

Clyde & Justina George & George Bros

My parents, Clyde and Justina worked in the healthcare field for over 40 years. Our family has four brothers, me (Steve), Bob, Bernie and Jim. The brothers most involved with the sheep operation and most recognized in the Suffolk Industry are Steve and Bob.

Dad loved livestock. He never trimmed or showed sheep but he loved to feed, lamb out the ewes and visit with sheep people. Mom was always at the nursing home. She did go to the Ohio State Fair & Louisville with Dad. Both being raised on a farm, my parents thought we should have a livestock project growing up. In 1957 Dad went to the Ohio State Fair to look at Hampshires. The Hampshires were showing that day and the exhibitors didn't have much time to visit. While at the fair Dad saw some other sheep with black heads and legs. He noticed they had no wool on their heads and legs. He was visiting with the Orwick brothers (Larry & Roger) when he purchased 2 yearling ewes to be bred at \$50 apiece and George Bros. Suffolks was born.

In the 60's, the sheep were shown in 4-H at half a dozen county fairs and the Ohio State Fair. In the early 70's some ewes were purchased from the Spanish Fork valley in Utah. In 1971, JDLG304 "Spanish Jack" was purchased with Old Trail Farms (M. A. Bosse) at auction for \$1,150. People couldn't figure why that school teacher and red head would buy a ram like that. For the time he was too big, didn't have enough bone and was plain headed. The thought was that you couldn't breed him to just any ewe. As luck would have it, he worked on any ewe and was a breeding machine! In 1973, the original 20 Olsen Brother's ewes were purchased from Roger D. Nichols. They were a great impact on our program for years. Part of the Andrus flock was purchased in the late 80's. In the following years we added a few select rams and ewes to our breeding program. We focused on raising and selling stud rams from our outstanding brood ewe flock. At that time we lambed 220 ewes, grew out 25 yearling rams and 80-90 yearling ewes. We marketed the sheep through production sales in Ohio and Iowa and consigned to major sales across the country. We consigned to the Midwest Stud Ram Sale from 1974 through the early 2000's. We are proud of having many high placing and selling sheep at that prestigious sale. We learned a lot about promoting and selling our sheep from Larry Mead. We didn't show a lot but did exhibit at the Ohio, Indiana, and Iowa State Fairs, Louisville and the Chicago International the last 3 years it was held.

We are extremely excited and pleased with how well our rams worked for our customers over the years. There were many bargains as well as the high sellers that worked well for our customers. We sold lots of sheep privately from the farm which gave us the opportunity to meet and get to know many breeders and families that are lifelong friends.

Bob is currently running the Soil & Water Conservation District Henry County Ohio. He has held this position for 35 years. Bob is on more committees than I could mention. He is like Dad, he can't say no. His wife Marsha is a nurse in Findlay, Ohio at the Blanchard Valley Hospital. Their daughter Megan lives in St. Louis, son Zack is in Cincinnati and other son Luke is living in Toledo.

Steve has served on the board of the Ohio Suffolk Sheep Association and two terms on the USSA board. In 1993 Steve acquired his realtor and auctioneer license and has been working with Farthing Real Estate & Auctioneers in Findlay, OH since. Steve has also been working for Best Buy Distribution for the past 13 years. Steve's Daughter Kacie has her masters in Meat Science from Oklahoma State University. She lives in Ankeny, IA and works for Marel, an International company that innovates and produces meat processing equipment. Steve's son Jase lives in southern Wisconsin (Sharon). He works for Peterson Farms in grain production and farm machinery repair.

George Bros. now has a group of ewes located in Southern Illinois near Campbell Hill, which are managed and cared for by Steve's wife Joyce Burnham, owner of Custom Stockdogs.

Joyce raises black face wether ewes and Angus cross cattle. She breeds and trains Border Collies and provides lessons and Demonstrations. Joyce also does custom shearing and fitting sheep for shows and sales.

The sheep industry has changed over the years. There are different types of sheep within the breeds. I believe that you should raise the type that you like and that you can sell.

I would like to thank my fellow breeders for George Bros. success. Without their management, feeding, fitting and promotion of the progeny they raised from the sheep they purchased, we would not have the success we enjoy with our sheep.

The most important thing to me about raising Suffolks is the people I've met and the friends I've made over the last 55 years. I am grateful to my parents for giving me that opportunity.