

John Eagle

Sheep in general and Suffolks in particular have given a rhythm to John Eagle's life since 1977.

They were a part of the package that came with his wife, Mary, who had sheep from 4-H days, usually with a Suffolk ram at the helm. Sheep were an important contributor to the family income. They decided to try registered ewes in 1978, and what followed was a way of life that has provided a chance to meet and make friends with some of the country's most talented and interesting people.

Meeting the late Weldon Heard, and his friend Ed Fisher, was an opportunity to learn about animal husbandry from two of the world's greatest livestock practitioners, and has provided some of the most important life lessons.

Paying attention during breed challenges has brought the opportunity to visit with world class scientists, and the reminder that what you see in your own backyard, while important, may not represent the breadth of experience that sheep production entails around the country or the world. He has always thought meaningful production records and pedigrees are an important part of the craft of shepherding.

Eagle Suffolks stud rams have been used in flocks from coast to coast, which is a great source of pride.

John was also a commercial winemaker in Oregon—always looking for the perfect red wine to go with the perfect lamb chop!

He has greatly enjoyed judging county and regional fairs on a limited basis. Eagle Suffolks showing has been mostly limited to sales.

John has participated in state and national sheep organizations, in Oregon until 2004, and now in Idaho. He held offices in the Oregon Suffolk Breeders Association, and thinks he remembers being a director in the Oregon Purebred Breeders. He was the last President of the American Suffolk Sheep Society, and the first President of the United Suffolk Sheep Association, and tried to make sure that all members and employees were treated honestly, fairly, and openly.

He has been greatly blessed with the friendships of some really great Suffolk breeders.

On Christmas Eve you can usually find him in the barn, following some of the first advice given to him by Doc Heard many years ago. Sometimes you just have to sit, look, admire and thank the sheep that have given so much and asked so little.