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ANIMAL BREEDING PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT AN EVER-CHANGING WORLD

Tom Rathje DNA Genetics LLC, Columbus, NE

Tom Rathje currently serves in the role of Chief Technical Officer at DNA Genetics LLC, Columbus, NE. A native of Iowa, he grew up in Clinton on a diversified cattle and cropping operation. Tom received his B.S. in Animal Science from Iowa State University (1989), and his M.S. (1991) and PhD. (1995) in Animal Breeding and Genetics from the University of Nebraska where he currently holds an adjunct professorship in the Department of Animal Science.

Tom's M.S. Thesis focused on the effects of selection for testis size on sperm production in boars. His Ph.D. dissertation involved establishing one of the very first QTL mapping studies using selected populations. The study focused on identifying the association of QTL with variation in reproductive performance in swine.

He has been with DNA Genetics since its founding in 1995 and has played a key role in the development of the company, being responsible for implementation of the breeding program within nucleus and customer production systems and working in management to develop and support the growth of the company.

DNA Genetics has grown to become the second largest provider of swine genetics to the North American market and produces the most widely used terminal line in the swine industry, influencing over 35% of the pork produced. In this position he continues to pursue interests in genetic research including: application of genomic selection in pigs, disease susceptibility, sow longevity, identification of novel traits to improve production efficiencies and furthering the application of animal breeding principles to improve livestock populations at the commercial level.

His personal interests include partnering with his wife, Kristi, to keep up with their three adult children, son-in-law and now two grandchildren. Tom and Kristi have a growing business breeding and marketing purebred Simmental cattle.

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