

# Shaping the future with



In the genomics era, the success of AI companies is highly dependent on their ability to develop their own young sires.

At Semex, its internal product development program, Progenesis, is now producing top young bulls and helping the company tap into leading genetics around the globe.

Semex Chief Operating Officer Brad Sayles says the emergence of genomics has initiated significant change in the cattle genetics industry. The accelerated pace of change means it's crucial for a company like Semex to understand the needs of today's markets, anticipate demands five years from now, and then align the organization to meet and service those needs.

The goal of Progenesis is to produce world class genetics for customers, including bulls for Semex, female embryo donors, females for sale and embryos. "It

became apparent that if we were going to be able to access elite genetics for clients, then we had to have some ownership stake in some bloodlines to produce bulls for our customers," says Sayles. The strategy also has another component - with the development of Progenesis, Semex could also leverage some of its elite animals to gain access to other elite bloodlines in the marketplace.

## **ALIGNING WITH CLIENT NEEDS**

Overall, Semex's goal is to produce 25% of Top 1000 GTPI Sires with Progenesis sires contributing 35 to 45% of this goal. Sayles notes that Semex's 'eye to the future' focuses on developing a deep understanding of the "operational aspects of our customer's business to understand what drives their profit - what makes them make money, what costs them money,

and what can save them time."

For Sayles, the goal was to align the Semex organization to ensure Progenesis reflected this understanding, and delivers producers' needs in three key areas including: productivity; health and fertility; and functional traits such as good udders and strong legs that support high production over many lactations.

The first Progenesis high genetic animals were born in 2016 and the program has continued to grow. "It's accelerated quite quickly because we leveraged all the different resources that we had at Semex," says Sayles "We have people assets. We have genetic assets. We have technological assets through Boviteq. Our strategy really allowed us to tap into the tremendous resources within our control."

## MEETING GLOBAL MARKET NEEDS

Progenesis is a big investment and Sayles believes Semex clients will see significant benefits over the next 12 to 18 months. "We really try to take a global approach and we're very pleased with the position of our product line. A lot of these bloodlines are just coming to the marketplace now," adds Sayles. "We believe we have probably 25 to 30% of the world's elite bulls at any one time, and for a company like Semex, that's a strong achievement."

Sayles is excited about the size and scope of the Progenesis program. "This year, with the number of calves being born and the females we have access to, we have an opportunity to provide product for all different types of markets. He notes that Progenesis has produced strong bulls in Italy, Germany and across Europe. There's also elite performers in the US and South America.

"All of these countries have customer specifications that are a little bit different," says Sayles. "The size and the scale of our program allows us to have not only genetic diversity but also diversity in the type of product line."

The power of Progenesis also helps fuel strong partnerships. "It gives us the ability to leverage our genetics for access to genetics from some of the most elite breeders in the world," say Sayles. "It really does ensure that Semex and are clients our well positioned for the future."