



By the Numbers

► by Sally Northcutt, Angus Genetics Inc.

MaternalPlus® added benefits

The MaternalPlus program provides advantages not captured in the classic data submission through the Association. New reports are now available through AAA Login.

Detailed tracking

MaternalPlus® is a voluntary program available through the American Angus Association that includes detailed tracking of females in the herd for breeding success, while monitoring lifetime production and allowing for details regarding why

a cow leaves the herd. The MaternalPlus program is the ideal way to report heifer breeding records and monitor cow herd and reproductive performance data on your herd.

Within-herd data reporting for heifer breedings allows the heifer pregnancy expected progeny differences (HP EPDs)

Fig. 1: MaternalPlus menu items in AAA Login



Fig. 3: Example genetic trends for yearling weight and milk EPDs by participant herd and Angus breed

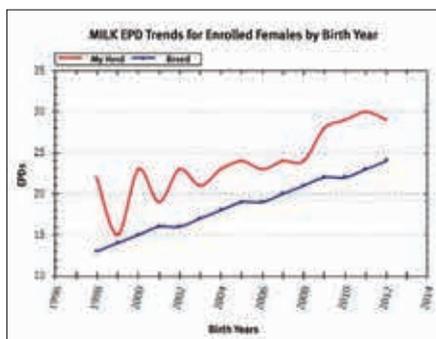
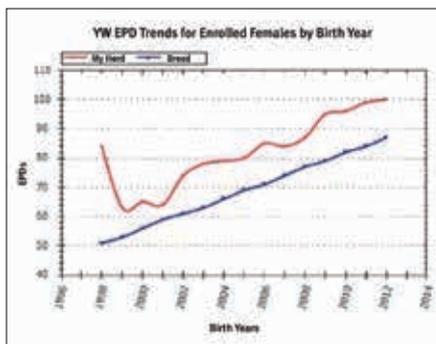


Fig. 2: Female age distribution report

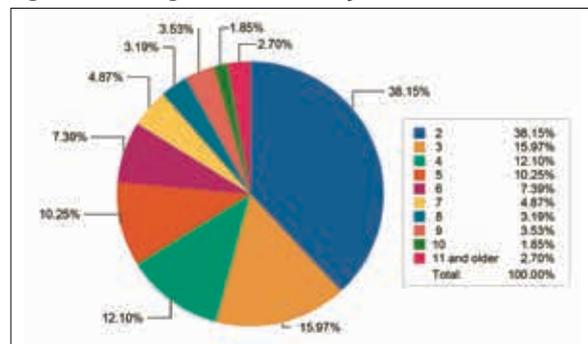
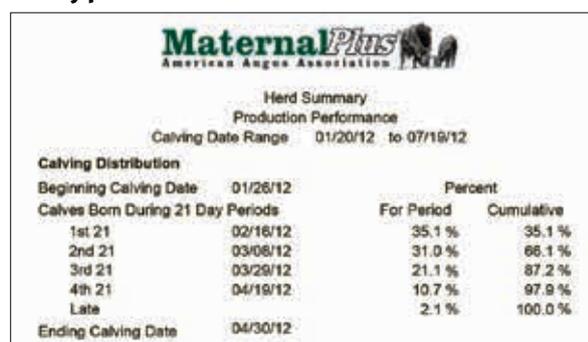


Fig. 4: Participant herd calving-distribution summary in 21-day periods



to be far more effective as a selection tool when tied directly to your herd genetics. In addition, participants gain faster access to preweaning EPDs as a selection tool prior to calf registration.

As with all performance data, the key to making progress is being able to access the information and make informed decisions using the tools available. As producers participate in the MaternalPlus program, additional selection tools and management information will be developed to better characterize the genetics and production levels in a system-wide approach. The following descriptions and examples provide an initial glimpse at some of the new reports available to MaternalPlus participants.

New MaternalPlus reports

New reports (see Fig. 1) are available on the main MaternalPlus menu tab in AAA Login. Note that the Production Performance Report is only available to breeders who have completed the re-enrollment process after one year of participation. This includes submission of heifer breeding data and updated cow disposal codes.

Female Age Distribution Report.

MaternalPlus features a Female Age Distribution Report (see Fig. 2) available to participants who have completed program enrollment. For enrolled females, this report provides age categories in bar-graph and pie-chart formats for a quick and easy reference to your cow herd age distribution. Herd demographics can be used to plan future production and marketing strategies. The distribution of young females can be reviewed to assess heifer replacement rate.

Genetic Trend for Enrolled Females.

MaternalPlus participants have access to real-time genetic trend lines by trait for enrolled females (see Fig. 3). A genetic trend line tracks the average EPD by cow birth year and plots these averages

Fig. 5: Participant herd calving-distribution summary in 21-day periods and dam age

Age of Dam Summary		Calving Distribution by 21-Day Period					Average Production Records						
Age	Calves	1st 21	2nd 21	3rd 21	4th 21	Late	Avg Calving Date	Num Birth Wts	Avg Birth Wt	Num Wn Wts	Avg Age	Avg Wn Wt	Avg Adj Wn Wt
2	68	51	13	4			02/11/12	68	69	65	184	452	563
3	51	9	17	13	10	2	03/10/12	50	78	50	160	429	555
4	37	3	13	8	10	3	03/14/12	36	78	36	159	430	538
5	25	4	5	14	2		03/09/12	25	79	24	170	466	536
6	18	8	4	3	1		02/23/12	16	82	16	180	504	552
7	18	3	9	5	1		03/02/12	18	85	18	172	498	567
8	14	6	7	1			02/21/12	14	78	13	181	495	545
9	4	2	2	2			02/28/12	4	87	4	161	499	599
10	3	1	1	1	1		03/10/12	3	84	3	163	447	545
11+	6		4	1	1		03/09/12	6	92	6	158	458	567
Total:	242	85	75	51	26	5		240		235			
Production Performance Measures													
Average Age at Weaning (days)		171											
Actual Weaning Weights (pounds)		469											
Bulls													
Steers													
Heifers		441											
Average Weaning Weight		456											

across the available years associated with the enrolled females. These trends are available when MaternalPlus enrollment is completed. The graphs feature the American Angus Association breed genetic trend line as an additional reference point with each trait.

Traits can be selected individually or in suites (production, maternal and carcass) for the formation of genetic trend lines. EPD trends can provide an indication of trait emphasis over time, along with drawing attention to breeding program strengths or focus areas.

Production Performance Report.

MaternalPlus breeders who complete re-enrollment can view a summary Production Performance Report for a customized production unit. While the default report encompasses all cows and their calving distribution for the period between beginning and ending calving dates, this report features the ability to customize the calving window. For herds with spring and fall calving seasons, consider modifying the beginning and ending calving dates to better capture the calving summary for production groups. In addition, participants completing multiple enrollment years can specify the enrollment year of interest.

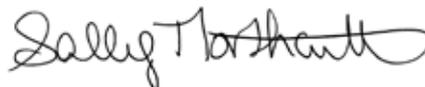
The Calving Distribution is summarized by 21-day periods (see Fig. 4). Research has shown that cows calving earlier in the season tend to breed back more regularly and wean heavier calves. MaternalPlus data allow breeders to make these calving-distribution assessments on a historical basis, and even by season, to characterize herd

production performance and assist in future management plans.

For additional detail, the calving distribution is stratified by age distribution of enrolled females (see Fig. 5). This includes calf average performance for preweaning weight traits. Calf counts contributing to birth and weaning weight averages are included, along with average calf age. The production report also includes summary measures by calf gender.

MaternalPlus herd visibility

Active breeders completing the enrollment can use the MaternalPlus logo as part of their marketing program. It's a way to convey to customers that all cow herd records and reproductive success measures are available on the herd with complete reporting of performance information. More specifically, it shares with potential buyers that heifer breedings are reported on the herd for use in genetic-selection tools, such as heifer pregnancy EPDs.



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Editor's Note: "By The Numbers" is a column by Association performance programs staff to share insights about data collection and interpretation, National Cattle Evaluation (NCE), genetic selection and relevant technology and industry issues. Sally Northcutt is director of genetic research for the American Angus Association. If you have questions or would like to suggest a topic for a future column, contact Northcutt, Bill Bowman or Tonya Amen at 816-383-5100.

MaternalPlus® program advantages

- ▶ Streamline your ability to track heifer and cow reproductive records through AAA Login.
- ▶ Monitor and summarize cow herd and reproductive performance data on your herd.
- ▶ Gain faster access to preweaning expected progeny differences (EPDs) as a selection tool.
- ▶ Characterize your females through heifer pregnancy EPDs tied directly to herd genetics.