

# The PREMIER PIONEER



SPRING 2019

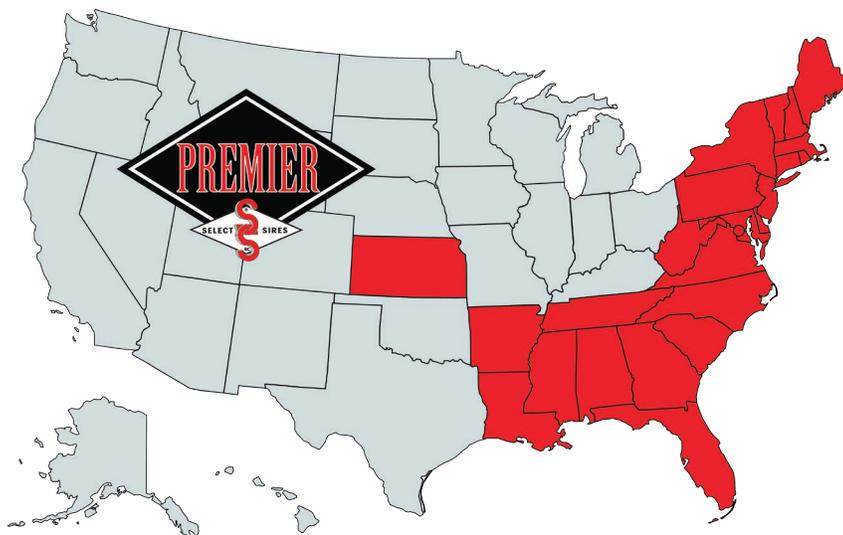
Premier Select Sires, Inc. was formed on January 1, 2019 as the result of a merger combining Southeast Select Sires and Select Sire Power. These two cooperatives each had a rich history of providing leading beef and dairy genetics, high-quality herd management products and valuable services to their member-owners.

The boards of directors for Southeast Select Sires and Select Sire Power felt that combining forces would be a beneficial venture for all parties involved, and within weeks of the merger, our experiences proved that we are in many ways “better together.”

However, like you, we are continuously striving to see what is on the horizon for genetics and reproduction. Now stretching across twenty-three states, we are looking forward to reaching new achievements and milestones with you.

The Premier Pioneer is an external newsletter designed to connect our member-owners, celebrate the success stories of the producers in our territory, highlight the resources our employees can offer, provide valuable industry insights and more. We are now a team comprised of more than 200 employees, nearly 100 independent distributors and approximately 13,000 member-customers.

Join us as we celebrate our heritage and look forward to our future! ♦



<b>PREMIER</b> Select Sires	23	States
	200	Employees
	100	Independent Distributors
	13,000	Member-Customers

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# MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

by Mark Carpenter

Henry Ford once said, "Coming together is the beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success."

I am honored and enthusiastic to introduce Premier Select Sires to you. As most of you know, the boards of directors for Southeast Select Sires and Select Sire Power voted unanimously to bring our organizations together effective January 1, 2019. Your new cooperative remains completely farmer owned and controlled by dairy and beef producers across 23 states and is nearly 13,000 members strong! Premier now represents just over 19 percent of the member co-op ownership in Select Sires, Inc.

Premier offers much more than just genetics to our members. Being part of the cooperative means joining the Premier family where we work together, grow together, and improve together. Your success is our passion, and our mission is to help you achieve your unique operational goals.

**Industry-Leading Genetics:** Premier members have exclusive access to a full range of industry leading genetics for beef and dairy breeds by Select Sires, Accelerated Genetics, and Generations.

**Herd Health and Reproductive Products:** Members have access to a premier line-up of products to address cow and calf care, feed additives, heat detection aids, udder health, breeding supplies, liquid nitrogen, and more—all from trusted partners such as Agrarian, Ecolab, Activon, Bayer, and Accelerated Genetics.

**Management Benefits:** Membership includes easy to understand monthly billing, free credit for 30 days, online access to account details and purchases, online beef certificates, and the ability to share in the success of the cooperative through equity and patronage through qualified purchases when applicable.

**Programs and Services:** Members gain access to highly trained professionals who are local and dedicated to helping members. These include valuable services such as regular delivery of products and services, mating services tailored to your specific goals, professional AI breeding services, reproductive advice on timed AI, heat detection, pregnancy checking methods, and more. Programs and services are offered individually or as a comprehensive full-service solution.

At Premier Select Sires, we stand by our members and have an unwavering commitment to help you succeed. We are proud to serve you and promise to be your trusted advisor in evaluating programs and services that are right for you and your goals. ♦

# YOUR SUCCESS

*Our Passion*

## FIND THE SEMEN STRAW

For a chance to WIN a special Premier Select Sires prize:

1. Find this semen straw hidden somewhere in the newsletter
2. Go to [www.PremierSelectSires.com](http://www.PremierSelectSires.com) and click the "Newsletter Contest" button on the home page
3. Tell us where you found the straw to enter the drawing!

## IVOR JONES RETIRES AFTER 25 YEARS OF SERVICE

Ivor Jones joined Select Sires in 1994. In his 25 years with the company, he has served several roles including Area Sales Manager, Technician, Reproductive Solutions Specialist and AI Trainer, where he finished his career.

Ivor has inspired many employees, students and aspiring agriculturists through his work as an AI trainer, and we wish him all the best in retirement!



# USING PEER GROUPS TO IMPROVE YOUR OPERATION

When you were growing up, your parents probably told you not to waste time “keeping up with the Joneses.” While comparisons can be dangerous, observing similarities and differences among farming operations can provide constructive feedback to producers. Several Premier Select Sires employees have helped facilitate peer groups across our territory, and member-customers have found these meetings to be an excellent environment in which they can network and learn from one another.

Dave Whitlock, Southern Regional Marketing Manager for Premier, has helped several employees in his region with these groups. He says that he thinks they are a great opportunity to spark discussion among producers on a multitude of topics.

“As with a lot of meetings and seminars, the side line conversations are as valuable as the person in front of the group,” said Whitlock. “We usually talk about topics within the reproductive arena and try to bring some of the new and cutting edge topics to the group.”

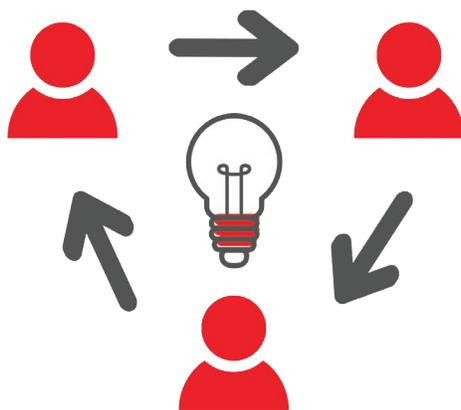
Elizabeth Ziegler, CowManager® Specialist for Premier Select Sires, presented at a peer group meeting in January for dairy herds using activity-monitoring systems. The meeting was the second in a series set up by Mathew Haan, extension educator at Penn State University.

Ziegler collected data from ten farms in attendance and anonymously placed the data side by side. She then allowed the farmers to compare, discuss and analyze differences in key performance indicators such as pregnancy rate, conception rate, days open, age at first service and more. Through discussion, attendees learned ways to maximize the benefits of their monitoring systems.

Among the producers in attendance was

Jay Good, a Pennsylvania dairy farmer with a CowManager® system. He said that the meeting allowed him to see areas for improvement on his operation.

“I credited my activity system for the fact that we were servicing animals at a younger age, and I thought that was a gain,” said Good. “We looked at the numbers and found that since doing that, our production wasn’t as high. That surprised me...where I thought I accomplished something, the numbers made it look like I didn’t do as much.”



After the meeting, Good said he was able to return home and implement changes like increasing the time before first service and changing the farm’s OvSynch program.

Haan mentioned that it often takes time for attendees to open up and share management practices in front of other producers.

“They come and want to hear what everyone else is doing, but are hesitant to say what they are doing,” said Haan. “I think that comes with time...farmers will be able to see what people using similar technologies are doing...why they chose certain methods and how they are using them to achieve.”

In most groups, data is confidential and operations are only identified if producers choose to make their farm known.

Area Sales Manager and Select Mating Service Evaluator David McAuley has been conducting a peer group in Florida twice a year for the past six years. He emphasizes the fact that it is not a sales presentation—it is a meeting solely dedicated to helping producers improve. He said that the farmers challenge one another in a positive manner.

“It’s a competition. They all get along but the guys want to do well,” said McAuley. “You get conversation between dairymen and that’s always good...our numbers have come up since we’ve been doing this.”

Select Reproductive Solutions Specialist Melanie Herman, who has also worked with peer groups in Florida, said that the groups not only allow producers to collaborate at the meetings, but also initiate opportunities for herds to explore peer group findings in-depth on their individual operations.

“I may mention to meeting attendees that we should have a farm meeting to dig deeper into a problem since our peer group reports are mass generated and I don’t have time to dig into each one before the meeting,” said Herman. “This lets us bring everyone to the table—technicians, veterinarians, nutritionists, etc.—who may not have been able to come to the peer group.”

Although every operation is unique, and there is no “one-size-fits-all” solution to issues producers face, peer groups provide a space in which attendees can talk, learn and grow as modern agriculturists. If producers are willing to work together and advance themselves and one another, everyone can benefit from a stronger industry. ♦



## ARE YOU INTERESTED IN BECOMING PART OF A PEER GROUP?

Peer group topics are not limited to those mentioned above, and all producers can benefit from collaboration. Ask your Premier Select Sires representative for potential peer group opportunities in your area. Also, contacting your local extension agent provides a great place to start when seeking networking opportunities within the industry.



## MEMBER FARM FEATURE: AR-JOY FARMS

*Owned by Duane and Marilyn Hershey, Ar-Joy Farms is a 550-acre 800-registered Holstein dairy in Cochranville, PA. About 720 cows are in milk and produce a rolling herd average of over 28,000 pounds. This contemporary farm has bred many high-profile animals and exemplifies sustainability with its 335-kilowatt methane digester. When they're not busy on the farm, the Hersheys advocate for agriculture, striving to make the industry better by educating consumers and uniting farmers.*

### AT THE ROOTS

Ar-Joy Farms stands on a foundation of family tradition, hard work and faith. Duane grew up on the farm, which his parents bought when he was four years old. Marilyn was raised on a farm just ten miles north of Ar-Joy. The couple married in 1984 and entered a partnership with Duane's parents in 1986. Duane and Marilyn slowly took over the farm, eventually purchasing the entire operation in 1996. Renovations and growth over the years took Ar-Joy from a 50-cow dairy to the 800-cow herd it is today.

As a member of the Select Sires Genetic Data Partner Program since 2004, Ar-Joy uses top genomic bulls to breed many of their animals. In vitro fertilization is used on selected animals, and some elite females are flushed. The Hersheys merchandize and have owned cattle with partners over the years.

Duane and Marilyn raised their four children—Stephen, Kelby, Robert and Kacie—on the farm. Now that their children are grown, Duane and Marilyn also have several grandchildren.

The Hersheys strive to make Ar-Joy an enjoyable place to work for their fifteen plus employees, one of whom is Marilyn's 90-year-old father, still assisting with the daily workload.

### MOVING TO THE NEXT LEVEL

A few years ago, the Hershey's began to explore the idea of installing a methane digester.

"You have to grow income each year because expenses increase," said Duane. "We hit the point where we couldn't add any more cows."

After research, feasibility studies and planning, the Hersheys installed their methane digester in November 2017. It was designed to run on manure, food waste from a local potato chip plant and used frying oil from area restaurants. The digester converts those inputs to methane gas that is burned for energy using a 335-kilowatt generator.

The system generates nearly twice the energy necessary to power the farm, and the power company pays the Hersheys for the excess sent to the grid. In addition, the digester produces valuable byproducts, including separated solids used for bedding and odorless liquid fertilizer for crop fields.

The digester runs around the clock, and after about a year and a half of operation, the Hershey's do not regret their investment.

### OPENING THE DOORS

Duane and Marilyn readily welcome visitors to their farm to show how farmers ethically produce the food and fiber we all need. If you ask about an instance when guests came to Ar-Joy, the Hersheys might laugh and tell you about the time their daughter's basketball team came to the farm.

"Most of her team was from Philadelphia. When they had games they'd sometimes spend the night here," said Duane. "Kacie was scared when she went to the city, but these girls were scared on the farm! We showed them around; they said, 'It's so dark out here,' and didn't know what to think of the smell!"

Marilyn said that they, and other farmers, have the opportunity to talk about agriculture to educate consumers.

"We have to tell our story better. We are the original environmental stewards. We care for cows, employees and the

land. People want to know where their food comes from and we can show them.”

## STEPPING OUT

While Duane and Marilyn advocate for agriculture by telling their own story, each has also taken on roles outside the farm to help other farmers do the same.

Duane ran for the Land O’ Lakes board of directors six years ago “to be exposed to progressive farmers from across the country.” Now about halfway through his second term since election in 2012, Duane says that he has learned a lot from the experience. He meets with the 24 members every two months, and serves on the Governance Committee.

Marilyn serves as chairwoman of the board of Dairy Management Inc. (DMI), which manages the national dairy checkoff program to increase sales and demand for dairy products through research, education and innovation. She also writes a column for Hoards Dairyman called “Common Threads” and serves on the American Dairy Association NE board of directors. She has been involved with the National Dairy Board as well.

“It’s all about selling more milk,” said Marilyn, speaking of her work with DMI. “This generation wants milk differently. For example, McDonalds uses milk for coffee, frappes and other blends, and it was checkoff dollars that started that partnership. We need more innovation when thinking how we can sell milk.”

## HELPING FARMERS FIND THEIR VOICE

Through their roles, the Hersheys do what they can to help the industry by helping farmers. For Duane, that looks like making himself available to farmers in the Land O’ Lakes cooperative.

“I see myself as the person between the cooperative and the farmer,” said Duane. “My job is to listen to farmers’ concerns and bring those feelings to the board. I encourage phone calls—I want to make the farmers feel heard because we are selling milk to the same co-op. We learn from each other too.”

For Marilyn, helping farmers involves keeping producers up to date on the efforts of DMI and helping those producers find their own ways to contribute to DMI’s efforts. She said that one of her biggest goals is to make herself available to farmers so she can inform them what DMI is doing.

“We follow what consumers want, but we need to do a better job of telling farmers what we are doing and where their money goes. We conduct a third-party audit to track our ROI, and for every dollar invested, we get about five to six dollars back. Farmers need to see that breakdown and know how we bring them value.”

Duane and Marilyn both encourage producers to get involved in dairy promotion to help consumers understand how food is produced. They say it is as easy as telling your story as a farmer, and some potential areas to get involved may include local schools, youth sports teams, Rotary Clubs, Lions Clubs and community events.

Fuel Up to Play 60 is one program in particular with which Marilyn hopes more farmers will engage. The National Dairy Council and the NFL partner to promote health and wellness in 73,000 schools across the country, and farmers can talk to the children and help distribute healthy snacks at events.

Producers may contact their local checkoff for more information on how to advocate for agriculture in their communities.

## PRESSING ON

Duane and Marilyn’s off-farm involvements give them a unique view of the industry as they meet with farmers across the U.S.

“Everyone is hurting in the industry,” said Marilyn. “We all have different challenges, and we need each other. We can learn from each other, and we can talk about our home farms. We can network. There is value in that.”

In this challenging industry climate, the Hersheys, like most farmers, feel the strains of tough markets, low milk prices, difficult weather conditions and more. However, they, like most farmers, take pride in their work. They strive to serve a hungry nation by ethically and sustainably producing what consumers want and need. They aim to unite with and encourage other producers as they work, and they will continue to do just that amid struggles.

“Negativity can eat you up,” said Marilyn. “You can’t have an attitude that life is roses, but you can deal with issues without hanging onto negativity. We have a strong faith and we draw on that. It puts our attitudes in perspective.” ♦

## Focus on



In their breeding program, the Hersheys place an emphasis on creating cows that last. Production and somatic cell count are also closely considered when selecting sires.

“You need that longevity. When a cow is three to five years old, that’s when you get your profit.”  
-Marilyn Hershey



Duane and Andrew Fleischer, Premier Area Sales Manager, review and select genomic bulls monthly.

Daphne Lang, SMS® Specialist, uses pedigree mating on cows and heifers.



Carli Woodward, SRS® Specialist, runs routine reports and provides data to track and achieve repro progress.



**Current Board Members (left to right) Back Row:** Alvin Herman, PA; Steve Craun, VA; Seth Major, TN; Frederic Simon, AR; Van Flora, VA; James Houser, PA; Kelvin Hatch, PA; Kenny Taylor, TN; Robert Cruikshank, NY; Pat Ard, MS; Mike Saylor, TN; H. Leigh Lane, NC  
**Middle Row:** Danny Bernard, TN; Vern Buessing, KS; Terry Reagan, FL; Kevin Satterwhite, SC; Teresa Shuey, PA; Barbara Nedrow, NY; Gary Dell, MD  
**Front Row:** James Cook, VA; Paul Gingue, VT; John Edd Harris, GA

# ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

**The 2019 Annual Board Meeting took place on Tuesday, March 5, 2019 in Nashville, TN. The Premier Select Sires Board of Directors, as well as employed leadership of Premier Select Sires, met to discuss various topics pertinent to the newly merged cooperative.**

- ◆ Representatives of Southeast Select Sires and Select Sire Power each presented 2018 year-end reports, officially closing the books on the former cooperatives.
- ◆ Discussion took place regarding the future reorganization of the Premier Board of Directors. The Select Sires Inc. by-laws (September 2008) state, *“In the event of a merger of two or more members into one entity, the merged organizations may retain the original aggregate voting control for a period of two (2) years.”* Nominations for the new board of directors, which will consist of 11-13 members, will occur in the summer of 2019 with member elections occurring in the fall.
- ◆ The 2019 Wayne Dudley Scholarship recipients were announced (see page 7).
- ◆ Kirk Sattazahn, Director of Marketing, provided a marketing report. Although it was a challenging year considering industry conditions, the cooperative experienced many successes and has set the stage for a positive future. It has operated at close to cost without compromising service to member customers.
- ◆ The Board discussed Premier representation within Select Sires Inc:
  - ◆ One Select Sires Inc. director term expires in 2019. Leigh Lane was reelected to fill that role.
  - ◆ Two Select Sires Inc. alternate director terms expire in 2019. Vern Buessing and Mike Saylor were reelected to fill those roles.
  - ◆ One position on each the Holstein Sire Committee, Alternate Holstein Sire Committee and Jersey Sire Committee have terms that expire in 2019. Seth Major, Frederic Simon and David Boyd were reelected to fill those roles, respectively.

The following Premier Select Sires employees have taken on new job titles and responsibilities within the cooperative:

Tim Riley,  
Chief Operations Officer



Tim Barnes,  
Director of Distribution



Joe Fowler,  
SW Region Marketing Manager



# 2019 WAYNE DUDLEY SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

Nine students were awarded \$750 to \$3,000 each through the 2019 Wayne Dudley Scholarship Program. The program offers financial support to eligible college undergraduates enrolled in agricultural majors. It provides additional return to Premier Select Sires' member-owners by supporting the next generation of young people desiring to study and work in the industry. Since 2000, more than \$165,000 has been given to future farmers and agricultural leaders through this scholarship. Congratulations to our 2019 recipients!



## Kavita Bushong

Daughter of Neil & Donna Bushong

College: Virginia Tech

Major: Dairy Science

Year: Sophomore

Kavita comes from her family's dairy farm in Columbia, PA. She takes part in the "Can I Vet Yet" mentor program, dairy judging, U.S. Pony Club, Dairy Club, and more. After completing her undergraduate degree at Virginia Tech, she plans to attend veterinary school and eventually pursue a career as part of a dairy practice.



## Daniel Kitchen

Son of Randall & Patricia Kitchen

College: Penn State

Major: Animal Science

Year: Junior

Daniel comes from Kitch-Vue, his family's custom heifer raising operation in Danville, PA. He participates in many activities including dairy judging, 4-H, Junior Holstein Association, and more. He holds various leadership positions in agricultural organizations, church and school. After graduation, he hopes to find a job working with dairy cattle genetics.



## Sandra Krone

Daughter of Amy Krone

College: Virginia Tech

Major: Dairy Science

Year: Senior

Sandra is from Fountainville, PA and has worked for several years at Black Hollow Dairy. She has been involved with Dairy Club, dairy judging, Dairy Challenge, 4-H and more, and served as VT College of Ag and Life Sciences Ambassador, PA Guernsey Queen, and Bucks County Dairy Princess. After graduation, she would like to work on a farm as an assistant herdsman.



## Cady McGehee

Daughter of Dr. Kerry & Teresa McGehee

College: Kaskaskia College

Major: Dairy Science and Business Management

Year: Sophomore

Cady is from Okeechobee, FL, where she and her siblings have developed a small herd of elite show cattle. She is involved in 4-H, FFA, the Guernsey and Holstein Associations, Collegiate Farm Bureau and the Professional Agricultural Students Organization. Cady would like to obtain a Ph.D. in Bovine Reproduction, as well as a Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine.



## Emily Mikel

Daughter of John & Sue Mikel

College: SUNY Morrisville

Major: Dairy Management

Year: Sophomore

Emily comes from Mikelholm Holsteins, her family's dairy farm in Stafford, NY. Her involvements and leadership positions include Junior Holstein Association, 4-H, dairy and livestock clubs. She has also served as Genesee Dairy Princess. After graduation, she hopes to return to her family farm and expand the operation. She would like to pursue a career in the AI industry as well.



## Jessica Skellie

Daughter of Kim & Beth Skellie

College: Cornell University

Major: Animal Science

Year: Senior

Jessica is from her family's dairy farm in Newark, NY. Her involvements and leadership positions include Collegiate Farm Bureau, Sigma Alpha Professional Agriculture Sorority, and Dairy Science Club. She has also served as Wayne County Dairy Princess. After graduation, she hopes to work as a dairy consultant or return to a farm.



## Sarah Thomas

Daughter of Jean Bullis & Donald Thomas

College: Virginia Tech

Major: Dairy Science

Year: Junior

Sarah has raised beef and dairy cattle on her family's farm in Pittsboro, NC. Involvements include Dairy Club, dairy judging, National Junior Holstein Association, Sigma Alpha Pi Chapter, 4-H and FFA. She has held various leadership positions, even serving as a NC state FFA officer. After graduation, she hopes to obtain a career in agriculture working with youth.



## Kayla Windecker

Daughter of Dale & Deborah Windecker

College: Cornell University

Major: Animal Science

Year: Senior

Kayla comes from her family's registered Holstein farm in Frankfort, NY. She takes part in dairy judging, Sigma Alpha Sorority, Junior Holstein Association, Cornell Dairy Fellows, 4-H and more. After graduation, she plans to enter a management role on a large dairy farm or enter a nutrition/business consultant role, and continue to help on her family's farm.



## Taylor Wolfe

Daughter of Ray & Dawn Wolfe

College: Penn State

Major: Animal Science

Year: Sophomore

Taylor comes from her family's registered Holstein farm in Milton, PA. She is involved with the PA Holstein Association, Dairy Science Club, 4-H and more. She has held various leadership positions within those activities. After graduation, Taylor plans to return to the farm, and obtain an off-farm sales or consulting position.

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## GENOMIC SIRES

	Type	Type Rel.	UDC	FLC
7H012922 DELIGHT	4.42	79	3.21	2.22
7H013730 UNDENIED	4.35	80	2.16	2.13
7H014582 UNRIVALED	4.20	80	3.07	2.86
14H014177 CROSS	4.13	79	2.94	2.41
7H014477 WARRIOR-RED	4.13	77	2.87	1.99

## PROVEN SIRES

	Type	Type Rel.	UDC	FLC
250H012589 JACOBY	3.95	87	3.30	1.85
7H010506 G W ATWOOD	3.67	99	2.54	2.69
7H011596 DEFIANT	3.60	99	2.51	1.59
7H012353 BEEMER	3.24	98	2.34	1.81
7H012587 DIAMONDBACK	3.19	96	3.16	2.15

12/18 CDCB/HA Genomic Evaluations. All bulls on this ad qualify for semen export to Canada.