



Tech Notes

► by **Scott Johnson**, director of Angus Information Management Software

EPD updates

We are often asked if an expected progeny difference (EPD) update will automatically “fill in” or “complete” the pedigree of missing animals. The answer is no, and that’s a good thing. Here’s why.

The process

When you request updated EPDs, you send us a file of the animals on your system. It’s a relatively small file that includes basic identification information about each animal. If we then turned around and sent you “missing animals,” it would be a very large file and a very slow process to import.

When we send you additional animals, each animal has 174 fields of data, and each animal comes with 14 ancestors. Some or all of these may already be on your system, so if you didn’t process them right with the import screens, you could end up with duplicates, or worse, of each animal.

Under normal circumstances, if you are using the Angus Information Management Software (AIMS) as it is intended, the pedigrees should be complete anyway. When you started out with your AIMS herd data, all active animals had full pedigrees. From that point on, AIMS helps you add new calves (the calving tab for a pen of cows) and the pedigrees stay complete, assuming you are also telling AIMS who the sire is for each new calf.

AIMS workshop offered

I will offer an informational workshop on AIMS version 2.1 from 1 to 4 p.m. April 23 at the Hilton Arden West, Sacramento, Calif., during the 2002 National Angus Conference.

Attendees can watch me demonstrate the features of the software via an enlarged computer image for a firsthand view of how the software looks and works.

Current AIMS users are welcome to bring their questions to Sacramento. I will be available during the conference for individual consulting outside the meeting room. For more information, contact me at (816) 383-5100 or scottj@angus.org.

Where this breaks down is with non-owned sires or purchased animals. Typically, you won’t have those records. Although you can add them manually, the easiest way to add them is with Additional Animals. This concept was covered in “Tech Notes” in the January 2002 *Angus Journal*, but I’ll provide a brief recap:

You send us a list of registration numbers of animals you need. We put them on a disk or e-mail them to you for importing into your system. There’s a minimum charge of \$15 plus \$1 or \$2/head (depending on if you own them) over the minimum. It’s well worth it for all the information you get electronically.

It’s also been suggested that AIMS allow the importing of sires from the National Sire Evaluation (NSE) module that’s built into AIMS or the importing of animals from our www.angus.org Web site. I can see workable solutions that someday would allow importing animals by one or both methods. The main problem is that the NSE database includes around 5,000 sires (not including ancestors), and the Internet search has access to several million records. AIMS needs several safeguards that would protect a user from adding thousands, or even millions, of records that they don’t really want. We’re looking into possible options.

E-mailing files

Did you know that you can e-mail registration and weight files for submission to the Association? Most of you do, but there are still some AIMS users who put it on disk and mail it. We will certainly accept the file on disk, but we recommend that you at least try to use your e-mail program and attach the file(s).

If you don’t know how to use e-mail attachments, there was a lengthy “Tech Notes” in the March 2000 *Angus Journal* that focused on using e-mail. I included the whole article in the AIMS Help file. In

AIMS, click on Help, Contents, then scroll all the way to the last entry, titled “How to use e-mail attachments.”

For those of you using e-mail, be sure to tell us whenever you change e-mail addresses so that we can keep our records up-to-date and not delay getting files back to you. This includes making sure your Reply To address field is correct, since many times we just hit Reply to send you information. Also, if you’ve changed the Reply To address, be sure to include a short note in the body of the e-mail in case we’re getting your e-mail address out of an address book.

Speaking of export files, when you request updated EPDs for your entire herd, be sure to use the EPD Request operation under File, Data, Export. Don’t try to send us a backup of your entire herd for updating EPDs; that causes several problems at our end. (However, you *can* send us backups for storage. That way if you have a major problem, we have a backup of your data that we can send back to you.)

Incidentally, the Entire Herd export operation doesn’t work, so don’t use that at all. When we revamped the Backup process, which made it much more reliable, we took out the ability to do Entire Herd. However, we didn’t get it taken out of the menu. We will next time, but for now, just be sure to avoid that menu option.

XP compatibility

Now that Windows XP is in widespread use, we have been asked many times whether AIMS is compatible. Some people have had a problem backing up files and working with import/export when using an XP system. Others haven’t had any problems with XP.

The only pattern so far seems to be if the machine was upgraded to Windows XP, it might have problems. If the machine is native to XP (in other words, if it was new and included XP), it works fine.

It is possible that some have upgraded and everything is working fine for them. In this case, we wouldn’t know because no one has called with a problem. So, if you have upgraded to XP and everything (backups, export, import) works fine, please let us know; it will help us figure out the pattern and, we hope, solve the problem.

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