



The Storm Cat Career Development Award

Sherry Johnson, 2020 Recipient
Colorado State University

Quietly in 2006, member of the board of directors Mrs. Lucy Young Hamilton awarded the first Storm Cat Career Development award of \$15,000. The success of the program since that first year has paid big dividends with 26 PhD candidates at 13 universities receiving this award, providing \$425,000 in direct salary supplements to individuals pursuing careers in equine research. Currently, 86% of the award winners are active in equine research, and the award has blossomed to \$25,000 annually. Many winners are now funded principal investigators and serve on our Research Advisory Committee. The success of this groundbreaking program has paid dividends to the research community and encouraged the studies of the individual winners.

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“Receiving the Storm Cat Award was pivotal in supporting early, evidence-based research in equine rehabilitation -an area where objective data was desperately needed. The funding allowed me to initiate foundational studies that helped establish scientific support for rehabilitation techniques and the use of therapeutic modalities. It also fostered my spirit of inquiry and helped define the trajectory of my research career, leading to a dedicated focus on equine rehabilitation and objective gait analysis. This award truly served as the foundation for a line of investigation that has continued to expand in both scope and impact.”

Dr. Melissa King, Associate Professor Equine Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation
Colorado State University

“I was grateful for this additional stipend support, especially considering the veterinary student debt that I had accrued following internship and surgical residency training prior to embarking upon PhD training. After completing my PhD studies, I continued to pursue research projects relevant to equine musculoskeletal disease, including osteoarthritis, fracture, and tendon injury. I was fortunate to be able to serve on the Research Advisory Committee from 2017-2020. I am most proud of the fact that my current PhD trainee, Dr. Erica Secor, a boarded equine surgeon pursuing research in equine osteoarthritis immunology, was recently selected as the 2025 Storm Cat Award recipient.”

Dr. Heidi Reesink, Professor of Veterinary Orthopedics
University of California-Davis



Storm Cat Career Development Award Recipients from 2006-2025

Jonathan Cheetham
Martin Vidal
Christianne Magee
Melissa King
Catherine Radcliffe Hackett
Kyla Ortved
Alice Stack

Brandy Burgess
Erin McConachie
Daniel Warren Youngstrom
Katarzyna Dembek
Bradley B. Nelson
Heidi Reesink
Aimee Colbath

Elaine Norton
Shavahn C Loux
Stephanie Bond
Holly Stewart
Lynn Pezzanite
Sherry Johnson
Callum G. Donnelly

Rosemary Bayless
Sarah K. Shaffer
Shun "Shune" Kimura
Rebecca Bishop
Erica Secor

Listed by Year of Award