

# United Suffolk Sheep Association

## *Hall of Fame*



*2020/2021 Inductees*



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*Marlin Berg & Family*

*Alan Culham*

*Jim Peifer | Kurt Birkey*

*William & Susan Shultz, Bunker Hill Farm*



# United Suffolk Sheep Association Hall of Fame

Year	Inductee
2020/2021	Marlin Berg & Family
2020/2021	Alan Culham
2020/2021	Jim Peifer / Kurt Birky
2020/2021	William & Susan Shultz, Bunker Hill Farm
2019	John Ascuaga
2019	Spelman B. Collins
2019	Rob Frost
2019	Ken McMillan
2018	Greg Deakin, The Banner Sheep Magazine
2018	Richard & Cindy Jones Family, Five Star 'J' Farms
2018	Larry & Linda Pauly, Double L Livestock
2018	Sam & Pat Wiford, Wiford Suffolks
2018	Bob & Mary Wilson
2017	Johnson Club Lambs, Weldon & Brian Johnson
2017	Alan & Mary Kjedaard
2017	Ansel Luxford
2017	Buckeye Acres, Ron & Carla Young
2016	Clyde & Justina George & George Brothers
2016	Millers Livestock, Brentford & Brenda Miller
2016	Chuck Ream, Windswept Ranch
2016	Duane & Marcia Sickels
2016	John & Pam Sponaule
2016	Dwight Stone, Stonemark Suffolks
2015	B.B. Burroughs
2015	Bob & Mark Chapman
2015	John Eagle
2015	Dr. Ben Huff
2015	George Hunter
2015	Sherwood Jackson
2015	Donna Mays
2015	Pearce McKinney
2014	Andrus Suffolks, Ken & Jim Andrus
2014	Andy Asberry
2014	Tom Burke
2014	Jim & Jacky Caras
2014	Hawkins Farm Suffolks, Glen "Sadie" Hawkins & Joy Hawkins
2014	Marvin & Sandy Heupel
2014	Joe Holbrook
2014	Bob Kimm
2014	Norman Olsen Family

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2014	Tom Slack, Slack Club Lambs
2013	Wes Azeltine
2013	Betty Biellier & Family
2013	George and Fred Buckham
2013	Fred A. & Marian Coble
2013	Robert Hall
2013	Heggemeier Sheep Farms, Bill & Alice Heggemeier & James & Jody Heggemeier
2013	Dr. Harold A. Henneman
2013	Bill & Helen Hurst
2013	Jarvis Sheep Co.
2013	Allan & VeNeal Jenkins & Annette Benson
2013	Warren Kuhl
2013	Jack Larsen
2013	Pearson Linn
2013	Larry Mead
2013	Roger Nichols
2013	Olsen Brothers, Alden & Snell
2013	Bob & Margie Paasch & Family, Donner Trail Ranch
2013	Richard Roe
2013	Roland (Rollie) & Ruth Rosenboom
2013	Wayne & Mary Skartvedt
2013	DuWayne Swenson
2013	Craig Van Arkel, Van Arkel Suffolks
2013	Harlan & Edwina Wagner
2013	Farrell Wankier
2013	Roy & Joe Warrick
2013	Bud & Julia Westlake & Family

More information on Suffolk Hall of Fame inductees can be found at:  
[suffolks.org/hof.html](http://suffolks.org/hof.html)

# *Marlin Berg & Family*

## Minnesota

Marlin and Donna Berg began raising Suffolk sheep in 1973 and have quite a story. Their family purchased an acreage south of Pipestone, Minnesota in the early 1970's. At the time, their children were six, eight, ten and twelve. They purchased 10 Suffolk ewes from two different Suffolk breeders in Pipestone County (Minnesota) and little did they know the adventures and life lessons their family would have that would help enrich their lives.

In 1975 the Berg family was encouraged by some local sheep producers that were taking their sheep to the National Lamb Show at Albert Lea, Minnesota. Their son Philip, age 10, showed the Grand Champion Market Lamb out of a total group of 400 lambs, this show was their first adventure in showing Suffolk sheep. The judge did not get asked back to judge again the next year as he had chosen a nobody for the Grand Champion. They went back to that show for several years and achieved Champion pen of three market lambs. Their challenge was to raise Suffolks and make decisions that would improve their Suffolks and help to make the Suffolks an economic adventure.

During the years the Berg's reached a point of having 100 ewes in their flock. These sheep were used to fulfill their economic goals and were used to develop lifelong learning experiences for their children. The work was shared by everyone in their family, and it soon was realized that dedication and hard work was a necessary ingredient to a successful program. It was important to the Berg's to make sure the dates on the pedigrees were correct, and that the lineage of the ewes was correct. The selection of rams from many leading breeders across the USA was always a family decision. The Berg children continued to show the sheep at local, state, and national events. They had all colors of ribbons but were still able to win some purple ribbons at many of the shows.

Through the years of raising Suffolk sheep many youth groups would use the Berg flock to practice their judging skills. They have had local 4-H, FFA teams as well as colleges visit the farm to practice developing their judging skills and improve their skills as they prepared for national contests.

Now there is a second wave of interest in their Suffolk sheep as with their twelve grandchildren were all excited to spend as much time as possible to learn everything they could about raising and showing sheep. The sheep also helped them learn the responsibly of hard work and success.

Now it is just Donna and Marlin, they are still excited about raising Suffolk sheep. However, their goals have changed, and numbers have decreased. They currently lamb out about 25 ewes. They still show a little and still have youth come and learn the observation skills of selection. The biggest purpose of the Berg flock is to have a selection

of good gaining productive, profitable, long-life rams for a small group of commercial breeders. There are many side benefits with raising and showing sheep, one of them is the many friends they have learned to know and cherish.



# *Alan Culham*

## Michigan

Alan's father John Culham purchased their first registered Suffolk ewe in the fall of 1961. This bred ewe, Smalley 60-14, was bred, and purchased from Norman Smalley of Williamston, MI, a prominent Michigan breeder at the time. By the time Alan enrolled in college in the fall of 1974 the flock had grown to twenty ewes owned in partnership with his 13-month younger brother Brian.

While attending Michigan State University to obtain a degree in Animal Husbandry, Alan worked under the guidance of shepherd George Good and faculty coordinator Dr. Harold Henneman at the MSU Sheep teaching and Research Center. The MSU Suffolk flock was of national prominence at that time having purchased both the world record selling Suffolk ram and ewe in 1973 from Olsen Brothers of Utah. Great success was gathered in the show ring with MSU having the Reserve Champion Suffolk ram in 1976, Grand Champion ram in 1978, as well as Grand Champion ewe in 1979 at the National Suffolk Show in Louisville. More importantly the MSU flock focused on individual animal performance and sold many rams whose offspring dominated the ram test stations of that era. In 1977 Alan spent the summer trimming rams for Jack Larsen in Spanish Fork, Utah for the National Ram Sale in August.

Alan participated on several judging teams while attending MSU including the Meats Judging team in 1976 and the Livestock Judging team in 1977. Highlights included winning the high overall individual award at the National Meat Animal Evaluation Contest, the High Sheep judge at the North Central Contest, and as the top individual in the halter division of the All-American Quarter Horse Congress.

Upon graduating from MSU in 1977 Alan purchased 400 commercial ewes and entered the sheep business on a large scale while still maintaining around 50 Suffolk brood ewes. Starting in 1984 Alan joined in partnership with Morrie Stevens to form the Culham & Stevens flock which had replaced the commercial flock with over 400 registered Suffolk ewes. Due to the tax advantages of purebred livestock at the time, Culham & Stevens had 14 investors in their Suffolk flock. Facing the impact of the Regan era tax law changes and the increased prevalence of the "Spider Lamb Syndrome" a decision was made to disperse the investor flock in the fall of 1987.

With the dispersal of the investor flock Alan returned to graduate school in Animal Science at Michigan State studying in the area of Growth Biology. He taught classes in live animal and carcass evaluation while coaching the meat judging team. The Suffolk flock was re-established with sheep believed to be free from the "Spider Lamb Syndrome" and enrolled in the National Sheep Improvement Program (NSIP) with a renewed emphasis on performance.

In 1986 Alan was elected to the board of directors of the National Suffolk Sheep Association (NSSA). Appointed to the chair of the Animal Health Committee Alan helped guide funding for research into the “Spider Lamb Syndrome” and published an article in the September 1988 *Sheep Breeder and Sheepman Magazine* “The Spider Lamb Syndrome: Where are we today – Where do we go tomorrow?” that established the genetic origin of the defect. While serving for a total of 12 years on the NSSA board Alan represented the association in the Federal Negotiated Rule Making Process that established the USDA Voluntary Scrapie Certification Program and was part of the merging of the National Suffolk Sheep Association and the American Suffolk Sheep Society into today’s United Suffolk Sheep Association.

In the decade of the 1990’s Alan served as an independent meat quality consultant for the Meijer department store chain while still managing the Culham & Stevens flock.

2006 found Alan returning to Michigan State University as the manager of the Sheep Teaching & Research center. While there he taught the Sheep Management course, the Live Animal and Carcass Evaluation class, as well as coaching the 2011 and 2012 MSU Livestock Judging teams. In addition, he oversaw the reemergence of the MSU Suffolk flock, this time as one of the preeminent NSIP flocks in the country.

In 2015 Alan was hired by the American Sheep Industry to oversee its “Let’s Grow Program” which funded 58 grants totaling \$1,012,766 to increase the efficiency and productivity of the U.S. sheep industry.

Starting in 2019 to present Alan serves as the Operations Director of Katahdin Hair Sheep International while still being the managing partner of Cuham & Stevens L.L.C..

# *Jim Peifer / Kurt Birky*

## Illinois

Jim Peifer started in the business of raising registered Suffolk sheep in 1987 with about a dozen ewes. At that time, Jim's sheep were more of a "hobby flock" to keep him busy in the winter when he had some down time from farming. A big influence on Jim to improve his breeding and his flock was his good friend, neighbor, and Hampshire breeder Dale Steffens. Kurt Birky started raising sheep living on the farm as a 11-year-old in 1968 with his father Wayne Birky and brother Kevin Birky. Kurt's influences were Rollie Rosenboom, Stan Heitz, Jack Larsen and George Good, just to name a few.

Kurt joined Jim in his business in the late summer of 1997. When Jim and Kurt got started in the business, their goals were to compete at the national level, to raise a "clean" flock, and to sell and be the "go to" flock for top breeders. They acquired 6 top stud ewes and leased 2 ram lambs from Steve George. This excellent start allowed them to meet those early goals and surpass them even quicker than Jim and Kurt ever expected.

Once the flock was established, it consisted of 30 to 35 ewes most years. The most impactful sire during this partnership was George Brothers 3915. Through his son Doc and his daughters and granddaughters, their impact continues on today in pedigrees around the country. The most impactful ewe family was George Brothers 3898 and her daughter Peifer 1015. His ewe line goes back to George Brother's great Bertha ewe and this line does not miss. The most shining moments in Peifer Suffolks success were their four Louisville Champions: Stroker Ace – 2002; Cracker Jack, a Stroker Ace son – 2004 for Tom Burke; Strokin' It, another Stroker Ace son – 2005; and Alpha – Champion Ewe in 2006 whose sire is 1186, son of 1015. During their partnership, they also had multiple champions and reserve champions at the Illinois and Iowa State Fairs, the Ohio Suffolk Sale, and at Sedalia.

The areas Jim and Kurt targeted in the industry were breeding big frame Suffolks, selling breeding stock to other breeders, and selling stud bucks to commercial and range breeders.

Jim and Kurt supported the United Suffolk Sheep Association and sheep industry by always registering their sheep with the proper pedigrees. They were committed to helping new people and new breeders as they were establishing their flock with best practices including feeding, fitting, worming, and other advice. This included working with a lot of junior Suffolk breeders. Kurt has assisted many young breeders in giving fitting classes and advice over the years.

Jim and Kurt had a multi-year plan for gradually retiring from the sheep business, but midway through that plan had an opportunity to disperse the flock in 2008 which was

found to be a blessing in disguise. In 2009 Jim was diagnosed with fronto-temporal degeneration – a type of early onset dementia – which became progressively worse over the next several years and led to his passing – too soon – in 2013.

Kurt has continued working in the Suffolk breed, mostly with the Ruby Mountain Sheep Company's flock that is based on a lot of the top Peifer sheep and several other flocks and enjoys competing at top level shows and sales.

# *William & Susan Shultz*

## *Bunker Hill Farm*

### Ohio

As a high school sophomore, Bill Shultz purchased his first registered Suffolks from Bill Hurst of Indiana. He exhibited his flock at show and sales throughout the Midwest.

After graduating from Ohio State, Bill was recruited by Larry Mead to be a field man for the Sheep Breeder Magazine. This gave Bill the opportunity to visit purebred flocks from coast to coast. The Midwest Stud Ram Sale became a yearly work assignment for over 25 years.

In 1998, Riverwood Farms wanted to add Suffolks to their operation and Run Guenther asked Bill to be a cooperator with registered Suffolks. In 2002, Bill and Susan purchased Riverwood Suffolks and transitioned the flock to a production-oriented focus. The flock was enrolled in the National Sheep Improvement Program (NSIP) and extensive data was collected on a yearly basis.

For the last 18 years, Bunker Hill Farm has been a leader in using breeding values as a selection tool for their Suffolk flock. Recently Bunker Hill Farm has recognized the need to also collect genomic information in particular, the myostatin gene in their flock.

Bunker Hill Farm focuses on providing genetics to the western range operations.

From the beginning of their marriage, both Bill and Susan have found time to serve as industry leaders at the county, state, and national levels. Bill was elected President of the Ohio Sheep Improvement Association (OSIA) in 1979 and Susan served as OSIA President in 2009 and 2010.

Bill was a director to the American Sheep Producers Council and served on the Lamb Council. Both Bill and Susan are now active in the American Sheep Industry Association (ASI) with Bill serving on the Genetic Stakeholders committee and Susan serving as ASI President.

In 2004, Bill, Susan and their son Joe were honored to receive the ASI Environmental Stewardship Award for their efforts in enriching and protecting their land for future generations.

Genetic Improvement has been and will continue to be a goal of Bunker Hill Farm as they look towards the future.



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