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FLORENTINO PAZ JOSE DA SILVA JUNIOR AWARDED 2024 NAAB DOAK GRADUATE FELLOWSHIP

Madison, WI [March 13, 2024] - The National Association of Animal Breeders is pleased to announce Florentino Paz Jose da Silva Junior has been selected to receive the 2024 NAAB Doak Graduate Fellowship Award.



Florentino is the sixth recipient of the NAAB Doak Graduate Fellowship and impressed the selection committee with his enthusiasm for male bovine reproductive physiology. He is also the first international recipient of this Fellowship. Florentino completed his Bachelor of Science in Veterinary Medicine from The Universidade Federal de Uberlandia in Minas Gerais, Brazil in 2021. He will pursue his graduate degree focused on diagnosing pregnancy, assessing markers for embryonic development, and evaluating the maternal response to embryonic signals based on the gene expression of the cervix. This will be implemented from days 16 to 32 of gestation and will address the male component of embryonic development and fertility *in vivo* following AI. Florentino will continue his MS program at The Ohio State University under the guidance of Dr. Rafael Domingues.

Florentino grew up in Araguari, Minas Gerais, Brazil. His interest in working with cattle started during his childhood when he visited his grandmother's dairy farm, mostly during the holidays to help with all farm tasks. As he considered his career options, pursuing a veterinary degree felt like a natural goal. His desire has always been to better understand cattle production, particularly to support cattle producers like his grandmother. During his undergraduate studies, Florentino was awarded a scholarship to collaborate with Dr. Rute Brito in Genetics for a year. Following that, he received another scholarship to work with Dr. Ricarda dos Santos on developing a 3D culture system to assess the quality of bovine in-vitro-produced embryos.

After receiving his B.S. degree, he worked as a research intern for 18 months in Dr. Joao Paulo Martins' laboratory at the Department of Medical Sciences, School of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. While there he conducted a study focused on investigating the impact of parity on the dynamics of pregnancy-specific protein B, an indicator of embryonic and placental development in cattle. Florentino expressed, "Being selected for the 2024 NAAB Doak Graduate Fellowship is an incredible honor, and I look forward to working with Dr. Rafael Domingues at The Ohio State University. This achievement holds a special place in my heart, and I dedicate it to the memory of my father, who passed away during my final year of vet school unable to see this recognition. His memory keeps me motivated, always reminding me of the important lessons he taught me."

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. "Florentino's undergraduate research experience along with his practical experience in a veterinary practice in Brazil provides an excellent combination of skills required to conduct sound

research” states Jay Weiker, President, and CEO of NAAB. "Florentino’s enthusiasm and passion for the cattle industry make him an excellent recipient of this award. Bovine male fertility and the male’s impact on a successful pregnancy is a field that has many research opportunities, so we are especially pleased that he 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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