

Johnny and the Goat Rancher Who Had a Change of Heart

By Laurelee Blanchard

Johnny was born on a goat ranch with sixty-five other goats, slated to be sold for meat. When Johnny's mother became too ill to nurse him, the rancher (Carol) had to bottle-feed the baby goat. Several times a day, she brought Johnny into her house and gave him a warm bottle of milk. Gradually, a bond developed between Rancher Carol and little Johnny. Carol could not bear the thought of Johnny ending up at a barbecue, so she decided to consider other options. One day, while shopping at the local feed store, Carol learned about Leilani Farm Sanctuary and was told that a rescued baby goat named Ned lived here and needed a friend.

The next day, the rancher called Leilani Farm Sanctuary and asked us to come to her ranch and pick up the baby goat. Concerned that she might change her mind about letting Johnny go, I immediately drove there. Nearby on same the ranch, I discovered there was also a pig operation. The hillside ranch was dotted with dozens of beautiful goats. It broke my heart to know that they were all destined for slaughter. I scooped Johnny into my arms and took him to Leilani Farm Sanctuary where he met baby Ned, a kid goat his age. The two kids became fast friends, cuddling together, playing on rock piles, and romping around the farm.



Laurelee holds Johnny while Leilani the donkey looks on

I was so pleased with the friendship between Johnny and Ned that I decided to call Rancher Carol and give her the good news about how well it was working out, and also invite her to visit us. Surprising to me, she accepted the invitation. That Sunday, Carol and her husband (a pig farmer) came to Leilani Farm Sanctuary and spent the whole afternoon, meeting all the goats and learning their stories. The visit became a revelation for them: it was the first time they had considered

goats as individuals with personalities. They began to understand what intelligent and sensitive animals goats are. That experience shifted Carol's perspective and she had a change of heart. Two weeks later, she decided to let all her goats retire, rather than sell them for slaughter. One month later, Carol's husband opted to get out of the pig business.



Johnny is safe and loved

