

## PROFILES OF STEM RESEARCHERS AT VT

### VITOR MERCADANTE, DVM, PHD

Assistant Professor, Animal and Poultry Science

#### Research Focus

- Bovine reproductive physiology
- Early embryonic development
- Reproductive biotechnologies
- Management strategies to improve reproductive efficiency in beef cattle

#### Advice:

Surround yourself with good people!

#### Fun Fact:

I play the drums!



### AHMERAH THOMPSON, '20

Dairy Science major; Women and Gender Studies minor

#### Research Experience

- Sr: Mammary Biopsies After Increased Milking Frequency in Early Lactation With Dr. Corl's Lab
- Jr: Dexamethasone in Dystocic Periparturient Dairy Cattle With Dr. Peterson-Wolfe's Lab
- Soph: Milk Frequency & BST Research Project with Dr. Corl's Lab

#### Advice:

Stick with it and take advantage of opportunities

#### Fun Fact

I'm getting a cow tattoo, and her name is Franny



## My Journey

### Dr. Mercadante:

I am lucky to have the opportunity to travel for work. I have participated in meetings and seminars across the country. So far I have visited 18 states for work related activities. I have also been to Israel on a faculty fellowship to interact with Israeli scientists and develop collaborations. In addition, I routinely go back to my home country, Brazil, for workshops and seminars which is a great opportunity to combine work and family time.

### Thompson:

I started my research Sophomore year and have loved it since my very first day on the job. As a first generation college student, I didn't know research was a thing until my department started sending research opportunities. I am grateful and blessed for the opportunity to work through college while doing something that I absolutely love! When I am not doing my research (which is not very often) I take a break from the barn and lab and go to my office job in Squires, or spend time with my sorority, Kappa Kappa Gamma.

Mixing up my schedule and activities like this has kept me sane and kept me from burning out. I have a nice balance of work, social life, mental health maintenance, and school work.

## Overcoming Challenges

### Dr. Mercadante:

My time in graduate school was one of the most fun, rewarding, but also most challenging times I ever had. I had a great mentor and advisor during graduate school that always told me "graduate school is a degree of persistence." Spending five years working really hard, being under-paid, and under constant intellectual pressure can be very draining emotionally and physically. I was lucky to have an amazing group of people around me, including my wife, that were working towards similar goals and we truly supported and pushed each other to be better.

### Thompson:

My advice to students stressing out about finding their place here is that it doesn't always come easy, but it will come eventually.



## Diversity Work

### Dr. Mercadante:

As a native of Brazil, I make an extra effort to advise international students and help them navigate graduate school here in the US.

