

Breed Characteristics

Head:

Medium length with a slightly dished nose. The ears should be well set apart, dropping forward to the nose.

Body:

The shoulders should be fine but not raised. A long level back with well sprung ribs and a broad loin are desirable. Deep sides, with a thick, full belly and flank from the ribs to hams are standard.

Hams:

Large and well filled to the hocks.

Legs:

Straight and strong.

Skin and Coat:

Skin should not show coarseness or wrinkles. The hair should be silky and straight.

Teats:

There should be at least fourteen well placed teats.

Objections:

Heavy jowl, short elevated ears, a mane of bristles, crooked legs, and serious wrinkles.

For Additional Information

Please contact:

Gloucestershire Old Spots Pig Association

13575 40TH ST S

AFTON, MN 55001

Sally Doherty, Registrar

Email: gosa@littlefootfarm.com

Visit our Website:

www.GOSAMERICA.org



History And Breed Information



Gloucestershire Old Spots Pig

The Gloucestershire Old Spots Pig, or GOS, descended from a region in Gloucestershire, England known as the Vale of Berkeley. Recognized as the oldest pedigree spotted pig in the world, the GOS was once popular with small family farms, where they were raised on dairy by-products (such as whey) and orchard “drop fruit,” giving these pigs the nicknames “cottage pig” and “orchard pig.”

Although it is difficult to trace the precise ancestry of most livestock, the GOS is believed to be a descendent of the Cumberland, Lincolnshire and the now-extinct Curly Coat pig. These breeds were regarded as thrifty and excellent foragers, supplementing their feed with roots and vegetation. Additional commonalities among these breeds include excellent maternal instincts and even temperament.



The GOS remains remarkably hardy today. They can withstand harsh weather and adverse conditions. This is in part due to the breed’s higher body fat ratio. Once revered for this high fat yield, the GOS served as an important producer of flavorful meats, lard and bristle hair.

It was with the shift in dietary trends, as people began replacing much of their animal fat intake with vegetable fat, that the demand for lard producing pigs decreased. This dietary shift, coupled with the Post WWII industrialization of agriculture, led to the decline in GOS numbers. Farmers were less interested in self-sufficient grazing breeds than they were in breeds easily kept indoors.

Unfortunately in the pursuit of efficient, industry compatible hybrids, many commercial sows lost the maternal instincts native to their purebred ancestors.



The GOS, noted for their exceptional mothering, was occasionally introduced into large pig operations in an effort to recreate this vital instinct. However, this niche alone could not keep the GOS numbers from all but disappearing.

By the early 1990’s there were four GOS pigs left in the U.S., and a few hundred breeding sows remained in the U.K.

In 1992, Kelmscott Farm imported 20 of these rare pigs into the U.S., with the hope of reestablishing a healthy population. With the aid of a strict cyclic breeding program, inbreeding is minimized through careful pedigree tracking and coding. Each pig is assigned to one of four color groups based on lineage. These color groups are determined by lineage and are selectively paired for breeding.

