

Donna Mays

Donna Mays established her flock in 1950 with two ewe lambs from the oldest and most well-known flock in the nation, Green Valley/Fred and Marion Coble. Marion was Donna's mentor as she was to many other youth. Today Donna's flock consists of 35 foundation ewes. As soon as she was out of 4-H Donna became a livestock leader for over twenty years. During that time Donna started the Northern California Junior Sheep Breeders Club. Donna gave clinics on showing, fitting, feeds and health.

Donna donated her time to teach students at Chico State College in Chico, California about showing, fitting and judging sheep. She gave school tours at her ranch in California, and continued to do so after moving to Idaho. She also put on showing and fitting clinics for southern Idaho.

Donna was a co-coordinator of the United Junior Suffolk Sheep Association along with Andy Asberry, they both donated their time and travel costs to the association. Andy and Donna enjoyed working with the juniors. Donna started the silent auction to raise money for the junior association at Sedalia and Louisville. The first year she contacted Alum-line for purchase at their cost a sheep topper. The juniors sold the raffle tickets and the highest selling junior won a Suffolk embroidered jacket. That raffle along with the silent auctions brought in around four thousand dollars.

Donna served three terms as a USSA board member, one of those years as vice president. Having shown at Louisville when all Suffolk's were fitted she thought that we needed another avenue for showing Suffolk's. Donna was given the chairmanship of that committee. It was not easy getting the slick sheared classes started. The first year all the slick ewe lambs were in one class and all of the slick ram lambs were in one class - that was a start. There were a lot of calls were made to NAILE management along with asking Sam and Pat Wiford to help with those efforts. The next step was to get the same classes for slicks as there were for fitted. The following year was to get a separate judge. The thought was for the classes be for middle of the road or frame type sheep, we now have wether type being shown.

Donna was also on the scholarship committee for a number of years. Donna enjoys judging a number of state fairs, county fairs in Idaho and surrounding states. But her most memorable show was judging the Suffolk Show at NAILE in 2006. It was a great honor.

Donna and her husband James sold his ranch and range sheep operation two years ago. They moved to Rigby, Idaho on seventeen acres so she could continue what she loved most - raising Suffolk's. Donna co-managed the sheep operation of the

6,000 ewes in Howe. Her wool classers/graders number is #14 along with the highest graders license you can have to grade wool anywhere in the United States. She also has a CDL and hauls sheep in state and out of state. Donna has retired from the Idaho Wool Growers board after many years of service.

Donna has two daughters, Jeanette and Brenda. Jeanette works for the state of California Department of Education. This year Jeanette was the recipient of the Chico State Distinguished Alumni Award for Agriculture along with being honored by California State Legislature Assembly Award. Six years ago Jeanette was an Honoree of the American FFA Degree at the National FFA Convention. Jeanette oversees all the agriculture teachers and students in Northern California. Brenda won the 1985 California FFA Diversified Farm Award, in 1986 the National FFA Sheep Proficiency Award winner along with being the 1986 California FFA Agri Businessman Award winner. Both girls showed sheep in 4-H and FFA. Brenda had a nationally known Hampshire flock. Jeanette raised and showed Suffolk's.