

AIMS Tech Notes

by Scott Johnson, director of Angus Information Management Software



The difference among versions

Q. I made a backup with AIMS and it took two disks; now I get an error when I try to restore into AIMS.

A. If you are using either version 2.0a or 2.0b, yes, this is probably related to a bug. If you are using 2.0c, the problem was fixed, and it's a simple solution. Start the restore process with the second disk in the drive. It seems to be an undocumented requirement of the utility program, but we discovered that you need to start with the last disk.

So, when restoring from multiple disks, put the last disk in first, then start the restore process.

More information on restoring: Early versions of 2.0 sometimes had a problem restoring backups. Actually, the problem looked like files had not been backed up properly when in reality the backup was fine; it was the restore process that caused the problem. Version 2.0c was delayed in large part due to my efforts to eliminate this problem. As it turns out, I was able to dramatically increase the reliability of the restore by changing the internal process.

Here's my recommendation on restoring. Always have a "marker" you can use to verify that the restore worked properly. For example, if you are working on a laptop and you have made a new pen, then you back up the data and restore to a different computer, immediately make sure the new pen is now on the second computer.

When in doubt, restart your computer before restoring.

Q. I'm confused about all the different versions of the Angus software; please explain the differences.

A. Yes, there are certainly many forms of the Angus software, so here's a fairly comprehensive rundown:

ARANCHER: This is about as old as it gets for American Angus Association software sold to members. This is the original Angus software. It is a DOS-based program. I've never even seen it run, and I don't know if it's Y2K compliant.

Angus Herd Management System

(AHMS): This is the Windows-based version that replaced ARANCHER in late 1994. The original version of AHMS was 1.0. Several subsequent versions, including 1.5 and 1.6, have been released while I've been with the Association. The last version we were shipping was version 1.6a. The cost was \$300, but we stopped selling this software in July 1999.

Angus Information Management

Software (AIMS): During development, this was known as AHMS 2.0, but in February 1999 the Board voted to change the name to AIMS. We kept the 2.0 designation simply as a carryover from AHMS. The Board also voted to set the price at \$495 for new installations and \$50 for upgrades from AHMS. Here's a breakdown of the three possible versions:

AIMS 2.0a: When we were finally ready to ship 2.0, we made 50 copies. We sent this to the first 50 orders we had received.

AIMS 2.0b: After receiving some immediate feedback on that first release, we fixed a few things and created version 2.0b. At this point, we had a company in Kansas City make the copies. By the end of the second week of August we were shipping 2.0b, eventually sending more than 600 copies to producers through the end of November.

AIMS 2.0c: As soon as version 2.0b was out, we started working on 2.0c as a

"maintenance" upgrade ("maintenance" is a software-industry way of saying "bug fix"). By the middle of August, Chadd Nolen, the AIMS 2.0 programmer, had moved to a new job in Florida. We brought him back twice during the fall to work on 2.0c, then I took over toward the end (with plenty of help from Chadd by e-mail and phone). This version fixed or changed more than 75 different items — some as major as cow progeny information's not getting updated, some as minor as adjusting the appearance of certain screens.

Now comes the tricky part.

We had 650 copies of a special version of 2.0c created to be sent to anyone owning 2.0a or 2.0b. The installation process only updated the program, not the data, and it installed a new set of reports after making a copy of the existing report files.

We also had a group of backorders waiting on version 2.0. I made the mistake of sending them the 2.0c update that was only supposed to go to those 650 users. Within the first couple of days, Wendy figured out what I had done, and we immediately sent the correct installation CD for 2.0c to those on backorder. These were sent by Priority Mail; some arrived on the same day as the wrong CD; others never seemed to get there at all (so we shipped another copy). All of this was during the holiday crunch, so I think some copies went to the North Pole.

So, by the time you read this, we will have resolved all shipping issues; all previous owners of 2.0a or 2.0b will have received the 2.0c update. All backorders will have been filled with the full-installation version of 2.0c, and any new orders for AIMS will be filled with 2.0c.

And we're already working on 2.0d — although maybe we'll call it 2.1. Whatever!

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