

HAMPSHIRE HERITAGE AWARD

RYAN HALLIGAN

WINCHESTER, KY

ESTABLISHED 2009

Growing up I was not from a farming family and was not related to anyone with a farm close by. I was fortunate to be able to have family friends that allowed me to keep my show lambs at their farm across the county. It was a short 15-minute drive over to their place, but it was a gateway to my future career and lifestyle. 10 years ago, I purchased a March fitted ewe lamb in the Stars of Louisville Hampshire Sale and that was my beginning in the Hampshire business. At the time I was a sophomore in high school looking to grow my FFA and 4-H project by raising sheep. I had shown market lambs for a few years and was somewhat versed in animal husbandry, but not experienced in raising sheep year-round. I had many local leaders in my county that assisted me stemming from my high school Ag teacher, Kylene Douglas, to JR Zinner another Ag teacher in the county. Over time I built my flock up to five quality Fitted type ewes and showed my lambs at county fairs, the Kentucky State Fair and NAILE several times. In 2019 I won the Rising Star Ewe Lamb Award from the AHSA which provided me another quality ewe from the Quam family of Minnesota. She became a cornerstone foundation ewe for

my flock along with a ewe purchased from the Bobendrier family later on that fall. Those genetics became a solid foundation for a small fitted program which allowed me to attain Champion Ewe honors at my county fair, a few other county fairs and Reserve Hampshire Ewe at the Kentucky State Fair Junior Show.



Stanley Poe and I in 2010 receiving the Rising Star Ewe Lamb Award

After graduating high school I evaluated my size and scale of my flock and chose to shift directions to more of a wether style ewe flock. Family friends introduced me to Mike Hancock of Eubank, Kentucky and he has been a great friend and mentor to me ever since. Currently my wife and I operate a small flock of about 20 ewes in Winchester, Kentucky. We typically breed our ewes natural style with rams owned in partnership or leased from Mr. Hancock, in the past we have utilized AI and will look to increase utilization of those technologies as well as ET in the future. Typically, we market our sheep to local 4-H and FFA members but also utilize some online sales as well. After high school I was fortunate to be elected to Kentucky 4-H state president while I attended community college and eventually obtained my Associates of Science. My FFA SAE project of Diversified Livestock Production included my sheep operation, a small cattle herd, and a horse boarding operation was selected as state champion my final year of FFA involvement. After community college I went to the University of Kentucky where I graduated with a bachelor's in agriculture economics with minors in business and political science. Currently I am employed with Valvoline Inc. My wife comes from a tobacco and commercial

cow-calf operation, so the sheep have been a new experience for her, but she's been extremely supportive over the years and have taken several challenges head on. This spring we purchased a house and a few acres right across from her family's farm where our sheep are housed. She works at Dean- Dorton in Lexington as an accountant after getting her bachelors degree from Georgetown College and masters in accounting from the University of Kentucky.

I started our small flock with frame ewes with varied genetics and have transitioned it to a small line bred wether style operation with minimal monetary investment and virtually no experience. Each year I look to evaluate my program and look to expand in either ewe numbers or equipment purchases. I set a yearly goal and look to attain that as well as 5 to 10-year goals for the operation to grow and expand to more of a small business. I believe in the Hampshire breed and think it is the breed of the future. Sheep have changed and the way we market our sheep and sell sheep have transitioned however the breed has remained constant. Over the years we donate at least one lamb to a 4-H and FFA member in the state of Kentucky who writes an essay through a lamb scholarship program called the Michael Wood show lamb essay program. I've always been a believer in giving back to the community who raised you and helped you succeed and am thankful that we are fortunate to be able to donate those Hampshire lambs in the past. I always look back and think on my past starting a Hampshire operation and look to assist others in their pursuits within the breed, it's been a fast 10 years in the Hampshire business and good lord willing we'll be involved for another 10 plus years.



Mike Hancock and I with a Champion Hampshire Ewe at the Kentucky State Fair in 2013