



Leigh Walton receives the National Association of Animal Breeders' (NAAB) Distinguished Service Award

Leigh Walton received the NAAB Distinguished Service Award in Green Bay, Wisconsin on October 13, 2016. It was an indication of the high regard the Information Processing (IP) Committee of NAAB has for Leigh that they (successfully) nominated an outsider of their industry for this special recognition. A few of the reasons they gave are abstracted in their following statements. As the Council on Dairy Cattle Breeding's (CDCB) Interim Technical Applications Manager, Leigh was instrumental in the process of transferring the distribution of genetic evaluation file postings and results from USDA Animal Improvement Programs Laboratory's (AIPL) servers to the new CDCB servers in March/April of 2013. The timeline was tight with only a few weeks lead time and the transition went smoothly.

Leigh has provided excellent, pro-active customer service for many years as the Information Technology Specialist for USDA's Animal Improvement Programs Laboratory and then continued while the CDCB Interim Technical Applications Manager. Leigh ensures genetic evaluation files are accessible and posted in a timely manner. He works diligently to respond quickly to issues as they are identified, and is always committed to quality control.

Leigh works in a cooperative manner with the NAAB IP Committee to address genetic evaluation data file exchange requests and provide timely test files. Leigh always maintains a positive "can do" attitude and provided excellent communication and follow up with the IP Committee. Additionally, Leigh is a strong proponent of enabling easy data access and collaborates throughout our industry by ensuring that the perspectives and needs of all cooperators are considered.

Leigh provided a very valuable service to the industry when he agreed to come out of retirement to help with the CDCB transition and has since shared his knowledge with newly hired staff. Leigh's friendly and humble personality makes it a pleasure to work with him. As a testament to his impact in our industry, Leigh had previously received the 2010 NDHIA Outstanding Service Award and a number of other USDA and group awards.

Leigh provided outstanding computer expertise that supported USDA's research program prior to his tenure at CDCB. He assisted in the development and implementation of new USDA editing routines. Leigh was instrumental in decreasing the time needed to deliver genetic evaluations including developing a web system to distribute information electronically. Leigh was responsible for coordinating and conducting computer processing for all national genetic evaluations for dairy animals. He developed automated procedures for processing edits and submitting jobs. All resulting efficiency reduced processing time for evaluations from 2 months to 1 week (pre-Interbull, pre-genomics). He made educational and technical presentations when needed. He consults with the industry on data receipt, schedule coordination, system compatibilities, and data error resolution.
Congratulations Leigh.