

# Farm Fund—Heritage Lane Farm

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Thirteen miles north of the Cordata Co-op, Heritage Lane Farm (HLF) was started by Craig and Kelly Mayberry as a way to feed their family and engage the community. Their mission is to promote food biodiversity by using sustainable farming in the production of rare-breed livestock and heirloom vegetables. First-time farmers, they started with a couple of Large Black pigs and a number of Navajo-Churro sheep. The summer of 2009 was spent raising vegetables, primarily as an experiment to see what worked and what did not. It was clear from the start that farming would be a learning experience and it would take some time to get everything growing smoothly.

Now, almost two years later, there are about 30 sheep, 70 pigs, 25 Narragansett turkeys, 20 Toulouse geese, three Oberhasli goats, and 15 chickens on the farm, along with a wide variety of heirloom vegetables. There are two barns for housing the animals, and about one-third of an acre in cultivation, with the land in transition to become certified organic in 2012.

When determining which livestock to raise, the Mayberrys rely on the American Livestock Breeding Conservancy

([www.albc-usa.org](http://www.albc-usa.org)). They try to balance the characteristics they are looking for with breeds that require conservation. The farm is currently home to two rare breeds of pigs, the Large Black variety and the Mulefoot. Both breeds are pasture raised with supplemental grain each day, as opposed to commercially raised pigs that eat a diet consisting entirely of grain. These breeds have a mellow disposition and are not aggressive. They grow more slowly than commercial breeds, taking almost a year to reach market weight, versus five or six months. With the pigs eating mostly pasture grass, they are still more economical than their commercially raised cousins. The farm has four sows providing upwards of 50 piglets a year. The easiest way to sell that amount of pork is through retail meat departments, like the Co-op. HLF recently received a loan from the Co-op's Farm Fund to develop a logo, label, and marketing brochure that will communicate to consumers the value of heritage breed livestock. They have started by producing pork, and hope to expand to lamb and turkey. You can find their pork products on the shelf in both Co-op meat departments.

Their animals' diet is predominately comprised of grasses grazed from the farm's own pastures and orchards, and alfalfa purchased from Washington or Oregon. The grains come from a local mill, and contain corn and soybeans from the Midwest. The Mayberrys are currently researching and experimenting with growing their own grain for the animals' consumption. Because they have pigs, sheep, and goats, feeding time

needs to be carefully coordinated. There is a schedule for daily pasture rotation; the Mayberrys bring the animals in at night to feed them, and then let them out again the next morning in a new rotation. Then they follow up with chicken tractors to help break down what the bigger animals left behind.

One goal the Mayberrys had when starting this farm was to create some food security for their family. While trying to help themselves, they decided to reach out and market any excess to their community. They are listed on the Sustainable Connections (SC) Farm Finder; participate in the SC Whatcom County Farm Tour; and they provide food to local shelters through SC Food To Bank On. They hope to expand in the future by building an outdoor commercial kitchen to host "Dinner on the Farm" as an educational activity. Local chefs will be invited to come to the farm and prepare a meal based on ingredients from the land. Local diners can come out, take a tour, watch the chef cook, and then eat a meal, all within a few feet of where it was grown.

This family farm, with a vision to preserve heritage breeds and heirloom vegetables, is another strong connection in our local food web. For more information about the breeds, varieties, and processes used on the farm, see their website [www.heritagelanefarm.net](http://www.heritagelanefarm.net), blog, or Facebook page.

Kelly and Craig Mayberry, owners of Heritage Lane Farm.



Photo courtesy of Heritage Lane Farm

## Food To Bank On (FTBO)

*Graduates and current participants of the FTBO program who now supply the Co-op with their local goods:*

- Holistic Homestead—organic vegetables
- Rabbit Fields Farm—organic vegetables, berries, herbs
- Uprising Organics Farm and Uprising Seeds—organic vegetables, seeds
- Highwater Farm—organic vegetables
- Moonance Farm—organic vegetables, sprouts
- Misty Meadows Farm—organic eggs
- Terra Verde Farm—organic vegetables
- WakeRobin Farm—organic vegetables
- Wildroot Botanicals—teas
- Cascadia Mushrooms—organic specialty mushrooms
- Heritage Lane Farm—fresh heritage-breed pork

