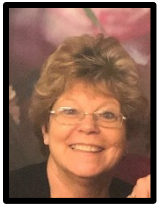


EAST DISTRICT DIRECTOR CANDIDATES

Director Seats Open: two 3-year term



Chris Auville – Mt. Sidney, Virginia

My name is Chris Auville and I'm running for the Eastern District Board position. My husband, Martin, and I have been raising Suffolks for over 30 years. Suffolks became a part of our lives while raising our two daughters and has continued as we have helped many youth along the way. Experiences in showing at local, state and the national shows have been great, but I feel the real performance takes place in the lambing barn. Breeding Suffolks and sharing their beauty and diversity is most important to me. I feel supporting our juniors is one of the best ways to grow our organization as they are our future. Through the years, I have been a strong supporter of 4-H, FFA, the Virginia Sheep Producers, the Virginia Junior Sheep Breeders and the West Virginia Purebred Sheep Breeders Association in addition to the United Suffolk Sheep Association. My husband and I were 2023 inductees of the United Suffolk Sheep Association Hall of Fame. I have served on the board for the last 2 years. During that time I have participated and Chaired the Junior committee. In addition, I was part of the process to hire the current Junior Coordinator. And this year I was chair of the Junior show at the Suffolk Event. I have also served on the Event committee and assisted in many jobs "behind the scenes". As a board director, I will continue to be an advocate for this great breed and its diversity. I will listen to and represent all who are in my district to ensure all viewpoints are represented. I hope I can count on your support for the Eastern Board position for the United Suffolk Sheep Association.



Jay Harris - Alexander, Illinois

I'm Jay Harris and I am running for the USSA Board Eastern District Board Member. Along with my family Mary Beth, AJ and Claire, we farm in Alexander, Illinois as well as operate our family's Farm Equipment business J.O. Harris Sales. We currently have approximately 200 ewes consisting mainly of Suffolk, Dorset, and Southdowns. Our family has raised sheep in Morgan Co for six generations dating back to 1861. My father started raising Suffolk's in the mid 60's as his 4-H project and we have continued the tradition to my children. I am excited to have the opportunity to be considered for the USSA board. The positive momentum within our breed is unmatched in the industry and I want to help it keep moving forward. From the Suffolk Event to the UJSSA, and the USSA Foundation, Suffolks are making great strides in popularity as a project for youth, in the show ring and in the barn!



Randy Hodges – Lansing, Michigan

I have raised Suffolk sheep for over 60 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 over 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 one of the two vacant District 2 Director seats. During my previous tenure on the USSA Board of Directors, I served as vice-president for several years, chaired numerous committees, served on the executive committee, and attended all in-person meetings and conference calls. I understand the challenges the Association faces as well District 2 challenges.

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. The USSA is experiencing some challenges with declining registrations, transfers, and memberships. We have 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. The Event held in June in Springfield, IL will hopefully become an annual education opportunity, as well as an opportunity for Suffolk breeders from across the country to showcase their breeding programs.

There are a couple of areas I would like to see the USSA contribute more time and resources to reconnect and expand to encourage more people to become members of the USSA.

1. We know that there are numerous breeders, especially in the west, that raise large groups of Suffolk range rams to commercial operations but don't register their sheep. How do we get these breeders to see value in becoming an USSA member? We promote Suffolks as the best terminal sire breed and we need these people in the Suffolk family.
2. Why is the Suffolk breed and the sheep industry as a whole so reluctant to embrace the programs available to utilize the use of estimated breed values (EBVs) to use in selection of breeding stock? With the new Digital Suffolk data program we now have, it's easy to input data and compare your flock's performance to others across the country. Again, we promote the Suffolk ram as the premier terminal sire, so let's embrace the collection of meaningful data like the beef and swine industries have been utilizing for years.

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 ten 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.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Hodges

810-441-6218



Victoria J. Morris, DVM - Whitesburg, Tennessee

I grew up in southeast Ohio on my family's beef and sheep farm, where my passion for agriculture and sheep production first began. I earned my bachelor's degree from the University of Findlay in northwest Ohio before completing my Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree at the University of Tennessee. I began my career practicing mixed animal medicine in southern Utah, then returned to Tennessee, where I currently work in general practice and serve as a faculty member at Lincoln Memorial University College of Veterinary Medicine. In my role as Large Animal Clinical Skills Course Director, I train future veterinarians in the hands-on competencies essential for livestock health and production.

My husband, Preston, and I live on a small farm in Tennessee, where we maintain a small Suffolk flock. I am committed to serving on the USSA Board of Directors to ensure the preservation of breed character, promote diversity in frame style, and maintain the Suffolk as the premier fast-growing, high carcass yield breed in the sheep industry. My background in production, veterinary medicine, and the show ring provides me with a multi-faceted perspective to ensure all members are equally heard. I am excited to see the future of the industry where the Suffolk breed continues to excel.