



## DATA DIVE

by Esther Tarpoff, director of performance programs

# Are You Prepared?

*Preparing happens every day. Are you ready for the next season of selection?*

As we come out of a season when one of the most common questions asked is, “Are you prepared for (insert holiday or event here)?” we realize being prepared can take on a lot of meanings. Ultimately, being prepared comes down to having a plan.

So, do you have a plan?

We are upon another season of spring calving, sales, breeding — the list goes on. If you are calving, you are likely prepared for the worst-case scenario when the weather turns in the winter. If you are having a sale, you start those preparations long before the day of the actual sale. For breeding, you spend time evaluating potential matings in your herd.

But are you prepared to help yourself make the best selection decisions? What about being prepared to allow your customers to make the most informed decision?

Preparing to make decisions that will affect your cow herd for generations to come is not a task anyone takes lightly. You can make the most informed decisions and reduce the risk of mistakes by being prepared.

### Preparing your tools

The genetic selection tools available today on registered Angus cattle, including expected progeny differences (EPDs) and dollar value indexes (\$Values), are built from

the Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR®) data. All the records you collect throughout the year, from breeding to birth data and yearling data to foot scores, should be submitted to AHIR to be included in the weekly National Cattle Evaluation (NCE). The genetic selection tools include the phenotypes you record.


When these records are left on a sheet of paper to submit “for another day,” that information isn’t being leveraged to help make your selection tools more accurate. Records that get left behind to submit “another day” are a lot like a check that sits in your wallet uncashed; you have it, but it’s not doing you any good. Records take time and effort to collect — make sure you get the most from them.

### Preparing your plan

The first step of being prepared to provide information for high-quality genetic selection tools is to have a plan for data collection. What information can you commit to collecting at each stage in production from breeding to birth to weaning to yearling? Is everyone involved in data collection prepared to record the correct information? Do you have a document where you record data that includes a column for each trait to record? Do you have the necessary

materials to collect your DNA samples? Are scales calibrated to take accurate weights? Do you have a plan for when these records will be submitted to the Association to be used in calculation of your EPDs?

The Association has a data collection guide available for download, print, or order that includes the necessary information for each trait. This guide can be found at [www.angus.org/performance](http://www.angus.org/performance) or by scanning the QR code below. Any traits that are scored on a numerical scale such as hair shed scores or foot scores also have scoring guides available.

As you prepare for the next season of data collection, create a plan that includes what traits will be recorded and when those records will be submitted to the Association. Data left behind to submit “another day” doesn’t help you prepare for the next generation in your cow herd. 

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**SCAN TO READ**

the data collection  
guide or visit

[www.angus.org/performance](http://www.angus.org/performance)

