



Baby Animals Return to Strawbery Banke Museum Alongside Historic House Tours for 2024 Season

Portsmouth, NH - (April 19, 2024) Strawbery Banke is excited to bring back Baby Animals: Heritage Breeds at the Banke, its popular spring event highlighting heritage-breed barnyard animals. Visitors can meet and discover more about domestic livestock common on farms in coastal northern New England from the 17th century to now. In 2024, there's an added treat: Strawbery Banke Museum's historic houses will be open ahead of schedule for the event, allowing guests the opportunity to explore them during their visit.

Baby Animals: Heritage Breeds at the Banke is a family-friendly, educational event that occurs daily, rain or shine, from Saturday, April 27, through Sunday, May 5, 2024, 10 AM-4 PM under a heated tent.

Peter Cook, Guest Curator of the event since its inception in 2016, secures breeders from NH, ME, MA, and NY farms who are experts in heritage animals. Breeders answer visitors' questions, explaining the unique characteristics of the heritage breeds, their special care, and their importance in today's world, and why these experts have chosen to preserve these sometimes-endangered domestic animals for future generations.

Some of the animals are representative of breeds with a population of fewer than 300. Petting the animals is not allowed for the health and safety of the animals and people.

Heritage breeds include:

- **American Guinea hogs and piglets** are a small, American, solid black breed, which were kept in the Southern United States as early as 1811. From Timber Haven Farm in Warwick, MA.
- **Clun Forest sheep and lambs** are an old breed from Shropshire in Northern Wales, introduced to the United States by migrants from Nova Scotia. From Riverbank Farm in Salisbury, NH.
- **Dexter cattle and calves** are some of the smallest cattle in the world, standing 40 inches tall and weighing 700-900 lbs. From Riverbank Farm in Salisbury, NH.
- **Gloucestershire Old Spot pigs and piglets** are a breed that arrived in New England in the 1900s and are often referred to as "orchard pigs" for their delight in foraging in fall groves. From Gentile Family Homestead in Fitzwilliam, NH.

- **Jacob sheep and lambs** are identified in the Book of Genesis and prized in New England for their soft, dark fleeces that are ideal for many weaving projects. From Jacob Fleece Farm in Gray, ME.
- **Lincoln Longwool sheep and lambs** are an ancient English breed that was a foundation for many of New England's early textiles. From the Rocks and Rills Farm in Hancock, NH.
- **Newly hatched chicks, turkeys, and ducklings** in specially constructed viewing brooders. From heritage breed hatcheries.
- **Nigerian Dwarf Dairy goats and kids** were introduced to the United States in the early 1900s and are very popular in New England as they are easily trained large milk producers that are easy to keep in small areas. From Tiny Hill Farm in Milton Mills, NH.
- **Oberhasli goats and kids** are Swiss dairy goats bred in the mountainous regions of Bern, Freiburg, Glarus, and Graubunden in Switzerland. It was introduced to the United States in the early 1900s. From See To It Farm, Plymouth, NH.
- **Mangalitsa pigs and piglets** were developed in the mid-1800s by crossbreeding breeds of Hungarian and Serbian pigs with the European wild boar. They are the only breed of pigs left with a woolly coat. From Littlefield Farm in Berwick, ME.
- **San Clemente goats and kids** are a rare kind of goat that comes from a group of islands off the coast of California. Both males and females are horned. From Al's Goats Farm in Sandford, ME.
- **Shetland sheep and lambs** are an old breed of sheep named after the Shetland Islands, where they lived for well over 1,000 years, and are prized for their wool. From Echo Valley Farm in Cornish, ME.
- **Soay sheep and lambs** are descended from a population of feral sheep on the island of Soay, in Scotland. Unlike other breeds of sheep, Soay sheep do not flock together. From Piermont, NH
- **Silver Fox rabbits and kittens** are the third breed developed in the United States. The young are born either solid black or blue and the silvering process takes 4 months. From Elier Acres LLC in Bradford, NH, and What Farm, Berwick, ME.

In addition to the animals, Strawberry Banke hosts fiber arts demonstrations and hands-on weaving activities. On Sundays, April 28 and May 5, Dan Smith, Restoration Assistant and Museum Beekeeper, performs a honey extraction demonstration in the Lawrence J. Yerdon Visitor Center Lecture Hall from 11 AM to 2 PM. Demonstrations are included with Baby Animals: Heritage Breed at the Banke tickets.

Baby Animals event tickets are priced at \$12; Children (under 1) are free.

New for 2024, Strawberry Banke Museum's historic houses are open for touring during the event. A combination ticket is available to experience the Baby Animals event and explore the Museum's houses, exhibits, and heirloom gardens.

Combo tickets are priced at \$34 for Adults; \$32 for Seniors/Students; \$22 for Children (ages 5-17); \$12 for Children (ages 1-4); Free for Children (under 1); and \$80 for Families (2 Adults and Children).

Strawbery Banke members receive free or discounted admission to Baby Animals: Heritage Breeds at the Banke and free museum admission.

Strawbery Banke is also hosting a special program in conjunction with the event, which may be of particular interest to those with young children:

Children's Program with Baby Animals

Morning Session: April 27 & 28; May 4 & 5, 2024, 9 AM-10 AM

Afternoon Session: April 27-May 4, 2024, 4-5 PM

Presented for an hour before or after the event is open to the public, the Children's Program is led by a heritage breeder and educator and is designed to give children ages 4-8 an opportunity to meet the baby lambs, kids, chicks, and other animals up close. Tickets for the Children's Program include a breakfast or afternoon snack, admission for up to two accompanying parents or guardians, and all-day admission to the main event. Limited space is available for each session. Member: \$20; Nonmembers: \$25.

Baby Animals: Heritage Breeds at the Banke is sponsored in part by Lonza, Lincoln Financial Group, R.M. Davis, Bangor Savings, Portwalk Place, Kennebunk Savings, Atlantic Orthopaedics, M&T Bank, The Rowley Agency, LLC, Newburyport Bank, Exeter Hospital, Piscataqua Savings Bank, Seacoast United New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, Piscataqua Dental Partners, Revision Energy, and the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts.

For more information about Baby Animals: Heritage Breeds at the Banke and tickets, visit StrawberyBanke.org.

About Strawbery Banke Museum:

Strawbery Banke Museum, in the heart of downtown Portsmouth, NH, is a 10-acre history museum interpreting over 300 years of history, from Indigenous history to the present day, through historical houses on their original foundations, heirloom gardens, traditional crafts, and costumed roleplayers who share the stories of the families who lived in the authentic waterfront neighborhood of Puddle Dock. The Museum welcomes visitors, members, schoolchildren, and volunteers for daily programs, exhibits, skating, and signature special events throughout the year. Strawbery Banke Museum is funded in part by grants from the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation; the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts & National Endowment for the Arts; the Institute of Museum and Library Services; the National Endowment for the Humanities: Democracy Demands Wisdom; and the New Hampshire Land and Community Heritage Investment Program. For more information and a complete calendar of events, please visit StrawberyBanke.org.