

# National Association of Animal Breeders



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## **SAMANTHA ROBERTS AWARDED 2023 NAAB DOAK GRADUATE FELLOWSHIP**

The National Association of Animal Breeders is pleased to announce Samantha Roberts has been selected to receive the 2023 NAAB Doak Graduate Fellowship Award.



Samantha is the fifth recipient of the NAAB Doak Graduate Fellowship and impressed the selection committee with her enthusiasm for male bovine reproductive physiology. Samantha will complete her Bachelor of Science in Animal Science with a concentration of bioscience and a minor in food and agriculture business from The University of Tennessee in May 2023. She will pursue her graduate degree focused on conducting a study that measures metabolome profiles on semen from a group of bulls to determine if the metabolome profiles can be used to predict fertility of sires. During her undergraduate program, she analyzed the metabolites from weaned heifers to identify a difference in rate of gain. Samantha will continue her MS program at the University of Tennessee under the guidance of Dr. Sarah Moorey and Dr. Saulo Zoca.

Samantha grew up on the family farm, Meadow Branch Farm, a third-generation beef cattle farm consisting of two hundred acres. She has been involved in showing cattle throughout the US and has utilized A.I. and E.T. programs to expand and improve the genetics of their herd. Samantha is also an active member of the American Junior Simmental Association and currently serves as the Tennessee Junior Simmental State President. Following graduation from high school, Samantha enrolled at the University of Tennessee and majored in Animal Science. Her interest in research started during her freshman year when she became involved in sample collection and processing for multiple projects. Her most recent project involved a multitude of molecular and in vitro based experiments, and she is the primary researcher on a metabolomics study in beef heifers. The resulting abstract and student poster presentation earned a bronze award at the University of Tennessee Exhibition of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity (EURECA) in Spring 2021.

The NAAB Doak Graduate Fellowship is a unique opportunity for individuals planning to pursue a career in the bovine genetic improvement industry to earn a Master of Science degree in bovine genetics or bovine male reproduction physiology. The fellowship was established to develop talent with the technical and management competencies as needed by the future cattle industry. As such, the award is intended for individuals who have long term aspirations in the genetic improvement industry as exemplified by Dr. Gordon Doak, who dedicated 42 years to developing NAAB programs. "Samantha's undergraduate research experience with beef cattle reproduction and genomics resulted in her selection as the Departmental Research Assistant at the University of Tennessee. This provides an excellent foundation and understanding of the skills required to conduct sound research" states Jay Weiker, President, and CEO of NAAB. "Samantha enthusiasm and passion for the cattle industry make her an excellent recipient of this award. Bovine male fertility is a field that has many research opportunities, so we are especially pleased that she has interest in this field."

NAAB is the national trade association for artificial insemination businesses. NAAB members account for about 95% of dairy and beef semen sold in the USA and market semen to more than 100 countries around the world.

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