

Wayne & Mary Skartvedt

Wayne purchased his first Suffolks in 1962, there were six head of registered bred ewes from the local sale barn, they cost \$22 per head. The flock grew until at it's largest there were 200 brood ewes in the flock. 1968 was a year of several milestones in his life; he started farming in March, graduated from Iowa State University in August, was elected vice president of the Iowa Suffolk Sheep Association in November and married his wife Mary in December.

Like many of the people being honored by the Suffolk Hall of Fame the operation is truly a family operation. Many of the accomplishments in the flock would not have happened without Mary's hard work and support. Actually Mary was raising sheep before Wayne; as a 4-H member she had first Montadales and then a Hampshire flock. It may have been preparing meals for friends and customers who stopped, mixing lamb milk, or fitting sheep, in every way she has been a total partner in the operation

Wes Azeltine and Richard Roe both from Iowa were very influential in the first years of the Skartvedt Suffolk flock. In the following years five stud rams were purchased from the Roger Nichols flock.

Wayne strived to produce massive fast growing Suffolks that were sound on their feet and legs. Production records have been kept from the beginning and used to help select replacements. Several production sales were held in the late 1970's and early 1980's. Each sale had about 25 head of breeding sheep and 85 head of club lambs. In those days you could use the same bloodlines to produce both types of sheep. Mary was in charge of fitting the sheep, which meant that often one of the boys was found in a car seat or playpen in the barn while the sheep were being fitted. Rams were entered in the Iowa Ram Test and the Illinois Ram Test. He had the top gaining ram in the Iowa test in 1987 and tied for first another year. Their three sons were active in the Iowa and National Junior Suffolk organizations helping with all aspects of the flock.

Skartvedt Suffolks have been consigned to numerous sales throughout the county over the years and have been well received. A highlight came last June when one of his son's ram was named Grand Champion Ram at the Midwest Stud Ram Sale. In past years sheep have been exported to Mexico and semen exported to Germany and Hungary. Wayne judged shows in eight states and especially enjoyed judging junior shows.

Wayne and Mary were awarded the Iowa Master Lamb Producer award in 1980. Wayne served as an officer or director of the Iowa Suffolk Sheep Association for over 40 years. He was elected to the National Suffolk Sheep Association board of directors in 1976 and served until 1986. While on the board he was on the committee that found and remodeled the new office in Columbia, MO. He also served as chairman of the Youth Committee of the NSSA. While at a board meeting in Louisville in November of 1981 Wayne proposed sponsoring a National Junior Suffolk Show patterned after the Angus and Jersey cattle junior shows. The board agreed to back the show if Wayne would manage it; seven and one-half months later the first National Suffolk Junior show was held in Des Moines, IA in July 1982. The goal was to have at least 200 sheep exhibited; 302 head of Suffolks were shown in two days. The show grew and is still going strong today. The following year the board decided that with the show and other Junior Association activities a Junior Coordinator was needed. Gary Jennings from Texas was hired; as chairman of the Youth Committee Wayne oversaw the position. Creation of the position increased the number of juniors active in the association and its activities.

Skartvedt Suffolks remains a strong family affair. Wayne and Mary plus sons and daughters-in-law; Doug and Jodi, Paul and Shannon, and Jim and Danelle and eight grandchildren enjoy various sheep shows and sales. The Iowa State Fair is always a highlight of the year.