

USSA Director Candidates

District 1



Cynthia Huckins, Spring Creek, Nevada

Hello, my name is Cynthia Huckins, owner and manager of Ruby Mountain Sheep Co. in Spring Creek, NV. My love for the Suffolk breed started as a little girl and has never wavered. I take raising registered Suffolk, the most beautiful and functional, sheep in my opinion, as a honor and with great pride.

Although I am running unopposed in district one, I want share a few of my ideas on the direction our association should be going. We have a breed that has something for everyone! Whether you raise club lambs, range rams, NSIP sheep, show sheep or anything in between our association should be there to support and encourage you to succeed. The only way the USSA will survive is by taking care of the membership that it already has. Breeders should be allowed to raise the type and kind of sheep that they want to. The board should not be there to dictate to people what kind of sheep they think they should raise. Agriculture as a whole is under attack and we need to band together and present ourselves and our sheep in the best light possible while encouraging others to become part of our breed.

District 2



W.E. (Bill) Gergen, Geneva, Nebraska

Hi. I am W.E. (Bill) Gergen and I am running for District II Board of Directors of the USSA and I am asking for your vote. I have been raising Suffolks for 57 years. It started out as an FFA project and turned into my life long business and job. I have exhibited at over 500 shows and sales across the United States and have sold sheep in 37 states and three foreign countries.

Some people refer to me as the **disruptive force!** I believe I bring a common sense approach to the Board and ask all the questions no one else wants to ask or answer. I believe the USSA Board has become a "secret society" and doesn't want YOU (the membership) to know what is going on with the association. The Board of Directors think since they have been elected by you that gives them the right to decide everything for you. This seems more like a dictatorship than a democracy to me. Remember as members of the USSA this is your association. You have a right to speak your piece and express your opinion(s). Please help me do the job for you. I will stand up for you.

Our prime goal as an Association should be our junior member(s) they are the shepherds of tomorrow. Not wishing for the good old days of the *Suffolk Hay Days* to come back. The world has changed and has dictated changes in agriculture and economics. We need to move forward.

I believe the NSIP (program) is a very important tool within your own flock. I do have a problem with that being the prime focus and some people thinking it is the ONLY way to go with the Association. I always tell people to raise the kind of sheep you want to. You are the one who has to feed them and look at them every day.

Thank you for your time and your vote will be appreciated for District II Director.

If you have any questions or just want to talk Suffolks, please contact me at 402.540.7884.

W. E. Gergen



Jim Van Dyke, Wessington Springs, South Dakota

Hello, I am Jim Van Dyke from Wessington Springs, SD. I run a flock of roughly 175 mature Suffolk ewes with an additional 150 head of commercial white face ewes. My Suffolk journey began 28 years ago in August of 1991. I have devoted a rather large part of my life to raising Suffolk sheep & a rather large portion of my income comes from sheep. Raising sheep isn't my hobby but rather part of my career. I have served on the SD Sheep Growers Assoc. board of

Directors for over a decade as well.

Several years back I had a farm visitor tell me I was trying to do the impossible & that I could never sell top quality terminal sires & still be able to compete in the show ring. It may be somewhat true that I still don't compete in the show ring, however I have sold numerous top-selling Suffolks at the Midwest Stud Ram Show & Sale since my inaugural in 2002. Today I market over 100 head of Suffolk rams to various sectors of the industry with the majority going as terminal sires. The Suffolk breed was developed to be a terminal sire breed & we must not forget that!

It is with this diverse yet complete mindset & the encouragement of others that I have decided to run for the board of directors of the USSA. I will bring with me a business mindset on how we run our Association & the breed as well. I believe we have breed standards for a reason & we need to adhere by them. I am a firm believer that we must learn from our past, make corrections & move forward. I am open for discussion & am here to serve you the members in my respective district. If elected I expect to hear from each & every member in this district who has an opinion on the future of the Suffolk breed.

Sincerely,

Jim Van Dyke

USSA Director Candidates

District 3

There are two directors seats open in District 3. The individual with the most votes will fill the 3 year term and the second most votes will fill the 2 year term.



Kenny Capron, Parkersburg, Iowa

I Kenny Capron would like to announce I am running for District 3 seat. I have been associated with Purebred Suffolks since 1990. I am from Parkersburg Iowa and currently lambing 45 ewes. I can be reached at 319-231-4497.



Randy Dombek, Ivanhoe, Minnesota

Randy Dombek has been raising Suffolk sheep for nearly 40 years starting in 1980. Randy and his wife Gunvar have four daughters and nine grandchildren. Together they operate a sheep farm in southwestern Minnesota, where along with their Suffolk flock they run 900 commercial ewes. The terminal sires used in the commercial operation are supplied by the Suffolk flock which also provides high quality breeding stock to other purebred breeders. These Suffolk sheep are bred for scale, growth, and structural correctness. The Dombek flock has been very competitive over the years as have their customers.

The Dombeks have been members of the Pipestone Lamb and Wool program for forty years and Randy has served on the Advisory board for twenty of those years. Randy has also served for many years on the board of directors for the Minnesota Suffolk Sheep Association where he served as president for several terms. Randy has just retired after serving more than 30 years on the board of directors of a local agricultural cooperative. During his time on the board the cooperative went through several mergers and continues to operate as a thriving customer owned business.

Fiscal responsibility and breed promotion of all segments of the Suffolk Association membership are the primary reasons that Randy is running to serve as one of the District 3 representatives on the board of directors of the United Suffolk Sheep Association.



Gary Hoskins, Jefferson, Iowa

Some of you know me some don't. I live on the farm where I grew up near Jefferson Iowa about 60 miles northwest of Des Moines with my wife Kathi. We have 3 children Jaimee & Kyle Mowrer with Rylee 9, Nora 7, and a baby girl in November, Becci & Jake Butcher, Will 4, Kris 2 and Sam 8 mo. and we can't forget David. Those how know David will understand. All but Kyle, Jake and Sam help with the sheep. We are still working Kyle and Jake.

I have been raising Suffolk sheep for over 50 years. They started as 4-H market lambs. After that it changed to the test station and breeding stock. Now it is mostly breeding stock and showing sheep. We have 30 brood ewes to breed this fall.

As you can see my flock has changed over time. The Suffolk breed is very diverse in genetics and type. You need to raise the type you want and like and you can sell. It should not be the board or a few members that try to tell you. I have changed over time and my change again but it should be up to me.

We should be The Breed In The Lead not the laughing stock of the industry. Let us bring all types together, let all types thrive and grow, stop the in-fighting, reunite the family and grow the breed.

Thank you for the vote.



Dennis Sorensen, Chebanse, Illinois

Hi, my name is Dennis Sorensen and I am seeking a District 3 Board of Directors seat. I grew up on a grain and livestock farm where we raised 200 plus commercial ewes. I started raising Suffolks during my 4-H and FFA years. Here it is 50+ years later and I am still raising them. Along with my wife, Mary Ann, I live in Chebanse, Illinois and currently run 25-35 purebred Suffolk ewes.

I graduated from Illinois State University with a degree in Agriculture Education. I also obtained a M.S. in Agriculture Education from the University of Illinois and an M.A. in Educational Administration from Governors State University.

For the first 8 years of a 38 year educational career, I taught Vocational Agriculture and advised the FFA program. The last 30 years I had the privilege to instruct and provide administrative support for post-secondary agriculture classes and programs at a local community college. During the instructional years I coached livestock and meat judging teams.

I am now retired and have the time to focus on raising Suffolks and hopefully serving you as a Board member.

I appreciate your consideration.

USSA Director Candidates

District 4



Randy Hodges, Lansing, Michigan

I have raised Suffolk sheep for over 55 years, starting with a 4-H project in southeastern Nebraska. I have served as sheep superintendent at our county fair and have judged open and junior classes at several county fairs. My wife and I have owned our farm in North Branch, Michigan for nearly 30 years. I firmly believe that Suffolks are the most productive breed in terms of pounds of lamb per ewe. Their lambs are fast growing with a lean and desirable carcass. No other breed can beat a Suffolk ewe in lamb production a fact that sometimes gets lost when attention is given only to show ring results.

I am running for the District 4 Director seat that I currently hold. I am the current USSA vice-president, a position I have held for the past two years. I am the committee chair of the By-Laws committee and the Hall of Fame committee; and co-chair of the Breed Improvement committee.

I think that support of junior breeders is vital to the future of the industry. We can do this by continuing to support the ewe lamb futurity and the USSA junior shows at the both the regional and national levels. I am looking forward to the day when my 2 grandsons will be old enough to be a part of the UJSSA.

The USSA is experiencing some challenges with declining registrations, transfers, and memberships. The current board has taken steps to keep the USSA sound financially by keeping our office costs under control. We have also had several good educational programs through the Suffolk U webinar series. These webinars were put together to offer ideas that were beneficial to breeders of all types of Suffolk sheep. We plan to continue to offer new webinars in the future to benefit all USSA members.

I believe that I have a range of experiences with the Suffolk breed in both the commercial and purebred settings that qualify me to represent the variety of Suffolk breeders within the district. As a representative of district 4, I will make every effort to convey the ideas and concerns of the breeders within the district to the board. When I was a director previously, I took my responsibilities seriously. I never missed a conference call or face-to-face board meeting in the three years I was on the board. I encourage you to contact me if you have any concerns you would like to discuss before you cast your ballot.

Randy Hodges
810-441-6218
hodgesrk@yahoo.com