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## Rare Hog Breed Catches On Fast

Carl Blake doesn't believe in "build it and they will come". He has taken the initiative to build a following for his rare Swabian Hall hogs which didn't even exist in North America 2 years ago (see Vol. 33, No. 4 for FARM SHOW'S first report). Since then the Swabian Hall has become the "in-demand" hog for a number of top chefs around the country and has won acclaim among cured meat lovers.

"If people taste the meat, you don't have to push it," says Blake. "They tell me they've never had anything like it. We have chefs serving Swabian Hall pork in fine restaurants from Chicago to San Francisco and St. Paul to Houston."

He credits the taste and quality of fat and muscle with both breeding and ration. Though he feeds breeding herds traditional corn and soymeal rations, meat animals are finished for two months on peanuts, rye, barley and canarygrass seed with acorns, when available.

Whatever he's doing must work because one of Blake's pigs won top honors in COCHON 555 San Francisco. The event is a traveling contest that requires participating chefs to use the entire carcass of a heritage breed pig in a variety of dishes from appetizer to dessert. In the case of Staffan Terje, the San Francisco chef who won with a Swabian Hall pig from Blake, he even used the blood and rendered lard. His dessert item was hog's blood cupcakes with whipped lard frosting. A judge described it as tasting like a "moist chocolate cupcake".

Getting his rare breed noticed didn't just happen. Blake emphasizes that you have to have the right product for the market and package it right. He promotes the pork, the pig, its heritage and the way he raises it.

Blake has worked to build awareness through one-on-one interaction with chefs as well as local farmers market customers.

"I call them up, explain what I am doing and ask if I can visit them," explains Blake. "When I visit, I give them some of my pork and ask them to try it. So far we have been



Don Scott has developed a process to use stinging nettles to heal sore muscles and joints.

## Stinging Nettle Heals Sore Muscles, Joints

If you have a sore muscle or joint, you should try treating it with stinging nettles. Don Scott swears by the home remedy and says it works so well he started selling patches made of nettle extract that you can use if you don't have the real stuff. He noted the pain relief doesn't last as long with raw nettles, but raw nettles act faster.

"If you have stinging nettles growing wild around your yard or farm, give it a try," he says. "Use nettles that grow in the sun, not the kind found in the woods."

Scott literally stumbled into the benefits of stinging nettles (*Urtica dioica*) 10 years ago. While doing tractor work in the river bottom of his farm, the tractor stalled. At the time, the former airline pilot was unable to walk due to an extremely painful knee. However, not having a way to help, he found a branch to use for a crutch and began to hobble home. Faced with going around or through a huge patch of nettles, he went through, even though he was wearing shorts.

By the time he reached home, he realized the pain in his knee was gone. After that he started using nettle compound whenever his knee flared up.

Scott was so excited about what the nettles could do that he developed a process to use dried nettles. The leaves are chipped for the extraction process and the resins are poured onto 100 percent cotton cloth, packaged and sold as the Netical Patch.

The patches work like an old-time poultice; held in place against the skin for up to several days. The solution soaks into the tissues of the skin to help relieve aches and discomforts.

building demand as fast as we have built our hog numbers."

To find local buyers, Blake takes his prepared pork to area farmer's markets and gives out free samples. He also donates pigs to be prepared by local chefs for fund-raising banquets.

Having a winning hog at a COCHON 555 has opened doors for Blake with other chefs. Blake's pork was the featured pork at the James Beard Foundation Annual Dinner



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"The first year I had two ounces of solution," recalls Scott. "The next I had 100 pounds of patches and ran out. The following year I had sever thousand lbs. At the present time, we have 60,000 to 70,000 pounds of dried nettles on hand," says Scott. "We also have plenty of growers lined up in case we need more."

The patches come in three convenient sizes for a multitude of uses: #15 (4 by 6 in.) comes with an adhesive backing that sticks to your clothing in areas where needed to relieve aches, swelling and discomfort associated with the abdomen, chest, shoulder, hip and back; #30 (5 1/2 by 8 1/2 in.) is applied with an elastic wrap, self-adhering wrap or sock and is applied to areas such as arms, elbows, fingers, legs, knees and toes; and #40 (3 by 11 in.) is used for aches, swelling and discomfort associated with muscles, tendons, ankles, heels, headaches and sore throats. It's also applied with an elastic wrap, self-adhering wrap or sock.

Sold four to a packages, the price is approximately \$23 per pack. The Netical Patch can also be used on heel spurs, sprained ankles, gout, arthritis as well as any kind of inflammation or soreness due to trauma and overused muscles.

For more information visit our website or call 740 569-4499.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Transdermal Innovations, Inc., P.O. Box 65, Bremen, Ohio 43107 (ph 740 569-4499; [transdermalinnovations@yahoo.com](mailto:transdermalinnovations@yahoo.com); [www.nettlefarm.com](http://www.nettlefarm.com) or [www.transdermalinnovations.com](http://www.transdermalinnovations.com)).

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in Chicago.

Blake walks a fine line, building demand and supply at the same time. He currently has around 250 F1 (initial cross) Swabian Hall animals in his herd. He has begun cross breeding the multiple lines in an effort to create a purebred Swabian Hall.

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