

2009 SEMEX GENETICS MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIP – Kate Hallawell

Well I have finally arrived in Michigan, United States to begin my semester at Michigan State University. The weather has been beautiful, and I'm trying to soak it up while I can as I keep getting told that I won't be so happy once the snow arrives.

After travelling through Canada and working in the Semex office in Guelph, Ontario where I gained an understanding of semen sales, collection, distribution and marketing I began my semester in at Michigan State in early September.

The University has a very strong focus on Agriculture, as part of this the campus is a fully functional beef cattle stud and show barn that has both a purebred Hereford and Black Angus herd. It is here that I am also working in between classes, my job includes halter breaking, feeding and preparing cattle for upcoming shows and sales. There is also a 300 head beef feedlot, a sheep farm running up to 50 Suffolk ewes, an Arabian horse stud and a 180 head dairy which are all used in day to day lessons.

Whilst at MSC I have to enrol in the following classes:

Advanced Beef Cattle Feedlot Management: In this class we learn different feedlot management systems and issues. We also have a strong focus on different feed issues, manure management, health maintenance and also cattle marketing. This is a very hands on class and we used the actual data from the University feedlot for all class work. We also travel to different feedlots within Michigan to get an idea of different management systems.

Animal and Product Evaluation: This class looks at the evaluation of breeding stock, market animals and carcasses for cattle, sheep and swine. By far my favourite part of this class is getting the opportunity to judge the cattle, swine and sheep live on Monday mornings and then judge the same animal's carcasses on a Wednesday at the University meat lab. It very interesting to see how differently an animal can look on the hook, and your placing in the live classes can be completely different to how you placed them once seeing the carcass. We also focus on quality grading, yield grading and pricing of market animals and carcasses.

The other class I am taking is- **Principles of Animal Feeding and Nutrition:** In this class we look at the principles and practices of nutrition for cattle, horses, poultry, sheep and swine. We look closely at protein, minerals, and vitamins for specific diet formulation, that we then produces and actually use on the different livestock on campus, this also helps us better understand performance predictions for different livestock.

Until you hear from me again, Go Spartans! (the MSU football team).

