



# Like Engend'ring Like: Heredity and Animal Breeding in Early Modern England

*Nicholas Russell*

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Robert Bakewell of Dishley Grange in Leicestershire is usually regarded as the founding father of modern farm livestock breeding, and is thought of as one of the legendary pioneers of the agricultural revolution in late eighteenth-century Britain. However, Bakewell was by no means the first English breeder to practise deliberate selection of desirable qualities in his livestock. This book sets out to examine the ideas and techniques of earlier generations of agricultural and sporting improvers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and to demonstrate the earlier sources of many of Bakewell's opinions and procedures. It reviews the relationships which may have existed between the ideas of practical animal breeders and those of philosophical naturalists with theoretical ideas about heredity. It also touches on the question of whether the stimulus for the development of new stock was provided by demand for different products or by a desire to obtain knowledge about the heredity of domestic animals.

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