

Wes Azeltine

Wes Azeltine was from Latimer, IA. He developed a top herd of Brown Swiss cattle, which he successfully showed and sold breeding stock. When he decided it was time for he and his wife Lillian to reduce the workload on the farm he decided to disperse the cattle and establish a flock of sheep. While driving through Wisconsin one day he saw a flock of Suffolk ewes coming down a hill from a pasture; he was struck by the beautiful black heads and long bellshaped ears. This was at the time when Suffolks were just starting to gain popularity.

His flock featured very productive ewes that were great milkers; a result of his dairy cattle background. Most of the showing that Wes did was limited to Iowa, but his flock was very competitive. In 1966 the 1st and 2nd place pens of 3 ram lambs at the International Livestock Exposition were from Iowa, but an Azeltine pen of 3 won the Iowa State Fair.

Joint production sales with Richard Roe were held from 1967 through 1970 featuring great sets of yearling ewes. In one of their ads he commented that 80% of the buyer were or became repeat buyers.

Wes was a charter member of the Iowa Suffolk Sheep Association serving as President, Vice President and director. He also served as director of the National Suffolk Sheep Association in the late 1950s and early 1960s. He developed a slide set on a carousel to be used at Suffolk meeting and shows; that was the latest technology at the time.

Wes specialized in helping young breeders get started raising Suffolks. At the 1970 Iowa State Fair four young Suffolk breeders; Alan Kjeldgaard, Wayne Skartvedt, Richard Roe and Don Bartholomew; honored Wes by establishing the Wesley Azeltine traveling trophy for the Champion ewe. At the same show Wes and Alan Kjeldgaard exhibited the Champion Suffolk ram; the first of the "big framed" Suffolks from out west to be show at that show. Three weeks later on September 7, 1970 Wes suffered a heart attack and died; he was doing what he loved to do, working with his Suffolks. The entire flock was sold to Alan Kjeldgaard.