

HAMPSHIRE HERITAGE AWARD

JACK MASSERA SALINAS, CA

ESTABLISHED 1949

In 1949, I joined 4-H and used my paper delivery money to purchase three Hampshire ewes with four Southdown-sired lambs. A lamb from one of those Hampshire ewes became my first market lamb and won reserve champion at my county fair. This marked the beginning of my love of raising Hampshire sheep and I've had them ever since. In 1954, I won the State Sheep Shearing Contest at the California Ram Sale. I made feed money by shearing local flocks, including my future father-in-law's sheep. I sheared all my own sheep until I was 65.

My mentor in the sheep industry was Spelman Collins, who was well-known in the sheep industry and often judged California sheep shows. A professor at Cal Poly, Spelman loved to share his knowledge and experiences and I enjoyed spending time with him. He gave me great advice about my Hampshire and



This was a local news article from 1951 highlighting wins of the newspaper's paper deliverers (including me) at the Salinas Valley Fair in 1951, where I had my first champion lamb

Saturday, April 14, 1951 SALINAS CALIFORNIAN—7
**Making Good Use of Profits ...
 Salinas Californian Carriers
 To Show Animals at S.V. Fair**



In 1954 State Sheep Shearing Contest at the California Ram Sale.



Southdown flocks and encouraged me to attend Cal Poly, where he was an Animal Science Professor. With his help, I did well showing purebred sheep throughout my 4-H and college years and graduated from Cal Poly with degrees in animal science, biology and a teach credential. (I was an ag teacher early in my career.) In 1956 Spelman wrote a book titled, "Profitable Sheep" and gave me a signed copy, which I still have today. When I see other sheep producers from my era, we often talk fondly about Spelman, who was a mentor to many of us.

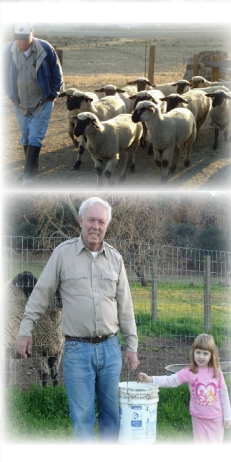
There is just one previous generation in my family that has raised Hampshires. My father became involved with the sheep when I did in 1949 and raised Hampshires and Southdowns with my throughout his life. We have several current generations involved with the Hampshires. Raising sheep is a family affair. Today, we have the fourth generation of Masseras working with Hampshire sheep. My father and I worked the sheep together when I was growing up, my daughter and son both showed sheep in 4-H, and today my daughter and I show the sheep at California shows. My grandchildren love helping on the farm and I'm doing my best to make successful sheep breeders out of them!



We had the reserve champion Hampshire ram at the 2017 California State Fair. We didn't show last summer, but we've shown our Hampshire and Suffolk showstrings at numerous fairs throughout California. Three years ago, we had a yearling ewe who placed well at the shows in California and placed 7th in the Hampshire Yearling Ewe class at NAILE. I've been happy with how the sheep have been doing and I enjoy spending time with other sheep producers.

I enjoy talking to visitors at shows and talking about my sheep and the sheep industry. We regularly attend the National Ram Sale in Sedalia and the Reno All-American Show where we have purchased top placing Hampshire rams.

I volunteer at a bi-annual Farm Day event for second graders, where we provide tours of agriculture exhibits - including sheep. In the 1980's



I was instrumental in starting an animal control program in Monterey County. We regularly have friends, neighbors, and my daughter's Silicon Valley colleagues visit the ranch for tours.

I have a small flock of 100 sheep and raised Hampshires and Suffolks. Right now we are lambing and that is keeping me busy. We hope to go to several shows next summer and are planning to attend the Midwest Stud Ram Sale in Sedalia, the Nugget in Reno and the California Ram Sale. I enjoy these events and catching up with other sheep producers. I really enjoy the day-to-day care of the sheep. One of my favorite things is to sit with them after I've fed them and they come up for a scratch and a visit. We call this "cocktails with the girls" and I can usually be found with a Starbucks Frappuccino. (I keep a secret stash in the barn.) I'm 83 and my "girls" keep me young. I always wanted to have a farm, raise quality, healthy and happy sheep - and I'm living my dream.

Thank you AHSA for making it fun to raise beautiful Hampshire Sheep!