

## *Jack Larsen*

Jack Larsen was born and raised on a small irrigated farm near Spanish Fork, Utah. Jack was one of the leaders in both the Suffolk and Columbia Sheep breeds.

Jack's first experience with sheep came in the 4-H Show Program. Jack's father had bought him two "fat" lambs to show, both of which were sifted. After that experience, he would make sure that never happened again.

Jack attended school in Spanish Fork and after graduation attended college at Utah State University where he majored in Animal Science. While attending Utah State, Jack met his first wife, Mary. They married the day after graduation. Jack then entered the military where he spent 3 years. Returning from the service, he attended BYU where he did post graduate work. Upon the completion of which, he returned to Spanish Fork where he taught 5<sup>th</sup> grade for 6 years.

Jack and Mary had three daughters. Marthanne, the oldest is a retired school teacher and is married to a crop duster. They have two children. Melinda is married to Steven Paasch. They have 4 children and reside in California. Steven worked for Jack for several years. Millicent is the youngest, is married with 3 children, and resides in Salt Lake City. Millicent is the principal of an elementary school.

Jack and Mary divorced and he remarried Bessie Perkins, she later died of cancer.

Jack credits his family for much of his success saying: They were behind him all the way! They were always there to help no matter what.

Along with the 600 head of Suffolk ewes Jack ran 150 head of Columbias. He also farmed in Spanish Fork, had a barley farm in Idaho, ran 150 head of Hereford cows and raised Quarter Horses. Although the cattle did well, the sheep were his priority.

Jack credits Snell Olsen with him first getting started raising sheep. Snell went and got him out of high school one day and they went to Delta and bought twenty Hampshire ewes. The ewes were shipped back to Jack's by railroad car. Those would be Jack's first ewes.

Jack credits much of what he learned about sheep from Mark Bradford, whom he trimmed and showed for and to Hartley Stock Farms in North Dakota. Jack worked as a shepherd at Hartley Stock Farm, which raised both Columbias and Suffolks during the 1950's.

From nothing to one of the most respected names in the sheep business did not happen overnight. The Suffolk flock was built gradually over the years after Jack returned from the service. The Columbia flock was started with the purchase of the Alma Esplin flock of Logan, Utah.

Both the Columbia & Suffolk flocks had many champions and high selling individuals all across the United States. The Larsen flock was operated with sheep herders, dogs and horses. The operation consisted of moving up the mountain in the summer and to the foothills in the fall, and down on the desert in the winter. The main business was selling commercial rams.

Jack felt some of the breeders had gone off the deep end and worried more about height and daylight under lambs. He felt the sheep needed to be big, but they also needed to be long, correct, sound, have some bone and keep some meat in them. Sheep like these is what kept him as one of the top sheep breeders.

Jack retired in 1990 but not before leaving his mark on the sheep industry. His genetics and breeding were known worldwide. It would be safe to say he was one of the founding “fathers” of the sheep industry. He liked breeding good sheep, showing good sheep and selling good sheep. Some of his stud rams included “Mule Face”, “Quest” and “The Key”.