

Marlin Berg & Family

Minnesota

Marlin and Donna Berg began raising Suffolk sheep in 1973 and have quite a story. Their family purchased an acreage south of Pipestone, Minnesota in the early 1970's. At the time, their children were six, eight, ten and twelve. They purchased 10 Suffolk ewes from two different Suffolk breeders in Pipestone County (Minnesota) and little did they know the adventures and life lessons their family would have that would help enrich their lives.

In 1975 the Berg family was encouraged by some local sheep producers that were taking their sheep to the National Lamb Show at Albert Lea, Minnesota. Their son Philip, age 10, showed the Grand Champion Market Lamb out of a total group of 400 lambs, this show was their first adventure in showing Suffolk sheep. The judge did not get asked back to judge again the next year as he had chosen a nobody for the Grand Champion. They went back to that show for several years and achieved Champion pen of three market lambs. Their challenge was to raise Suffolks and make decisions that would improve their Suffolks and help to make the Suffolks an economic adventure.

During the years the Berg's reached a point of having 100 ewes in their flock. These sheep were used to fulfill their economic goals and were used to develop lifelong learning experiences for their children. The work was shared by everyone in their family, and it soon was realized that dedication and hard work was a necessary ingredient to a successful program. It was important to the Berg's to make sure the dates on the pedigrees were correct, and that the lineage of the ewes was correct. The selection of rams from many leading breeders across the USA was always a family decision. The Berg children continued to show the sheep at local, state, and national events. They had all colors of ribbons but were still able to win some purple ribbons at many of the shows.

Through the years of raising Suffolk sheep many youth groups would use the Berg flock to practice their judging skills. They have had local 4-H, FFA teams as well as colleges visit the farm to practice developing their judging skills and improve their skills as they prepared for national contests.

Now there is a second wave of interest in their Suffolk sheep as with their twelve grandchildren were all excited to spend as much time as possible to learn everything they could about raising and showing sheep. The sheep also helped them learn the responsibly of hard work and success.

Now it is just Donna and Marlin, they are still excited about raising Suffolk sheep. However, their goals have changed, and numbers have decreased. They currently lamb out about 25 ewes. They still show a little and still have youth come and learn the observation skills of selection. The biggest purpose of the Berg flock is to have a selection

of good gaining productive, profitable, long-life rams for a small group of commercial breeders. There are many side benefits with raising and showing sheep, one of them is the many friends they have learned to know and cherish.