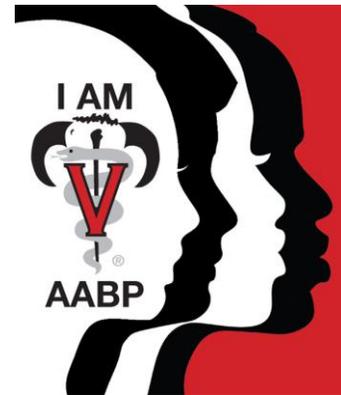


In order to recognize the diversity of AABP members, the American Association of Bovine Practitioners (AABP) launches "I am AABP", a Facebook series that highlights the different types of AABP members and the wide variety of jobs they have within the bovine veterinary industry.

### **I Am AABP**

Dr. Ryan Rademacher, Okotoks, Alberta, Canada  
Graduated from Oregon State University, 2014  
Year joined AABP: 2011

Dr. Ryan Rademacher may not be like a typical feedlot veterinarian as he works with feedlot and calf-grower clients in the United States, Canada and Mexico, but he knew from a young age he wanted to practice feedlot medicine. The son of AABP member Dr. Dave Rademacher, the younger Rademacher says the biggest advantage of having a veterinarian father came from observing a mixed practitioner with a very diverse interest in veterinary medicine. "Although I did not follow his exact career path, the time spent with him during those formative years really helped me to identify and solidify that I wanted to focus on feedlot medicine," Rademacher says. "It was this opportunity to see a gamut of possibilities in veterinary medicine and hone in on an area resonating with me that helped to propel my future career."



Rademacher notes that many people go to veterinary school because they like animals and medicine, but their final career path is more of an afterthought. "While this is a perfectly valid path and may lead to broader exposure, for me, I have known for a long time exactly what I wanted to do and focused solely on that." This interest led him to a visit at Feedlot Health Management Services by Telus Agriculture in Okotoks, Alberta, when he was a fourth-year veterinary student. In addition to his other responsibilities, he is currently the Animal Health Team Lead at Feedlot Health. "The Feedlot Health approach is directly aligned with my personal approach to delivering veterinary and consulting services for cattle producers," Rademacher says. "I quickly realized that this was an exact match for what I wanted to do in my career. As much as I am passionate about medicine, it has always been the people and the operations that I am most interested in."

### **Becoming involved**

Like many, Rademacher had help along the way in the form of organized veterinary medicine. He is the current AABP District 13 director, which encompasses members in Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba and Saskatchewan, as well as vice chair of the Amstutz Scholarship Committee, but his involvement started long before this. "As a student, AABP was very good to me and helped to shape my education through involvement as a student delegate and receiving of multiple scholarships," he says. While in veterinary school, Rademacher received the Amstutz, AABP Foundation-Zoetis and AABP Foundation-Cargill scholarships. "I continue to try to pay it forward but may never be able to fully express the gratitude that I have for the opportunities that the AABP has afforded me."

Post-graduation, he says being involved in organized veterinary medicine includes obtaining CE which continually improves the profession. "If you are not moving forward, you are moving backward," he says. He notes the comradery and friendships that are generated through involvement are also

extremely valuable. “Involvement also helps shape the direction and future of veterinary medicine. Especially as it pertains to livestock production, these organizations serve a valuable role in informing policy makers about science. Without each of our individual membership and involvement, it leaves someone else driving the ship for us, which is fine if you don’t care where you go. However, I’d argue that it is in each of our best interest to be involved and active in organized veterinary medicine.” Rademacher also belongs to the Academy of Veterinary Consultants and the Western Canadian Association of Bovine Practitioners.

### **Mentoring is vital**

Rademacher believes mentorship can come in many forms and different individuals can fulfill different aspects of mentorship. For example, he says his six-year-old son provides as much “mentorship” as anyone just by observing him interact with the world. “He is a constant reminder for me to never stop learning and finding wonder in the world.” He notes that the majority of the time mentors or role models come from everyday interactions. He has also seen people struggle due to a sense of a lack of mentorship, and believes in those cases people should take it upon themselves to seek out formal or informal mentorship whether it’s senior veterinarians, clients, friends or family. He encourages younger AABP members to tap into the AABP mentorship program.

Naming his own mentors, Rademacher includes his father Dr. Dave Rademacher, his colleagues at Feedlot Health, and AABP members and feedlot veterinarians Dr. Del Miles and Dr. Ed Johnson.

### **Keeping in touch**

A highlight for many veterinarians is the opportunity to engage with colleagues at professional meetings, but in our current state, that has become difficult, if not impossible, for many. Rademacher notes that there are other ways to engage in the interim such as Facebook groups, online/virtual conferences, the AABP listserve, etc. “It is extremely important that people have someone they can discuss and share experiences with,” he says. “We should actively reach out to colleagues who we have not talked to in a while and see how they are doing.”

Rademacher says organizations such as AABP serve as a vital resource in times of uncertainty as a place to come together (virtually or in-person) to discuss ideas, issue formal position statements and create guidance for membership, industry or policy makers. “In my very short tenure on the AABP Board of Directors, it is apparent that our leadership spends a lot of time behind the scenes working on topics that affect the membership including providing comments on proposed legislation or regulation that directly impacts bovine veterinarians and their clients, as well as tackling really tough and nuanced topics like diversity, equity and inclusion in bovine practice.”

### **Advice to new practitioners**

Rademacher thinks veterinarians should not be afraid to make a change. “I landed into a role that fits exactly with what I want to be doing, but if that is not the case, this profession is loaded with opportunity and it might be time for a change. You should be able to find fulfillment in your career even though there might be tough times and situations along the way.”

Another piece of advice is to recognize what you do and don’t have control over. “Stuff happens,” Rademacher says, “and it helps to focus on the process rather than just the outcomes. So much of success/failure in life or veterinary medicine, is due to random chance and serendipity. If your process is valid and decisions are made using an appropriate framework, then negative outcomes should not be viewed as failures, but rather random outliers. Negative outcomes should serve as an opportunity to

review the process and ensure that it is correct and does not require adjustment, but don't dwell on them as your key metrics of success. Play the law of averages and do not worry too much about the outliers you have no control over."

Not everything is about work in Rademacher's life. In his spare time, he and his wife Katrina and son Wyatt enjoy hunting, fishing, skiing, camping and backpacking, as well as exploring new places from a non-tourist perspective.

April 7, 2021

#IamAABP