

2025 MARVIN AND ARLENE LARGE PIONEER AWARD

Presented to RAW Symposium “Think Tank”

Sept. 17, 2025

In 1996, Mel DeJarnette, along with colleagues Roy Wallace, Brian House, and Clif Marshall of Select Sires, Inc., invited a group of reproductive physiologists to participate in an “Estrous Synchronization Brainstorming Session” or “meeting of the minds”. The objectives were to “discuss recent progress and potential direction of future research efforts with regard to practical methods of estrous synchronization of beef cattle.” The data presented at the session centered on 2x PGF, GnRH + PGF, and GnRH + P4 + PGF options for synchronizing estrus. According to Mel, the intent was a one-time meeting to determine if they were ready to recommend a protocol to producers. The answer was yes, and Select Synch (GnRH + PGF) was born. Mel further reported that Dave Patterson commented after the meeting, “That was fun. Can we do it again next year?”

So it became an annual meeting, initially known as “Think Tank.” The group gathered to share new data generated during that year's breeding season and began to identify emerging research questions. Each breeding season brought more data and refinement of systems to synchronize ovulation and improve fixed-time AI results. **There is no question that this meeting accelerated the pace of progress in the development of the estrous synchronization systems used today in both beef and dairy cows in the US and globally.** Over time, the group expanded to include a broader network of reproductive physiologists, graduate students, and key industry figures, including Drs. Jim Lauderdale and John Chenault with Pharmacia Upjohn. Dr. Lauderdale played a critical role in ensuring the statistical integrity of the conclusions drawn.

Roy Wallace from Select Sires was determined to support the development of strategies that lead to increased use of AI in cattle, particularly fixed-time artificial insemination of beef cattle, thereby reducing or eliminating the need to detect estrus. It was Roy's firm opinion and focused determination that the development of these strategies held the key to the expanded use of AI in purebred and commercial beef herds, with the underlying goal of improving the genetics of the U.S. cow herd.

Early on, it became evident that widespread confusion existed among individuals attempting to implement synchronization programs. The systems were relatively new, and many users were easily influenced by the latest reports, some of which lacked solid statistical evidence to support their effectiveness. The need for clear, science-based guidance to help producers navigate emerging technologies with confidence was sorely needed.

The Think Tank meetings were instrumental in the formation and growth of the Beef Reproduction Task Force (BRTF) and its recommendations, serving as a foundation for collaborative research, extension efforts, and industry-wide progress in implementing reproductive technologies.

Many founding members of the Beef Reproduction Task Force (BRTF) attended this meeting, which served as a valuable opportunity to discuss not only ongoing research but also extension recommendations and strategies for educating users about scientifically validated options. When the Beef Reproduction Leadership Team was first formed in 2004, Roy Wallace and Brian House were among those present, marking the beginning of a collaborative effort to advance reproductive technologies through research and outreach.

Select Sires' support of research was also instrumental as scientists worked to refine synchronization systems to better align with real-world production settings and minimize operational challenges. Experimental designs were carefully developed and discussed, with results emerging in subsequent years. These findings provided a foundation for evidence-based recommendations that considered regulatory requirements and practical implementation, ultimately advancing the use of reproductive technologies in the beef industry.

Roy Wallace played a pivotal role in discussions and the evaluation of data, consistently advocating for practical systems that would enhance the use of artificial insemination among beef producers. Roy understood the challenge beef producers faced in synchronizing mixed populations of pubertal and pre- or peripubertal heifers and cycling and anestrous cows. For this reason and based on data supporting a combination approach involving progestins, gonadotropin-releasing hormone, and prostaglandin, he supported research that delivered optimal results while minimizing the labor required to implement the various protocols. His commitment to bridging research with real-world application left a lasting impact on the industry. Following his unexpected passing in 2008, the Think Tank was renamed the **Roy A. Wallace (RAW) Memorial Symposium on Bovine Reproduction** in his honor, recognizing his contributions and legacy in advancing reproductive technologies in beef cattle.

The pace of change in research on systems for synchronizing ovulation has slowed, but the RAW Symposium remains a vital forum for sharing new findings and addressing emerging challenges within the beef industry. The symposium continues to foster collaboration, promote evidence-based practices, and support the ongoing advancement of reproductive technologies.



August 20, 1996

To: Bill Beal, VPI
Jeff Stevenson, KSU
Les Anderson, OSU
Larry Corah, KSU
Keith Inskoop, WVU
Dave Patterson, Univ of Missouri
Jack Whittier, CSU

From: Mel DeJarnette

Re: **Estrous Synchronization Brainstorming Session**

Gentlemen;

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this "meeting of the minds." The objectives of this session are to discuss recent progress and potential direction of future research efforts with regard to practical methods of estrous synchronization of beef cattle. Such discussion will hopefully benefit.

- 1) You, the researchers, by providing an opportunity to exchange information and develop new ideas for future research.
- 2) Beef cattle producers by providing (now or at some point in the future) more efficient and reliable methods of synchronizing estrous in cattle.
- 3) Any benefit realized by yourselves or beef producers will ultimately benefit Select Sires and the A.I. industry.

The meeting will take place at the Holiday Inn Airport, Columbus, Ohio on Monday, September 30, 1996 beginning at 8:00 A.M. Room reservations will be made for each of you for Sunday night, September 29. Travel arrangements should be made from your end. Select Sires will reimburse for all associated expenses.

The meeting room will be equipped with a slide projector, overhead and a flip chart. If you have additional needs or questions, don't hesitate to call.

Thank you again gentlemen and we look forward to our meeting in September.

Sincerely,

Mel DeJarnette
Reproduction Specialist

JMD:sh

cc: Roy Wallace
Brian House
Clif Marshall