

### **“Farm Friends” at Hancock Shaker Village**

**You can help care for Hancock Shaker Village animals by participating in this exciting program! Your support provides the resources needed to feed the animals on our farm. Your participation also helps us train our staff in traditional farming methods, assists us with medical expenses when the animals become ill, and enables us to make repairs to their shelter when it becomes necessary.**

#### *About the Animals at Hancock Shaker Village*

**Oxen:** Oxen are male cattle of any breed that have been neutered and are at least four years old. They are often trained and used for work. Although the Hancock Shakers had carriage horses for transportation and teams of work horses, they primarily used oxen for field work throughout the nineteenth century. The Hancock Shakers maintained as many as eight teams of oxen at one time to work their vast acreage.

**Cattle:** Throughout the nineteenth century, the Shakers preferred triple-purpose cattle — those that were valuable for milk, meat, and work. These breeds included Devons, developed in medieval Devonshire, England and first brought to the New World with the Pilgrims; and Durhams (later called Shorthorns or Milking Shorthorns), also named after the British region they originated from. The Shakers sometimes cross bred Devon and Durham cattle, to improve their herd’s quality and productivity.

**Sheep:** Merino Sheep were not commonly found in the United States until the early 1800s when a progressive farmer, noted businessman, and Pittsfield resident named Elkanah Watson began importing prize Merino sheep to the Berkshires. Because the Shaker Sisters were considered the best at spinning and weaving, Watson brought some of the fine wool to them for processing into textiles, beginning a relationship that would extend for many years. The Hancock Shakers recognized the superiority of the soft and fine Merino wool, and maintained a large flock of Merinos.

**Poultry:** All kinds of poultry, including chickens, turkeys, ducks, and geese, were kept by the Shakers. They provided eggs, feathers, and meat. Some of the many breeds of chickens found on farms throughout New England in the 1800s were Dominiques (one of the first breeds to arrive in colonial America), Wyandottes, Dorkings, and Rhode Island Reds. Pilgrim and Toulouse geese, Cayuga ducks, and Bourbon Red and Narragansett turkeys were also commonly found on New England farms.

**“Egg-citing” Fact:** *To determine what color eggs a chicken will lay, look at the chicken’s ears. Those with darker colored ears produce brown or dark colored eggs, and chickens with lighter colored ears produce white or light colored eggs.*

**Pigs:** The pigs kept at HSV are a mixed breed from both modern and heritage pigs, including Hampshires, Yorkshires, Dorics, Landrace and Brookshires. The older breeds have more fat, while newer breeds are leaner, reflecting the dietary interests of the time period in which they were developed. The gestation period for a pig is three months, three weeks and three days long, so a sow could have 3 litters in a year, but ours ideally have two – one in the spring and one in the fall.

*Pigs are one of the only animals that will not overeat! They have small stomachs, so they eat frequently, which gives us the impression that they are gorging themselves, but in fact, they always stop eating when full!*

**Yes!** I'd like to become a Farm Friend at Hancock Shaker Village

- I would like to help you feed the animals       \$10                       Other amount \$
- I would like to be a **Farm Hand**. *Includes recognition in the Round Stone Barn for one calendar year and a small thank you gift*                       \$50
- I would like to be a **Cultivator**. *Includes recognition in the Round Stone Barn for one calendar year, a small thank you gift and two free passes to the Village to share with friends*       \$100

**Contact Information**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/ST/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Payment**

Check enclosed

Please charge my credit card

MC/Visa/AmEx/Discover (circle one)

Card # \_\_\_\_\_

Exp \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail to:** Hancock Shaker Village PO Box 927 Pittsfield, MA 01202

***Gifts to the Farm Friends program are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.***