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ABS expands genetic research

DE FOREST, Wisc. - American Breeders Service announces plans to contract as many as 30 "super" genetic cows within the next two years for the purpose of evaluating the genetic merit of identical twin bull calves through its industry leading progeny test program.

"These identical twin calves, produced by embryo splitting, will be among the highest pedigreeindexed young bulls in the breed," explains Robert E. Walton, president, American Breeders Service. "Our original intent will be to progeny test a significant number of sets of identical twins to gain concrete data proving in-

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dentical twin bulls transmit funded by W.R. Grace & Co., ABS' identical genotypes. There is strong evidence to that effect this project will also give us the necessary information to make more accurate evaluation of these bulls through our progeny test program," he remarks.

Project plans call for ABS to work closely with the University of Wisconsin-Madison in developing state-of-the-art research in genetic improvement, embryo transfer and the production of identical twins through a variety of techniques.

The joint ABS/University of

parent company. Grace's financial support is in keeping with the firm's continuing efforts to stimulate biotechnology research in all areas of efficient food production. This specific project applies directly to the genetic improvement of future generations of livestock.

ABS' main involvement will center around the ABS research staff gathering embryos on the farm from specially mated ABS contract cows for the sole purpose of producing identical twins to enter the ABS progeny test

These embryos will be microsurgically divided and each section will be transferred to its own recipient located at the U.S. Dairy Forage Research Center, Prairie du Sac, Wisconsin, - the entire procedure to be completed within 12 hours of recovering the embryos. All identical bull calves that result will become part of ABS' young sire program. Heifer calves will join the U.S. Dairy Forage Research Center herd to benefit that operation's future forage research. Like the bulls, these heifers will be of high genetic merit and will greatly enhance the understanding of forage utilization by high milk producing dairy cattle.

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"Long term, we believe we will have better bulls available for widespread A.I. service through the sampling of identical twins," says Walton. "This program, combined with our current rate of sampling young sires, can definitely speed up improvement in the genetic merit of the sires we offer.





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