

The Lilac Farm

CANADA



By Wilhelm W. Kohl

Pictures - The Lilac Farm

Design Barbara Meyer zu Altenschildesche

THE 1ST MANGALITSA FARM ON CANADA'S ATLANTIC COAST

Cape Breton, an island, is one of these incredibly scenic places in Nova Scotia, with a history to match. Settled in repeated waves by European immigrants from the early 16th century on, known to the French as “Ile Royale”, it has become a true melting pot of different cultures over the centuries.



One of the few places where Scottish culture can have a Gaelic accent, it has become a true tourist spot over the last few decades. And that is exactly what brought Tanja and Christian Welz, hailing originally from Bremen, Germany, to join this cultural mix.





*H*aving visited Nova Scotia repeatedly over the years, they fell in love with the landscape and the people, and when they got a chance, they decided to move there. Christian had gotten a rare opportunity to work for a company in Calgary, Alberta, and immediately upon their arrival there, they started the process to become permanent residents. Once they obtained this “landed immigrant status”, their move to their beloved Cape Breton followed quickly and their dream to live there became reality.

*W*hat they wanted was their own farm, raise their own animals, a life very different from the one in the crowded city of Bremen. They jumped on the chance to purchase a historic farm house, built in 1828 by a Scott named John Campell, one of the original pioneer settlers. He not only had started a working farm, but discovered a rich quartz vein on his land, whose deposits of copper, iron and a little bit of gold ended up being mined for over 60 years. The entrance to the mine remains today, together with the old village post office in the back of the house from the early years of the settlement.



It took some effort clearing away many years of neglect, but it also led to the surprise discovery of an old apple and berry orchard, with the apple trees of authentic Scottish origin.



Cape Breton has quite mild summers for its northern location, with plenty of precipitation, but cold and snowy winters, moderated only by the proximity to the Atlantic Ocean. Searching for the right kind of animal for this kind of climate, not only able to survive rough winters outdoors, but able to help clear the land once again for agriculture, makes for very few candidates. One of them, and as it turned out, a perfect fit for The Lilac Farm, is the Mangalitsa.

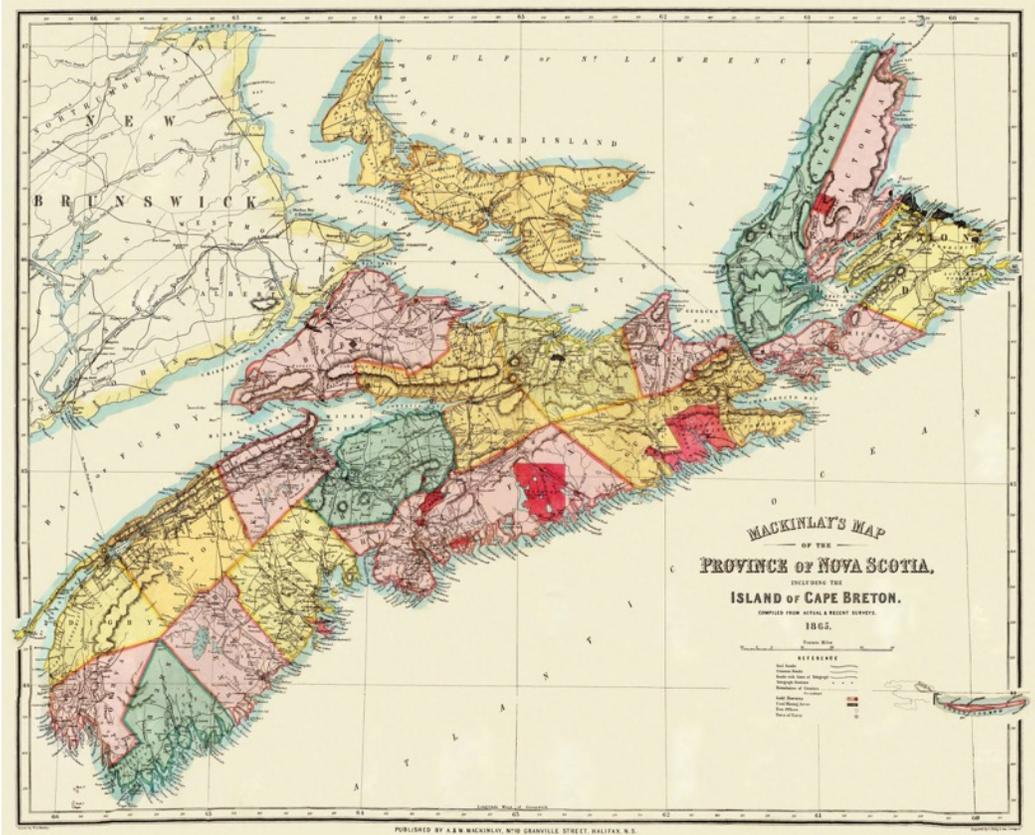
It takes a large pork processor less than 2 minutes to cut up a standard pig with a standard band saw. Seam butchery requires a much more delicate touch, carefully cutting it muscle by muscle, carefully also preserving the up to 4 inches of back fat, raw material for the very popular “Lardo”, now part of many charcuterie plates.





Tanja did her due diligence on the breed, checked whatever research available, and then purchased a swallow belly boar and 2 gilts from a breeder in Western Canada. Once the pigs got to Nova Scotia, the first Mangalitsas ever to do so, they quickly adapted to their new home, and did what pigs are known for. They breed and multiply. She in the meantime has 35 animals, including another swallow belly boar, she recently traded for with a breeder in Ontario, and the herd is doing its job. They are busy clearing the land, living in the wide open space available to them, enjoying the room to play and freely interact with each other.







While the Mangalitsas are busy clearing the woodlands, Tanja in the meantime is spending more of her time promoting the pigs. A service is planned to deliver meat and charcuterie to restaurants all over Nova Scotia in cooperation with other breeders, possibly even starting their own charcuterie operation. It certainly will keep these German immigrants busy for the foreseeable future, building a business the residents of Bremen can only dream of.

She now is also involved as one of the directors of the Mangalitsa Breeders Association of Canada, and actively engaged to make the greatest possible genetic diversity of blood lines available in Canada. As of the writing of this article, Tanja is working with another Mangalitsa lover in Ontario to import more bloodlines from the USA, further supplementing available genetic material. Looking forward to visiting the Welzes and their farm – and of course petting some of their Mangalitsas.



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- TANJA & CHRISTIAN WELZ -



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