

Getting to Know Select Sires' Research Team

The Select Sires board of directors, made of customer-owners from across the country, has always encouraged Select Sires to develop, run and analyze research projects that benefit customer-owners. The research team at Select Sires is excited to carry out important research on a variety of topics.

The Select Sires research team consists of five members: Mel DeJarnette, vice president of research and quality control; Dr. Matt Utt, director of research; Dr. Kristina McDonald, research associate and microbiologist; Lucas Helser, research assistant and the newest member Dr. Bo Harstine, research and quality assurance associate. This dedicated, talented group of researchers spend their days developing and running research trials as well as supporting Select Sires' semen processing team and field staff.

"Some days I spend time reading literature and designing research projects," says McDonald. "Other days I am in the lab putting plans into action or I may be analyzing data and formulating results."

Although their backgrounds and research projects are varied the team does agree on one thing, working on behalf of customer-owners is very important.

"I know that the work we perform is not done for a boss inside the building but rather done on behalf of dairy and beef producers worldwide," explains DeJarnette. "I know that the little things we do every day make a difference in the profitability of their operations and in their livelihoods."

"I enjoy learning from my incredibly knowledgeable coworkers," says Harstine. "I also enjoy knowing that what I do helps farmers and food production and that I work for a progressive company that continually strives to be better in all aspects of what they do."

Learn more about our outstanding and diverse research team to the right. ♦



Name: Mel DeJarnette

Job Title: Vice president of research and quality control
DeJarnette's family raised polled Herefords and tobacco and DeJarnette went on to attend Virginia Tech. After taking some time off from college, he returned to take his dreaded reproductive physiology class and ended up loving the subject and obtaining a master's degree. He joined Select Sires in 1990 and now oversees the research and semen processing staff. Although he has certain standard operations that must be performed each day, he spends his time troubleshooting and supporting the semen production, research and field staff.



Name: Kristina McDonald, Ph.D.

Job Title: Research associate and microbiologist

McDonald spent time growing up on her family's dairy farm in Radnor, Ohio and received degrees from Ohio Wesleyan University and The Ohio State University. She recently earned her Ph.D. in comparative and veterinary medicine from Ohio State. She became interested in joining Select Sires after a middle school field trip and sent in her resume after graduating from college. McDonald has been with Select Sires since October 2007. She serves as a resource to the quality assurance and control personnel and works closely with other staff scientists to design and implement research trials.



Name: Matt Utt, Ph.D.

Job Title: Director of research

Utt grew up without an agricultural background, but received bachelor's and master's degrees in animal and poultry sciences from Virginia Tech. In 2010, he went back to school to earn his doctorate degree and study male physiology through a joint associateship program between The Ohio State University and Select Sires. He enjoys the level of innovation and passion at Select Sires and spends most of his time investigating collaborative research opportunities with universities and industry groups in addition to crunching numbers and working with Select Reproductive Solutions® (SRS®) staff to develop data-driven solutions and analytical tools for customers.



Name: Bo Harstine, Ph.D.

Job Title: Research and quality assurance associate

The newest member of the team, Harstine grew up near Sugarcreek, Ohio on his family's registered Holstein and Ayrshire farm. Harstine first worked as a research intern at Select Sires in 2010 and afterwards signed on to the C.E. Marshall Graduate Associateship Program, a joint venture between Ohio State University and Select Sires. Harstine has a bachelor's degree from Washington & Jefferson College and master's and doctorate degrees from The Ohio State University in animal science. On a typical day, he interacts with a variety of employees on his main project—optimizing semen collection from young, genetically superior young sires.



Name: Lucas Helser

Job Title: Quality control/quality assurance coordinator

Helser grew up on a small diversified grain, dairy and hog operation and while helping his uncle A.I. cows developed an interest in learning more about how semen was produced. After receiving his bachelor's degree from Capital University and his master's degree from The Ohio State University, he joined Select Sires in 2007 as a weekend processing supervisor and outsource production coordinator. Now a member of the research team he spends a majority of his time working with the quality control team and performing semen quality tests and re-tests as well as working on research projects.