

Martin & Chris Auville

Virginia

Martin & Chris both grew up with livestock. Martin's family had cattle, hogs and later commercial sheep. He grew up in an agricultural community. Chris, on the other hand, grew up on a horse farm in a more urban area of the state. Martin taught agriculture, was a state supervisor for agricultural education but the majority of his career was as the director of career and technical programs for the county schools. Chris worked in healthcare and managed a multispecialty clinic for over 30 years.

Suffolks became a part of their lives while raising their two daughters Jessica and Stephanie and their "adopted" daughter Kristin (a neighbor who joined herself to the family). They enjoyed their experiences in showing at local, state, and national shows but feel the real performance takes place in the lambing barn. Once they started breeding, they only showed sheep they raised. In the early days, they had large fitted sheep but started transitioning to more moderate, slick sheared sheep after the girls aged out of showing. Chris still says there is nothing more beautiful than a fitted Suffolk yearling ewe.

The single most influential ram to the flock was Slack 11681 "Megabyte". He was the changer ram in transitioning the flock. His legacy lived in the flock until the purchase of MacCauley 4910 CSO (Chief Suffolk Officer) the high selling Suffolk in 2021 at the Midwest Ram sale. They feel this ram exemplifies what the Suffolk breed is about and is passing it onto his progeny.

Through the years, Martin & Chris have been strong supporters of 4-H, FFA, the Virginia Sheep Producers, the Virginia Junior Sheep Breeders and the West Virginia Purebred Sheep Breeders Association. They have hosted many free lamb showmanship camps at the farm (which included a lamb barbeque lunch for youth and parents), taken in kids to "live at the farm" and experience showing and lambing, hosted state judging teams and local extension workshops. Additionally Martin and Chris traveled throughout the east coast speaking at various lamb camps at no charge and often providing lambs for attendees to ensure all kids had a sheep to work during the camp. They have donated ewe lambs for their state "Ewe for Ewe" program and most recently donated the Champion Suffolk Ewe lamb at the WV Purebred sale to set up a youth scholarship to honor John Sponaugle's legacy. Chris is currently a member of the Digital Suffolk Committee for the United Suffolk Association.

When Martin and Chris got into Suffolks – Suffolks were the "cool" breed. Now, in their area, the growing segment of the sheep industry is with hair sheep and club lambs. They feel it is just a matter of time before the shininess wears off. Suffolks are a meat breed

and the lamb market wants clean meat that is brought to market at a young age with a lot of muscling. They feel Suffolks are the most profitable of the breeds to accomplish this, everything is cyclical, and in the future there will be renewed interest in the breed.