

Marvin & Sandy Heupel

Dedicated to Improving Suffolks for 57 Years...Before Heupel Suffolks began in 1957, it was known as Heupel Farms going back to the 1940's with registered Hampshire and Duroc swine. A great deal about livestock genetics and animal breeding was learned and applied to the sheep while Marv was in the hog business. While attending college at Fresno State University, Marv was responsible for Live Evaluation of the college hogs. This type of real meat evaluation could be directly applied to lamb carcasses. In the 50's, the swine industry was far ahead of the beef or sheep industry in performance testing, feed conversion, daily gain and carcass evaluation.

In 1957 Marv and his young family; wife, Elinor, children, Kendra, Kurt and (Annette yet to come) moved to Corvallis Oregon where Marv was hired by Oregon State University to manage the swine herd. He also enrolled in graduate work and started his Suffolk flock with 13 original Walter Hubbard ewes. While at Oregon State, the Agricultural Education Department launched a "first of a kind" program called Intern Teaching. Marv received the distinction of being the First Intern Teacher in the US. He went on to teach High School Agriculture and Mechanics for 10 years at Newberg High School.

His teaching career brought him back to California in 1969 where he accepted the position of Department Head and Instructor at Allan Hancock College in Santa Maria. Marv's teaching consisted primarily of Mechanized Ag and Diesel Equipment Technology. Marv did not accept being addressed by his students as "MR" or "Professor" just plain and simple "Marv". With this approach, instructor and students were on an equal basis and communication was easy. Students went from this program well skilled in Equipment Operation, Class A Truck Driving, Equipment Repair and Maintenance, Hydraulics and Engines. This was rewarding for Marv to see his students go into the work force with dignity and good financial rewards. In 1994 Marv retired from teaching and continued with the passion of Line Breeding his Suffolks.

Back in 1968 Heupel Suffolks began consigning range rams to the prestigious California Ram Sale where the sale rules allowed a pen of three rams for the first year. If a consignor was in the top third average on their sale price they were allowed to double their consignment. For the consignor who was progressing upward in average sale prices they could keep doubling their allotment to 10% of the sale until they reached the maximum of 125 rams. Heupel Suffolks reached the maximum number of rams and held it through the 1970's and 1980's. It was great to watch the excitement of those pens of 15 rams as they sold. The Heupels always sold their best pen first which got the buyers attention and they would bid strong on the Heupel rams until they were all sold.

Throughout the years Heupel Suffolks took their sheep to numerous shows and sales. They took out some of their best to get the attention needed to make private treaty sales at the ranch. On numerous occasions that one desirable individual would open the door to sell as many as 50 head to one customer. During the 80's there was a strong demand for those big classy rams as weather sires. In 1989 Heupel's exhibited a weather sire that became Supreme Champion at the Midwest Sale, one of the larger sales of weather sires. This ram went to Hill Country Suffolks of Texas and helped to sell another 35 yearling weather sires.

The Heupel brood ewes are like a special woven fabric. They carry the influence of their cornerstone rams a good number of times in their pedigrees. They have used many rams in the 57 years of breeding, but the main cornerstones are 1957 "The Eldon Riddle ram", 1962 "The Hubbard ram", 1978 "Banyan", 1981 "Keepers Kopy", 1984 "New Genes", 1985 "Keen Genes", 2003 "Giant", 2007 "Angus Kopy", 2011 "Bismark", and in 2013 "Marv's Next Step" Heupel Suffolks legacy will continue on in partnership with Marv's son and daughter in law, Kurt and Carol Heupel and their breeding program in Colorado.

The Heupel's were pioneers in:

1959: The first sheep tilt table was designed built by Marv. It was called The OSU Table.

The first sow milking machine was built by Marv and used to get colostrum milk from sows to bottle feed newborn piglets on Atrophic Rhinitis Eradication it was called The Octopus.

The first winner at the Pacific International Lamb Carcass Contest. 32 lambs competing Heupel's placed 1st, 2nd and 4th.

1974: First sheep producer in US to own and process corn silage with a German made Eberhardt Silo Press

1980: First winning Progeny Performance Cal Poly Ram Test

1984: First large scale operation to perform Artificial Insemination of sheep via Laparoscope. Dr. Haymen of New Zealand and Tracy Haslem of California.

Worked in conjunction with UC Davis to test rams to rule out the Spider Gene.