

Carolyn Thomas

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When a litter of pigs is large and sturdy enough to no longer require auxiliary heat, the sows and her brood are moved to a community

pen. Following weaning, they enter market unit pens with feeders supplying a ground corn and supplement mix.

Sows and boars, however, are all



Several hundred pounds of honey are harvested by the Thomas' annually from their beehive sideline. In her kitchen, Carolyn fills various sizes of jars with the homegrown sweetener.

hand fed twice daily. As with the pigs, their feed is ground at D.E. Horn's Red Lion mill. Except for supplement, the corn, barley, oats and alfalfa ingredients are all raised on the Thomas farm.

Hogs are not the sole interest at the Thomas farm, however, where they also enterprise birds, bees, and Boston terriers.

Carolyn's flock of 100 heavy laying hens demands daily attention for feed and egg gathering. Along with the layers, she is currently raising a replacement flock of similar size.

And, the couple maintains a half-dozen hives of bees, extracting several hundred pounds of honey in a productive season.

The initial hive was purchased several years ago by Charlie's father, Ralph, at a local charity fundraising event. Since then, several swarms of bees have been gathered from locations as diverse as trees in the middle of town to pasture fence posts, adding new hives to the backyard lineup.

A pair of Boston terriers are the lone breeding stock currently in

the runs of the small kennel, although puppies are a future possibility. And, while Charlie initially had interest in breeding Charolais cattle, assisting with the hog business claims most of his spare time. Vacations from his job are planned well ahead, with hog show and crop harvest dates dictating many of his scheduled days off.

With winter farrowing season in full swing, Carolyn will keep a careful eye on the farrowing house litters over the next several weeks. She'll look at arched backs and underlines and observe ham sizes and how the growing pigs move on their feet.

Perhaps another champion tottles around the farrowing house, snuggling under a warm heat lamp with littermates. Carolyn Thomas would likely be one of the first to say that much showing success lies with fate.

After all, Bam Ka-Li-Ga 4-4's

mother was entered in the 1986 Farm Show and Hampshire Sale. But she turned up lame and Carolyn left her at home. And when she farrowed, this year's champ was there among her litter of matching, black and pinkish-white piglets.

Bam Ka-Li-Ga 4-4's mother is bred again. Needless to say Carolyn and Charlie will keep close watch on her pigs. Maybe, just maybe, history might repeat itself.





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