Which came first?

November 5th,2021

Which came first, the chicken or the egg? We can sit around and debate that in many different ways, but I will change that question to something that can be more easily proven. Which came first, the dog or the pig?

Domestication of animals started to take place around the time of crop domestication. Around 12,000 years ago, wheat was one of the first crops to undergo genetic improvements allowing people to go from being hunters and gathers to being farmers. This is the dawn of civilization. There would not be any massive cities without the ability to feed people. Farming allowed the ability of communities to have excess food and therefore people could now trade and have occupations like butchers, bakers, and candlestick makers.

In those roles, the bakers had a variety of wheat species domesticating them to the point that today we have six classes of wheat that can be used depending on where it is grown and the use, bread, pasta, pie crust, brewing, or pastry.

Domestication of animals brought about the butcher trade. Goats were the first farm animal, around 10,000 BC followed by pigs and sheep, a thousand years later; cattle in 8,000 BC and chickens in 6,000 BC. Geese were 3,000 more years into the future.

Ancient horse DNA samples have identified the genetic homeland of modern horses, where the animals were first domesticated around 4,200 years ago. According to a study published in Nature in October 2020, modern domestic horses probably originated on the steppes around the Volga and Don rivers, now part of Russia, before spreading across Eurasia.

They are the latecomers to domestication coming about 8,000 years after goats but they made significant strides in transportation, communications, and warfare. Part of that domestication was breeding horses for a strong back. An essential trait for the many uses we have for horses.

The candlestick maker can trace their origins back to the Egyptians. They are located on the western edge of the area of the world known as the cradle of civilization. The area from which wheat, sheep, and goats also arose. The first candles are attributed to the ancient Egyptians, who made torches by soaking the pithy core of reeds in melted animal fat. The Romans began making candles from tallow, beginning around 500 BC. Tallow is the fat of either sheep or beef. The domestication of these animals lent themselves to the establishment of this trade.

The first animal domesticated was the dog at least 3,000 years before goats. Man’s best friend was also its first friend. Some evidence even points to wolves being domesticated 23,000 years ago in Siberia.

So, to answer the hen and egg question. I contend it is the egg. I equate that with a seed. Our bread wheat comes from a cross of durum wheat and a plant called Tausch's goatgrass. That breeding produced an improved genetic seed from which our bread wheat is derived. There are many genetic crossings in all walks of life, it is from those that we have been able to mankind. It is all in the seed, or should I say the egg.