

# *Bob & Margie Paasch & Family*

## *Donner Trail Ranch*

A pioneer spirit best describes the Robert Paasch family of Chicago Park, California, where the Paasch's started their Donner Trail Ranch from scratch. While most people think of California as the land of palms and beaches, the Paasch family built their sheep ranch on a rugged spot in the Sierras. The ranch is covered with oaks, pine and manzanita, with a beautiful view in all directions, including Donner Summit to the east.

Bob and Margie have two sons, Robert K. and Steve, and a daughter, Mary. The sheep have always been a family affair; all three children were very involved with the flock during their youth. All of Steve's children, Bob & Margie's grand children, were also very involved with the Suffolks, and now the great grand kids can be found 'helping' out on ranch. Today on the ranch, the flock is comprised up of Bob & Margie's 'white tag' ewes and Steve and family's 'blue tag' ewes.

Bob Paasch and his wife Margie met in Rescue, California where Bob was visiting his grandmother's ranch. Both Bob and Margie attended U.C. Davis together where Margie received her B.S. degree in Home Economics of 1952. Bob received his B.S. degree in Agricultural Engineering from Cal Poly in 1954 and his Master of Education degree from U.C. Davis. While earning his Agricultural Teaching credential from U.C. Davis in 1954-55, Bob and Margie lived on the Ervin Vassar ranch in Dixon, California. Bob learned a great deal about the purebred sheep business working part time for Buckman and Vassar. The Paasch's purchased the nucleus of their present flock in 1959 from Harlan and Edwina Wagner's Stony Point flock. The granddams of these ewes were primarily Stoneman, Trentham, and CPR Canadian breeding, and the sires were 2 Green Valley ram from Fred and Marian Coble.

Bob taught vocational agriculture in Hamilton City, California for 3 years at which time he bought his first registered Suffolks at the Calgary Fall Sale from Harold Trentham. In 1958 the Paasch family moved to Chicago Park, California, where they leased a 40 acre ranch. While the boys were growing up in the '60's', the Paasch's purchased 40 acres, 1-1/2 miles from the original ranch. In subsequent years with Robert K. and Steve's help a large barn and house were built. Bob taught vocational agriculture at Nevada Union High School, Grass Valley for 30 years from 1958 to 1988, serving as Department Head for 23 years. Bob was awarded Honorary American Farmer Degree at the 1973 National FFA Convention, Kansas City; Regional Star Advisor in 1977; and the Teacher of Excellence Award at the 1977 California Agricultural Teachers Association convention.

Bob, with much support from Margie, has been instrumental in the promotion of the Suffolk breed and has served in numerous leadership roles within the breed associations. Bob is a past president and served over 15 years on the Board of Directors for the American Suffolk Sheep Association. Bob is also past president of the California Suffolk Sheep Breeders Association (CSSBA) and was a 20 year member of the organizations Board of Directors. Bob is also a long-time member of the Board of Directors for the California Wool Growers Association and Nevada County Farm Bureau. Bob spearheaded numerous shows and sales promoting Suffolks. Working closely with other CSSBA board members, Bob was instrumental in bringing the concept of a "Grand" Suffolk event to fruition. Bob served as Sale Manager for the first

nine (9) Nugget All-American Suffolk Show and Sale events (1980-1988) at John Ascuaga's Nugget Hotel and Casino in Sparks, Nevada. These unique Suffolk only events included a 'lottery' for selecting judges at ring-side (it was unknown till show time which judge would be judging which class), a cocktail party with the top placing sheep on display in the convention center, and selling Suffolks across the Celebrity Room stage. Bob was also instrumental in organizing many national and regional shows throughout the West and managing other CSSBA sales such as the Purple Circle Show & Sale and Cow Palace Suffolk Sale.

For many years Paasch Suffolks were familiar competitors at many of the major sheep shows across the country, including the California State Fair; Great Western in Los Angeles; Pacific International in Portland, Oregon; Golden Spike in Ogden, Utah; Grand National Livestock Show and Rodeo (Cow Palace), San Francisco; and the Chicago International Livestock Exposition, Chicago, Illinois. An early accomplishment, with a brood ewe flock of 15, Bob & Margie captured the English Perpetual Challenge Cup for 1st Flock at the 1962 International Livestock Exposition in Chicago, Illinois. This 1962 winning flock was anchored by Circle P 29, Champion Ewe at the National Show. The Paasch family has won the English Challenge Cup six (6) times through the years.

More recently, the Paasch's have primarily exhibited at the California State Fair and North American International Livestock Exposition (NAILE). During their last trip to the NAILE in 2011, they exhibited the National Champion Ram "Big Gold" and Reserve National Champion Ewe "Margie's Big Girl". As rewarding, the National Champion Ewe exhibited by MacCauley Suffolks was sired by a Paasch ram.

The Paasch family has also consigned to most of the major purebred Suffolk shows and sales, including Mid-West Stud Ram Sale, Nugget All-American Show & Sale, Louisville Suffolk Sale, Crossroads Show and Sale, Purple Circle Show and Sale, and Top of the Rockies Show & Sale. As the sale of range rams has been a key market, similar to many western flocks, the Paasch's have had top Suffolk consignments at the National Ram Sale, California Ram Sale, Bakersfield Ram Sale, and Willow Ram Sale.

Son Robert K is married to Belinda, and has been a professor of mechanical engineering at Oregon State University since 1990. Bob has two sons, Tom Paasch, a research and development engineer for Honda America in their ATV/side-by-side division and Steve Paasch, a food science major at Oregon State University. Son Steve is a graduate of California State University, Chico. In 1978, Steve married Melinda Larsen. Steve worked with his father-in-law, Jack Larsen from 1978 to 1986 in Spanish Fork, Utah raising Suffolk and Columbia sheep and farming. Steve and Melinda have 4 children, John, Doug, Nancy and Diana, all of which are graduates of Cal Poly. John is married to Diane and has three children Audra, Larsen, and Ainsley and another on the way. Doug is married Maria and they have a son, Jack. Nancy is married to Ben Hoover, their son Charlie just celebrated his 1<sup>st</sup> birthday. Diana holds a B.S. in Agricultural Business and is a Partner Strategy Manager at Liftopia. Mary is married to Greg Ahart; they run about 100 Suffolk and Suffolk-cross wether-type ewes.