

Sam & Pat Wiford, Wiford Suffolks

Sam and Pat Wiford, of Ohio, raise moderate frame Suffolk sheep. They have been raising sheep since 1972. During those 46 years they raised Suffolk feeder lambs, large frame fitted and now the moderate frame slick shorn Suffolks.

They organized the Ohio Suffolk Yearling Ewe Futurity at the Ohio State Fair. They competed in the futurity from it's first year until last year.

Sam and Pat have both been officers in the Ohio Suffolk Sheep Association. Pat is presently a director. Sam has served a number of years as chairman of the Ohio Suffolk Sale.

Youth from Ohio and all across the United States have always pulled at their heart strings. They served as advisors of the Ohio Junior Suffolk Sheep Association for 12 years and continue to help.

Their two children, Tammy and Brett both showed in the National Jr. Suffolk Show until their 21st birthday. They have a lot of good memories and friends from the shows. Brett was the youngest NJSSA president to preside. Sam and Pat were the co-coordinators of the National Jr. Show when it was in Ohio in 1990.

When their children were too old for the National Jr. Suffolk Show, Sam and Pat started to attend the All American. They have organized and lead the sheep Skillathon at the All American for 24 years, educating the youth on the sheep and wool industry. Their unique sheep Skillathon includes an actual sheep skeleton, actual jaws, a Preg-Tone machine, and a ruminant stomach just to mention a few of the 50 different stations. Their Skillathon is "User Friendly". Sam and Pat want the kids to learn practices they can use in the barn. This year at the All American there were close to 400 youth go through the Wiford's Skillathon.

In addition to the All American, they traveled to the Wisconsin Sheep and Wool Festival for the past 14 years to hold their Skillathon. The Wisconsin Sheep Breeders presented the Dr. Art Pope Award to Sam and Pat. This award is given to someone in recognition of Outstanding Service and Dedication to the American Sheep Industry. Sam and Pat were the first recipients outside of Wisconsin to receive this award.

Sam and Pat have also received the Charles Boyles Ohio Master Shepherd Award for their excellence in sheep production and recognition of their contribution to the Ohio Sheep Industry.

Sam was on the committee of three, along with Donna Mays and Bill Zwyers that were instrumental in getting the slick show at the North American International Livestock Exposition.

The Wifords are still very active. Sam judges sheep show across the United States. And Pat is on the committee of three in charge of the Guys and Gals Lead show at the North American International Livestock Exposition and the Ohio State Fair.

Sam and Pat co-coordinate the three state junior breeding sheep shows each year in Ohio. They have been doing that since 1996 – 22 years.

They also coordinate the Mid-West Regional Jr. Suffolk Show at the Ohio State Fair. This was the 7th year for that show.

They coordinate an "All Breeds Picnic" where producers and breeders come together and raise money for their junior breeding sheep shows.

Their grand-children Will, 8 years old and Brynn, 6 years old are continuing the sheep legacy into the future. They have a small flock of Registered Suffolks of their own named Wiford Sheep Company. When they sell sheep it goes into their college fund. Will and Brynn have been showing for several years at the Mid-West Regional Jr. Suffolk Show, open class at the Ohio State Fair and here at the North American.

The sheep industry, especially Suffolks and youth will always be important to the Wiford Family.