

# *Johnson Club Lambs*

## *Weldon & Brian Johnson*

Weldon Johnson, Gotebo, Oklahoma, raised sheep all his life. As a young boy he started his show career which he continued as a young adult. He then passed this grand journey on to his son, Bradley and daughter, Karen.

In 1964 Weldon purchased his first Suffolk ewes. Weldon said, "The first thing we knew we had 30 to 40 ewes, and the next thing we knew we had to buy a farm to have a place to keep them. It went from a hobby to a job." He purchased Stonemark ewes from Dwight Stone for a ewe base and added a ram from Stan Heitz. Weldon helped bring the Suffolk Club Lamb Industry to prominence in Oklahoma.

Gradually Suffolks grew more popular and in 1969 Karen won Grand Champion at the Oklahoma State Fair, the first Suffolk to win Grand at a major show in Oklahoma. Weldon said, "We got our foot in the door and we were on our way". Johnson Club Lambs were Grand Champion at all major shows in Oklahoma and many across the nation.

Karen reigned as the International Suffolk Queen in 1970. It was a proud moment and year for our family to be representing a breed of sheep that we loved.

Weldon retired from sheep in 1988 and started carving as a hobby. Karen and her husband, Jim Mason took 100 ewes and Bradley and Brian took the rest of Weldon's flock to continue Johnson Club Lambs.

Weldon continued being the mastermind for Mason Suffolks and helped them evolve into a fully registered herd which proved to be predominately NN/RR. Attending the Midwest Sale and Top of the Rockies were always a highlight of the year and felt like family reunions.

Bradley and Brian have been leaders in the Club Lamb Industry for many years and have continued the winning tradition that Weldon started years ago.

Weldon's philosophy was always stay in the middle of the road. Weldon still loves talking sheep and even at the age of 92 can still judge a great one!