

by Mark McCully
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New year of opportunity

The beginning of every year brings resolutions and anticipation of things to come. I suspect the ushering in of 2021 is accompanied by hope and optimism that the COVID-19 pandemic will subside, vaccines will be available and effective, and our world will return to some sense of normalcy again.

Even with uncertainty, we continue to plan for another great year. We know our members are resilient and moving forward, and we will ensure that this association matches that same tenacity to serve your needs.

One new initiative I am especially excited about is the inventory reporting option for the Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR®) program. The MaternalPlus® program has grown substantially over the past years, and I applaud those breeders who have committed to move to whole-herd reporting. Turning in data on the entire calf crop and supplementing it with female disposal codes and breeding information creates a more complete picture of your herd.

With more complete data, we can build better and more powerful tools to describe genetic merit and specifically get at improved measures of maternal function, fertility and longevity. For those who have not already enrolled in MaternalPlus, this new simplified inventory reporting option in AHIR is for you.

As a part of this change, you will begin seeing the MaternalPlus logo

on expected progeny difference (EPD)/pedigree lookup. This is a way to call out those cattle enrolled in MaternalPlus and give credit to breeders committed to whole-herd data reporting.

It was great seeing many Angus breeders in Kansas City, and I look forward to seeing others in Oklahoma City in January. As I interact with members, I am continually reminded of the diversity of this breed.


Clearly, not all Angus breeders belong to the American Angus Association for the same reason. Different goals, breeding philosophies and operational size dictate which Association programs and services a particular member finds valuable. Regardless, it is exciting and encouraging to see Angus breeders having success on so many fronts.

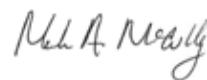
In our past fiscal year, 13,040 members registered 305,411 head into the breed registry. About half of those 13,000 registered one to five head. On the other hand, 5% of our members registered more than 100

head, and these 5% accounted for half of the total registrations.

The Association is committed to serving all of these members, but we know that requires us to be creative and offer diverse programs.

There must also be an understanding that not all programs and services benefit every member equally. It is a tricky balance, but one I am excited to work on as I believe there is tremendous strength in the diversity of our breed and breeders. There is certainly not a “one size fits all” answer to this business. Embracing our diversity will only make the Angus breed stronger in the future.

I want to extend a sincere thank you to our Angus family for their resilience and commitment through the many challenges of 2020, and I hope you are as optimistic about 2021 as I am. We have tremendous Angus momentum, and I cannot wait to see what the future holds. Cheers to a blessed new year! 



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