

# United Suffolk Sheep Association

## 2016 Director Election Candidate Bios

### District 2



#### **Candidate: Tom Burke, Platte City, Missouri**

I would like to introduce myself; my name is Tom Burke; as a Candidate for the Board of Directors of the United Suffolk Sheep Association. Residing on a farm near Platte City, Missouri it has been my privilege and pleasure to have been a Suffolk breeder for the past 36 years.

One of the highlights of my life was being inducted into the United Suffolk Sheep Association “Hall of Fame” at the 2014, 41<sup>st</sup> Annual North American International Livestock Show on November 17, 2014.

In 1988 I was elected to the National Board of the National Suffolk Association and reelected in 1990 and 1993. I had the privilege and pleasure of serving as President of the National Suffolk Association from 1994 through 1996. From 1994 through 1996 I served as Vice President of the Missouri Suffolk Breeder’s Association and from 2003 to 2007 served as the Secretary/Treasurer.

In 2002 I was selected to judge the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual North American International Suffolk Show in Louisville, Kentucky. In 2005 I was elected to the Board of Directors of the United Suffolk Sheep Association and served as President of the United Suffolk Sheep Association in 2009. For the past 26 years I have served as an announcer for the National Junior Suffolk Show. For the past 31 years I have exhibited Suffolk’s at many shows.

I have exhibited numerous Louisville champions and first prize winners and have been the premiere exhibitor at the North American International Livestock Show in Louisville at the National Suffolk Show for 4 consecutive years. In 2016 I will be exhibiting Suffolk at the Missouri, Nebraska and Kansas State Fairs. My registered Suffolk flock continues to grow and prosper. We are also planning on a commercial Suffolk Ram sale at the St. Joseph Missouri Auction Market late this summer.

As a member of the Board of Directors of the United Suffolk Sheep Association I will work for all members to continue building a fair and strong organization. I will aggressively be untiring in my devotion to keeping the Suffolk registry pure from the invasion of outside forces, and sincerely ASK for your vote and support in my candidacy as a Director for the United Suffolk Sheep Association. As a Director of the United Sheep Suffolk Association, if you are in need of help or have a problem, you won’t have to find me, I will find you.—THANKS!



#### **Candidate: W.E. Gergen, Geneva, Nebraska**

Hey! It’s me, the “Disruptive Force” as I have been labeled by some! My name is W.E. Gergen (WEG) and I am declaring my candidacy to run for Director from District II for the United Suffolk Sheep Association Board of Directors.

I am beginning my 54<sup>th</sup> year of breeding and raising Suffolks. I cover all the bases: breeding stock, range rams, commercial rams, and club lambs.

I have served two terms as a Director in the past and believe it is time for me to run again. The biggest issues I have today with the USSA Board is “common sense” when it comes to unnecessary spending. The other problem I see is “discrimination”. The majority of the time the Board does this without thinking things completely through.

We have to face reality: the glory days of the sheep business have come and gone! All the changes in agriculture today have dictated to the majority of changes in the economy in general. Maybe the time has come “to think within the box” instead of thinking “outside the box”!

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Maybe it is time to try and keep the numbers of registered sheep we have and not lose anymore. When your offense is not working, your defense has to step up, or you lose!

The number one issue we face is keeping the Junior members involved and enthused in the Suffolk industry. I believe the USSA has done an excellent job with this. We must keep promoting “Suffolks” and the “Juniors”; and not take our eyes off the ball or the goal!

The biggest problem I see in the sheep business today are “sales”. Whether it is live sales or on-line sales we need to protect our integrity with the quality of sheep consigned. Roger Snyder asked me a question about 40 years ago, “Would you, yourself keep that ewe or breed with that ram? If not, why would you expect someone else to?” We all need to think of this when we pick out sale sheep.

I hope I have brought up some things that make you scratch your head. Please feel free to contact me at 402.540.7884 with any questions or comments.

I would appreciate your vote for Director from District II for the United Suffolk Sheep Association Board of Directors and I apologize for not being as “entertaining” as Hillary or Donald with their campaign promises.

Thank you.

W.E. Gergen (WEG/I-80)



### **Candidate: Chris Mallett, Memphis, Missouri**

Hi, my name is Chris Mallett. I grew up and currently reside in rural Scotland County. I am employed as a DuPont Pioneer Seed salesman in the northeast region of Missouri. I have held this position for two years while also continuing in our family farming operation. Farming has been in our family for many generations. In our current operation we farm row crops, hay, and raise livestock, including cattle, sheep, goats, and hogs. I started in the sheep industry 20 years ago and since then my desire to raise better quality sheep has grown tremendously. The operation began as a way for my father to teach me responsibility and become familiar with the business decisions associated with raising animals of my own. Within just three years of operating my sheep flock, I decided to change from Columbia sheep to a Suffolk flock. This change came from studying other breeds’ characteristics and ultimately determining that Suffolk sheep aligned with my personal preference better. My current operation involves raising lambs for show, breeding stock, and slaughter. I am actively involved in showing at the Missouri State Fair as well as other shows to exhibit my breeding stock.

Suffolks are a breed of diversity, which I believe the United Suffolk Sheep Association board should be as well. For the breed to continue to succeed, it is important to have a group and director that have different ideas that can come together with one goal – to make the breed better. I strongly believe that the 20 years I have dedicated to adapting and perfecting my flock to its current status demonstrates my love of sheep and drive to improve the breed as a whole. I currently hold the position of Secretary/Treasurer of the Missouri Suffolk Sheep Association. In this position I have gained exposure of the Missouri organization and have become familiar with its wants and needs. My involvement in the organization and my extensive knowledge and love for sheep, I believe, qualifies me to hold the position of Director in the United Suffolk Sheep Association. As director, I would help complete the board by coming in with fresh, new ideas. I also believe that we need to continue to support the United Junior Suffolk Sheep Association. The UJSSA is a great organization to help kids come together to make lasting friendships while building leadership skills. It is important to have young breeders involved in the great program, but we can strive to build and make it even better so that we can continue to survive in the industry.

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#### **Candidate: Randy Steinhausen, Lincoln, Nebraska**

Randy Steinhausen has spent a lifetime working in the livestock industry. He and his wife, Diane, raised their three children on a diversified farming operation which was primarily a dairy but included commercial sheep, beef, hay and grain production. Currently their focus is on improving their flock of 50 registered Suffolks with detailed on farm performance records and enrollment in NSIP.

Steinhausen has worked with the American Jersey Cattle Association (AJCA) and Select Sires Mid America (SSMA). With AJCA he was an Official Type Appraiser (Classifier) and an area representative. He was responsible for member services, auction and private treaty sale management, promotion of breed improvement programs and developing new marketing opportunities. In addition to working in all of the “lower 48” states, he visited Mexico, Central America, Denmark and Italy to provide support for development and implementation of their breed improvement programs. With SSMA he was responsible for customer herds sire selection and mating recommendations, coordinator for Select’s progeny test program and earned designation as a Certified Reproductive Specialist working in a 4 state area. He also currently serves as an officer on the Board of Directors for the Norris Public Power District.

While recognizing exhibition as an excellent tool for promotion and public education, Steinhausen believes the key to the success and expansion of the Suffolk breed lies in embracing the commercial sector of the industry, helping establish new farm flocks through a mentoring program, development of regional marketing alliances, strong support of youth programs and breed improvement through the use of unbiased genetic evaluations ... “If you don’t measure it, you can’t improve it”.