



# All About ANIMALS at OSV

**It's spring**, which means that the farms and gardens at Old Sturbridge Village are coming to life. The Village's costumed historians are planting seeds for the summer growing season, and baby animals are being born! Let's learn more about a few kinds of animals we have at OSV.

All of the animals at the Village are **heritage** breeds. This means that they are similar to the types of animals that people would have had on their farms in the 1800s. The Village's animals are working farm animals.



## SHEEP

Everyone loves seeing lambs! Our first lambs this year were born in mid-February, so they are already getting big. In the 1830s, most farm families would have had between 6 and 20 sheep. In fact, the town of Sturbridge had more sheep than people!

At the Village, we have two different types of sheep. The sheep that you see in the pasture next to the Fenno Barn are a cross between Merinos and Gulf Coast Natives. They have nice wool that is used for high-quality cloth, or textiles. The textile industry was very important in New England during the early 1800s. The sheep get a haircut in the late spring as the weather gets warmer. This is called **shearing**. The Village then cleans and processes the wool to make yarn and textiles. The flock of sheep at the Freeman farm are Horned Wiltshire/Dorset cross breeds. In the 1830s, people raised these sheep for wool and meat.



## CATTLE

At the Village, we have two different types of cattle: Devon and Shorthorn. Devons have reddish brown fur and are smaller than a lot of modern cows you might see on farms today. Female Devons have horns, which surprises visitors! Shorthorn cows produce lots of milk, which was very important to farmers in the 1830s. During the spring and summer, women on New England farms made butter and cheese, which they could sell to people in cities. An average cow produces enough milk to make 100 pounds of butter and 150 pounds of cheese in one year! The cows at Freeman Farm right now are named Betsy, Goldie, Buttercup, and Bonnie; and the heifers are named Beulah and May. A **heifer** is a female cow who has not had any babies yet.

Oxen are also cattle that have been trained to work together as **draft animals**. A draft animal is one that can pull heavy loads, like wagons, carts, plows, or logs. They learn to follow voice commands from the farmer. Here are some of those commands:

- Gee: go right
- Haw: go left
- Come up: go
- Whoa: stop

The Village's oxen are named Tom and Sid. They have been working together in a **yoke** (like a wooden harness) since they were very young. There is also a new team named Red and Don. They are only considered oxen once they reach four-years-old. Oxen did a lot of work in the 1830s, and most towns would have had 100 to 200 teams.



## CHICKENS

The Village has two flocks of chickens that roam around the Common and Freeman Farm. They are called "dunghill fowl." People in the 1830s did not eat a lot of chicken, so it was more important to farmers that they produced many eggs. Each hen laid about 150 eggs a year. It was common for people to have about a dozen birds in their flock. As you will see if you visit the museum today, chickens roamed freely and ate bugs and seeds, or corn in the winter. Some farmers also raised geese and ducks, which we do not have at the Village.

## PIGS

Pigs were vital to farms in the 1830s. Pork was the meat that people ate the most during this time. The pig's lard, or fat, was also useful, and the pigs happily ate up scraps and leftovers from the farm family. Many families had 1 or 2 pigs, but some had as many as 8. The Village has a type of pig called English Black, which is very hearty and fatty.

