

- KOHL FARMS -

P E T E R S S T O R Y



By Peter Kohl

- As time flies -

I seemed only natural for my dad to start raising Mangalitsas when I went off to college after constantly referring to my bedroom as a sty and myself as a pig. While he would never admit it was his longing to have me around that started Kohl Farms, it did fill his void of having something to ridicule who wasn't paying any attention to him. Maybe he was right about me all those years (don't tell him I said that) because the moment I first met these beautiful, lazy, intelligent creatures and over the next year and a half I spent "managing" the pig farm there was a definite bond, as well as plenty of similarities, between myself and the Royal Mangalitsas.



When I was asked to write about our humble beginnings the first thing that comes to mind is just how humble they were. Before Kohl Farms was as aesthetically pleasing as it is now, with the new trees planted in rows leading up to the big red barn full of farm equipment and finished upstairs office, stone enclosed fire pit, concrete slabs fronting multiple large electrified pens, deer blinds, the well-manicured parking area, running water, electricity...there was myself, a shed, and four crudely assembled pens packed with piglets who for some reason believed squealing at the top of their lungs was helping me start a motorized water pump in two feet of snow (it wasn't).

The only reason there isn't a large feral Mangalitsa population roaming around Haslett Michigan is primarily because where the pens were is where the food was. Having said that, I vividly recall feeling the irony of having to leave class because one of our boars had decided he felt like escaping captivity to go stand out on the road. Whether he was trying to hitchhike his way back to Austria or had been brushing up on philosophy himself and wanted to prove it was his choice to be on the farm I will probably never know. What I do know is when the kind, friendly, compassionate, helpful residents across the street (do tell them I said that) had their new neighbor stop by they were probably not expecting him to be a 400 pound pig.



Fortunately, and unlike mowing the lawn as a child, I was compensated adequately for my various adventures, but the true value came from the laundry list of experiences I doubt many people could match. You have never truly lived until you've driven nine straight hours in a minivan with four piglets in dog kennels to meet a farmer in a secluded stretch of local highway to conduct a transaction that, from the outside looking in, would seem like those pigs were filled with diamonds or some illicit substance. What life is complete without spending an hour pulled over by eight of Ohio's finest Highway Patrolmen to

have the truck you are driving searched for drugs while multiple pigs sit in the truck bed and I sit in the back of a squad car. Did they find any drugs? Absolutely not. Did the drug dog 'indicate' that there were drugs? Of course it did. Did you know the most effective technique to move an eighty pound pig is to pick it up by the hind legs and walk it like in a wheelbarrow race? You do now. There is a certain satisfaction in watching a sow flop into a freshly dug pit of dirt that you've just filled with water, wallowing around until she finds a comfortable position and then inevitably being kicked out by her male counterpart

*R*eturning back home to the farm now is a mixed bag of nostalgia and jealousy. Could we have maybe built all these nice additions while I was the one doing all of the work?

My memories of the farm will always be of me and the pigs, but looking forward I see only good things for Kohl Farms.

