

Ken McMillan

I grew up raising sheep. My Dad raised Shropshires, Hampshires, and Suffolks, later judged widely, and was Superintendent at the International Livestock Show in Chicago. My first sheep was a Hampshire—before Dad established the Suffolk flock with one ram and three ewes from Phil Rock in Alberta, Canada, arranged by Roy Warrick. My younger brother, Ed, was first to show Suffolks.

We had great success with the Suffolk Flock—showing at the Illinois, Missouri, Iowa, Ohio, and Indiana State Fairs. When Dad got a chance to move us to a great farm in 1962, we dispersed the flock.

I could only stay away from Suffolks so long. About 1970 I bought a lamb from Duane Sickels—and began a Suffolk flock that came to a halt in December 2014 when I sold my flock (and my small farmstead) to Travis Snyder—who was my neighbor, and regular helper, in Monmouth, Illinois. There were nearly 50 Purebred Suffolks in the flock when I sold.

After several efforts to establish a flock—with help from Bud Westlake, Steve George, Rollie Rosenboom and others—I focused on Ansel Luxford breeding. I followed it closely, studied the sheep and the pedigrees, and set out to have a flock with as close to pure Luxford breeding as I could—and I succeeded.

My greatest claim to fame as a breeder was to know Ansel's flock and pedigrees better than anyone OFF his ranch—and I enjoyed sharing that knowledge. I never showed and rarely put sheep in sales in recent years. Yet, one of my proudest moments was breeding "Preacher Man" which Cindy Jones and 5 Star purchased and a ram named "Blizzard" which a Colorado family purchased and succeeded with.

My interest in the Suffolk breed included a lot of things. As a junior in high school, I was a finalist in the Illinois FFA Public Speaking Contest—with a speech entitled "The Mystery of Scrapie"—a long time ago. Many years later, I testified before a US House of Representatives Agriculture Committee on some of the problems, needs, and impact of the APHIS Scrapie Program.

I was proud to be elected to serve on the National Suffolk Sheep Association Board of Directors and to be Vice President. I encouraged and in some cases facilitated the merger between the associations to form USSA. I have played a role in several National Junior Shows, support the Illinois Junior Suffolk Show, and with my family have annually presented a plaque at the Illinois State Fair for the Champion Suffolk Ram. I have judged a large number of country fair and 4-H and FFA sheep shows. I have been on the Board of the Illinois FFA Foundation. As a past National FFA President, I strongly pushed for the National FFA Foundation Award for Sheep Production.

I am honored to have been nominated and selected for USSA Recognition. I have known Suffolk Breeders, and families, all over the country for 65+ years. I have attended shows or visited flocks in nearly half the States—and visited flocks in the UK and Australia. I am very proud of the Suffolk Breed.