florida which is one of those states.

I learned the hard way about required paperwork. I had searched online for state laws ahead of time. All I could find at the time involved transportation of feral hogs into Florida. The breeders I purchased my pigs from had both stated they would have health certificates for my pigs. One of the breeders got my pick-up dates mixed up and did not have my health paperwork ready, I did not think I would have any legal problems. No one had ever mentioned on any of the Yahoo or any of the other group sites that I visit about having transportation issues.

When I entered Florida and stopped at the Florida Agriculture Inspection Station I had my sale papers, registration papers and the one health certificate ready. The Inspection Officer had me pull over to inspect my animals further. The Officer inspected the pigs and verified that they were the ones listed on the health certificate and the sale papers, and then he dropped the bad news on me. He told me I had the following problems:

1. I had no Prior Permission Number. (A prior permission number is required on all swine imported into Florida. The prior permission

number must be written on the OCVI (Official Certificate of Veterinary Inspection) or Owner-Shipper Statement accompanying the animals.)

2. No health certificates for 2 of the pigs.
3. The health certificate for the other pigs listed them as slaughter pigs and not breeder pigs. (This meant I would have had to take them directly to a slaughter house)
4. I had no official negative brucellosis test
5. I had no official negative pseudorabies test.

He then informed me that my pigs would have to be quarantined with the state for 30 days. This meant that my animals would be taken to a quarantine location for the state and I would be responsible for feeding and watering the animals as well as paying the state for the costs of the quarantine. The officer had no idea where the quarantine site would be located, although it would probably be near the Inspection Center, which was hours from my home.

I finally received good news. The officer in charge, after talking to his superior officer, allowed me to quarantine my animals at home as long as there were no other animals around them: thankfully there would not be. I was allowed to do this because the two states where I had purchased the animals were both certified brucellosis free and pseudorabies free states. I had to inform the state as soon as the animals arrived at the farm. I was then required to have a veterinarian inspect them and do blood tests and return the proper paperwork to the State of Florida. After I had the tests done and returned to the state, I had to make an appointment with an official inspection officer. He had to come to the farm; inspect the animals, inspect the veterinarian's paperwork, and

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**Gloucestershire  
Old Spots Pigs  
Of America**

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- *Breeder Profile: Flying Pigs Farm*

make sure all my papers were in order before he would have my quarantine removed.

The second time I transported pigs into Florida, even though it was only from Georgia, my paperwork was all in order. I had an 800 number for the Georgia veterinarian who performed the health inspection to call and receive a prior permission number and to be informed of Florida's required tests and information. There was no cost to the veterinarian at all. I handed my papers to the Inspection Officer, he looked at them, asked me what I was transporting, handed me back the papers, and said "Have a nice day!" I never even had to get out of my truck. Those were the best 3 minutes of my life, compared to the worst 3 hours the first time.

## HOGGING THE ROAD Continued

The rules vary for each of the states, but they all follow the same basic rules requiring pigs to have an official form of identification (tags, ear notches or breed registration forms), as well as being brucellosis free and pseudorabies free. As of June, 2011, Texas, the final state that was not listed by the US Government as brucellosis free, is now

### Helpful links:

STATE ANIMAL HEALTH OFFICIALS 2011.

(Contact the state that the swine will be leaving from, state swine are going to, and I would suggest and state the swine may be passing through.)

<http://www.usaha.org/Portals/6/StateAnimalHealthOfficials.pdf>

APHIS import and export (The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service)  
[http://www.aphis.usda.gov/import\\_export/animals/animal\\_import/animal\\_imports\\_states.shtml](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/import_export/animals/animal_import/animal_imports_states.shtml)

USDA Veterinary Services Area Offices  
[http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal\\_health/area\\_offices/](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/area_offices/)

The time needed to make a few phone calls is much better than spending hours at an inspection site or maybe even being inspected unexpectedly by a DOT officer on the side of the road.

You may also choose to contact your states Agricultural Department for more information and regulations. Be sure to confirm with the seller who is responsible for getting the veterinarian to inspect the pigs. Often the seller will do it, but know ahead of time to avoid confusion and unneeded paperwork delay. Make sure the veterinarian has enough time to visit the farm, do the tests and get the results, and



provide the proper paperwork before your pickup date. As the purchaser, once you leave the farm with your pigs, you are responsible for their welfare, including legal issues. Always verify the pickup dates with the seller to help avoid paperwork delays. Make sure the veterinarian has provided the needed paperwork. Get a phone number to call when you are about an hour away so the seller can be ready for you.

### Concerning the health and welfare of your pigs while being transported.

Make sure your trailer is in good condition. Check tires, seals and bearings, make sure they are in good condition. Have a spare tire on a rim. I lost a complete tire, rim and all, on my trip. The bearing heated up, blew the seal, and caused the tire to come off. Luckily, a trucker got me to pull over and told me what had happened. I was still able to run on three tires until the missing tire was replaced.

Check hitches, wiring, lights, floors, dividers, door hinges and latches. Make sure there are no holes, sharp edges, nails or bare wires that the animals can get to. Make sure the floor is strong with no way for an animal to put a

foot through it, and all latches and hinges are strong and secure.

I believe that I will use a livestock trailer with dividers next time I transport adult swine. One of the latches keeping my horse trailer doors closed came off. Once again a trucker saved my animals. He was able to pull me over when the door came open going 45 mph on the interstate. I stopped because I thought the tire had come off again. If I had not stopped so quickly, I would have lost my sows. The trucker helped me put truck tie downs all the way around my trailer to prevent the door from opening. I don't know if losing the bar was from the trailer being at an angle while on the jack replacing the lost tire, or as I found out afterwards, because my large sow likes to stand up against the door and look out the back.

Make sure the vehicle you transport your pigs in is appropriate. If they are adult pigs bring a trailer where they will have enough room to lay down and move around in. If you are using a pickup with a dog box type holder or trailer for

## HOGGING THE ROAD Continued

transport, make sure you have a safe way for the animal to get into it. Don't forget ramps. Don't assume that the seller will have a way for you to load the pig and remember you still have to unload it when you get home. Make sure the ramps are wide enough and have secure footing for the pig to feel safe climbing up it. Yes, I have a story on that also, I had a hog box on the back of my pickup, I was picking up 1 young adult boar, and 5 piglets, I had two dog cages for the piglets. I forgot my ramps, so when I got to the seller's we tried to get the boar up a narrow ramp we put together. Well, the hog was willing, but the flesh was weak. He could not get a footing and we just could not help push him up the ramp without him sliding backwards. We finally figured out to put him in their lower trailer and then back that up to my truck and use the wide trailer ramp as a step up to my truck. Thank God the GOS boar was gentle enough to put up with the pushing and pulling we put him through without getting mean or freaking out. Of course, the cottage cheese helped a little: okay, it helped a whole lot. Getting him out was a whole lot easier and safer. We were lucky he didn't fall off the ramp and hurt himself or hurt us.

If you are picking up a piglet, bring a large dog transport cage. A cardboard box will not be good enough. A piglet will tear it apart. Always remember they are animals. The first thing they will do when nervous is pee and poop. You do not want to try and get that smell out of your car. It is best to transport the cage in the back of a pickup. If you have transport the piglet in a SUV, car, or van, use a dog cage and make sure it has hay or shavings in the floor for the piglet to lie on and help keep urine and manure from leaking into your vehicle. Just like a dog or child, don't leave them in a closed vehicle in the sun. They can get overheated.

Have plenty of bedding for the animals to lie on and to keep them from sliding. Use dividers if you have animals from differ-

ent herds, so they will not be able to fight with each other. Make sure that there are no fluids leaking out of the trailer, DOT could stop and fine you for this if they believe the fluids are mixed with manure.

Always start driving slowly so your pigs will not lose their balance and hurt themselves. You should also avoid making fast stops and sharp turns for the same reason of avoiding possible harm to the animals. Try to keep moving so the animals will have fresh air circulation and can keep cool. Make scheduled stops about every 4-5 hours, so the condition of the animals can be checked and fresh water and food can be given both pigs and humans, if needed.

**Porcine Stress Syndrome (PSS)** is the leading cause of death while being transported. Pigs with PSS will pant, tremble, lie down suddenly, and have a splotchy red appearance. Allow the pig to lie down and de-stress because they could die from this condition.

If a pig gets too excited or overexerted their heart will race and they could have a heart attack. An overexerted pig will lie down until its heart beats slower. Never throw cold water on an overexerted pig because this could cause shock and could then cause death. To help prevent this from happening you can wet down the bedding. Mixing ice in with the bedding is a good way to keep them cooled down.

Do not overfeed before transporting to help keep stomach upset from happening. Make sure they are well hydrated before and during the trip. If possible transport water from the original drinking source so the pigs not have a problem with diarrhea during transport.

Make sure you have a safe secure place for your pigs to de-stress at the final destination. Lightly feed them to prevent stomach upset and to allow them to get use to changes in feed and water conditions. Make sure that they have ways to adapt to the change in weather conditions,

such as plenty of shade in a hot area or plenty of bedding and shelter in a cold area.

If you are having someone else transport your pigs, make sure they know how to handle animals and have the proper equipment. Make sure all payment and delivery details are written down and signed before the trip to avoid confusion. Inform them of what number and specific animals they will be picking up. Make sure animals are paid for and ready to go when the driver arrives for pickup, inform the person at pickup site who will be picking up the pigs. Provide them with specific pick-up and drop-off addresses, names, and phone numbers. Provide dates and times for pickup and delivery and any specific details. Make sure driver, seller and buyer have all phone numbers especially cell numbers. Make sure they have or they will pick up all needed paperwork for the animals. Give them printed directions on feeding, watering, cooling, and specific requests, such as keep sows separated from boars. Talk to your driver to make sure that he understands all of your needs, concerns and the safety issues for your animals.

I am not an expert on transportation of pigs or any other animals. I wish I had known this information ahead of time to prevent many of the problems I had. I hope this article keeps you and your pigs safe and you have a safe and uneventful trip so you can enjoy your pigs from the start. By the way I have named my sow who was looking out the back of my trailer, while going down the interstate, DW (it stands for Death Wish). I love my Old Spots! Would I make the trip across half the country to get them knowing what would happen during the trip..... Yes, I definitely would! I would just make sure I made the trip a lot safer.

Thanks to Crystal Beacham in GA for helping me with this article. We are co-moderators for the SEGOSA yahoo group, and she is the breeder of my Big Red boar (the one in the article).

## “Bacon Takedown” - Robyn Metcalfe

Guilty pleasures drew a crowd of bacon lovers to the Somerville Armory for a “Bacon Takedown” on a recent sunny Sunday afternoon. At least that was what some confessed drew them to this sold-out event. Feeling not so guilty and certainly reveling in pleasure, participants positioned themselves in front of their bacon-inspired offerings wearing pig-imprinted aprons and flaunting outrageous porcine jewelry. The Takedown was a collaboration of its main sponsor, Hormel (based in Austin, Minnesota) and an extreme food enthusiast in Somerville, Matt Timms. He initiated a series of food takedowns as part of his radio program Mind Kitchen, a program that challenges his listeners to imagine a five-course meal made of five ingredients in five minutes. A veteran promoter of his other Takedowns, such as the Chili Takedown, Timms’ enthusiasm knows no bounds, which is evident in the fact that the Bacon Takedown is now a series of events that are noted with the dates of future bacon takedown printed on the backs of the black T-shirts (a la rock concerts) worn by those attending this event.

The Armory’s main hall filled with bacon lovers flaunting the opportunity to indulge in guilty pleasures. Families, bike messengers, foodies, and Harvard law school graduates, grazed down the long tables sampling the bacon-based foods that the competitors flogged and promoted.

Amateur cooks soon filled paper plates with samples of bacon ginger crème brulee, bacon cheesecake, bacon bao, maple bacon munchkins, bacon oreos, pork belly confit, bacon jam, bacon bourbon bark, bacon chocolate waffles, bacon toffee brownies, maple bacon lollipops, and bacon chocolate smores. The aroma of bacon fat, maple, lard imbued the air along with throbbing heavy metal rock music. Pigs in all forms appeared to promote the porcine fare on posters, as jewelry, hats, aprons, and bumper stickers. Who knew that bacon would so supremely satisfy those guilty pleasures?

After downing about twenty samples laden with lard and bacon, the attendees voted on the best bacon recipe, scribbling down the number of the cook/contestant on a small card, which was stuffed into a cardboard box atop a table draped with black and pink event T-shirts. The takedown impresario Timms gathered the crowd on the stage for the judges’ declaration of the winners, who, by the way, each received a year’s supply of bacon. That’s one pound of bacon every other week, or 26 pounds of bacon in all. Imagine the buckets of bacon ginger crème brulee one could produce for neighbors, colleagues, and family members, all of whom would question your culinary, if not broader, insanity.

When asked why bacon is attracting such

a following, the Hormel representative, who had apparently never pondered the recent surge of interest, suggested that vegetarians sought out bacon as their one pleasure, even if not feeling particularly guilty. This makes sense if you consider that bacon is sometimes called the “gateway” meat, the first step in a vegetarians’ apostasy of turnips and immanent embrace of meat. He claimed he was, in fact, a vegetarian, “...except for bacon,” a convenient allowance in his position as national spokesman for the product. Other takedown attendees were puzzled by the interest but grateful and one Harvard law student pointed out that bacon’s down-home, simplicity was a reaction to the high-tech molecular gastronomy that represented a culinary culture coming off the rails. Whatever the cause, the bacon takedown in Somerville was sweet news to those who raise pigs for market and for those who need to feed those wanton guilty pleasures.

### Facebook Activity as of August 29, 2011



#### Gloucestershire Old Spots of America

28 monthly active users 15 since last week

57 people like this 4 since last week

3 wall posts or comments this week 0 since last week

39 visits this week 20 since last week



## BREEDER PROFILE: Flying Pigs Farm - Mike Yezzi and Jennifer

Mike Yezzi and Jennifer Small never dreamed that the pigs they raised would some day elicit tears of appreciation from one well-known food blogger. Recently, pork belly from one of the pigs from Flying Pigs Farm tumbled off the blogger's fork as the foodie beheld the meat's "rich and complex" flavor. Yezzi and Small, one a fundraiser and the other a lawyer before becoming farmers, began the journey of pork to fork almost fifteen years ago.

In 1997, Mike and Jennifer purchased a 150-acre farm that had been farmed since the 1830s, a rambling group of buildings next door to the home where Jen's father grew up. Yezzi and Small wanted to protect the farm from developers and to keep it operational. After much patience and painstaking care, the couple renovated the post and beam farm so that they could begin raising heritage breeds of livestock.

They named the farm "Flying Pigs Farm" and today it is one of the more successful small farms raising premium pork from rare breed pigs. Located in the Battenkill River Valley in upstate New York, their farm delivers pork to the popular greenmarket in Union Square in New York City. The pigs

are raised outdoors on pasture and in the woods. Consistent with the urban legend that bacon is the "gateway" meat (a first bite of meat for vegetarians), the couple's love of bacon gave them the idea of finishing pigs.

In 2000, Yezzi and Small purchased three pigs and raised them with the help of books and farmers who offered advice and counsel. They also read about rare breeds and found that their customers wanted them to specialize in conserving heritage livestock. Encouraged by their customers, they raised 57 pigs, all rare breeds and discovered Gloucester Old Spots pigs at a summer rare breed show at Hancock Shaker Village in Western Massachusetts. They were so impressed by the breed they left the show with a gilt from Kelmscott Farm: another rare breeds conservation farm in Lincolnville, Maine. By 2003, they purchased three females and one unrelated male GOS for breeding piglets and raised 120 rare breed pigs.

Jennifer and Mike are both charmed and challenged by Old Spots. Breeding hasn't been easy, but their boar was gentle and

good natured. Breeding Old Spots required patience and the acquisition of new stock is often difficult to locate since breeders are widely dispersed across the U.S. Still Old Spots are their favorite breed, even though they now raise other breeds such as Tamworths and Large Blacks. They use Old Spots to cross with their other rare breeds including Ossabaw, Red Wattle, and Mule Foot pigs, but find pleasure watching pure GOS piglets running around on fresh pasture. This year they will raise over 700 rare breed pigs.

Jennifer and Mike work with other Old Spot breeders such as Rich Tilyou at T Meadow Farm in New York state. They share the goal of breed preservation and agree that the future of Old Spots pigs depends upon increasing the numbers of registered stock as well as creating a market for the "rich and complex" flavor of its meat. Through the continued efforts of the Gloucester Old Spots of America registry, breeders, the farms raising and marketing the pork, and consumers will continue to promote these pigs. survive and thrive.

In addition to the teary-eyed food blogger, others recognize the value of the Old Spots. The high quality of Flying Pigs Farm pork has been recognized in national publications such as *Bon Appetit*, *Food & Wine*, the *New York Times*, *GQ*, and other publications. Flying Pigs Farm pork, eggs, and chickens are sold in New York City, online, and to top New York City restaurants. More information about the farm can be found at: [www.flyingpigsfarm.com](http://www.flyingpigsfarm.com), [mike@flyingpigsfarm.com](mailto:mike@flyingpigsfarm.com) or by following them through Twitter at @flyingpigsfarm.

