

# BY THE NUMBERS

by Esther Tarpoff, director of performance programs

## A Solid Foundation

*Foot scores are recorded nationwide.*

It's been five years since the inception and release of production expected progeny differences (EPDs) for foot structure, claw shape and foot Angle. Angus breeders are dedicated to collecting scores.

In June 2019, two EPDs were released for foot structure: claw and angle. These traits are also included in the Maternal Weaned Calf Value index (\$M) and the Combined Value index (\$C). Claw refers to the shape of the toes and if both toes are straight or curling in. Angle refers to the foot angle through the pastern and amount of heel depth. The foot on an animal that is the combined poorest for both traits is

scored. Each trait is scored on a 1 to 9 scale. Details of how to score, examples of the scoring system, and “how-to” videos with examples can be found at [www.angus.org/university](http://www.angus.org/university) and following Resources > Tools and Services > AHIR.

Cattle can be scored as early as the yearling age window (minimum 320 days of age). Scores can be collected each year on mature animals as well. It is recommended to score animals before they leave the herd, whether it is groups of bulls prior to a sale or females being culled from the herd. For scoring consistency, one person should score an entire group of animals.

### Foot scoring data

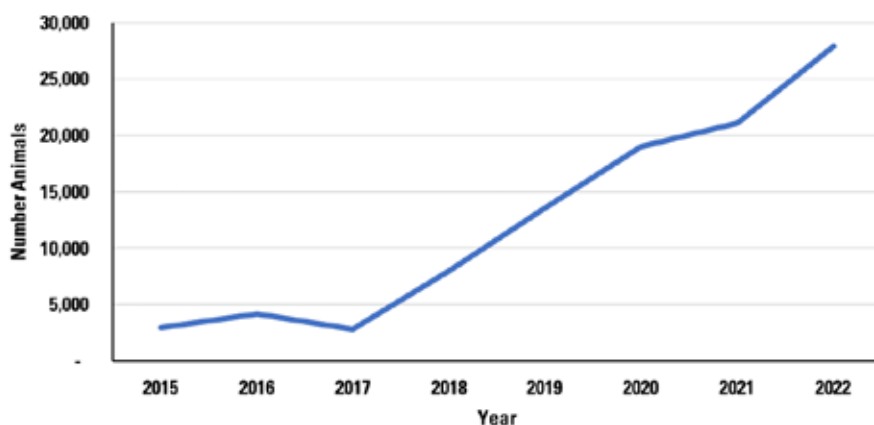
Since the release of claw and angle EPDs, more and more scores are being submitted to the American Angus Association. Currently in the national cattle evaluation (NCE) for claw and angle combined, there are more than 396,000 scores from the American Angus Association, Angus Australia and Canadian Angus Association. In American Angus Association data alone, there are more than 90,000 scores for each trait.

Figure 1 shows the growth year after year for the number of animals from Association members in the US with at least one trait for foot structure recorded. In 2022 there were more than 27,000 animals for which producers recorded one or both traits for foot structure.

With the growth of phenotypes in the evaluation, how many herds are scoring foot structure? Where are those herds located? Are those herds in one area, or across the United States? Let's explore those questions.


Starting with the question of how many herds have foot scores in the NCE, there are more than 800 herds from 44 states. Figure 2 shows which states have foot scores in the NCE.

**Figure 1: Animals in US with at least one foot score trait recorded by year.**



The darker the color of the state, the more herds recording claw and angle.

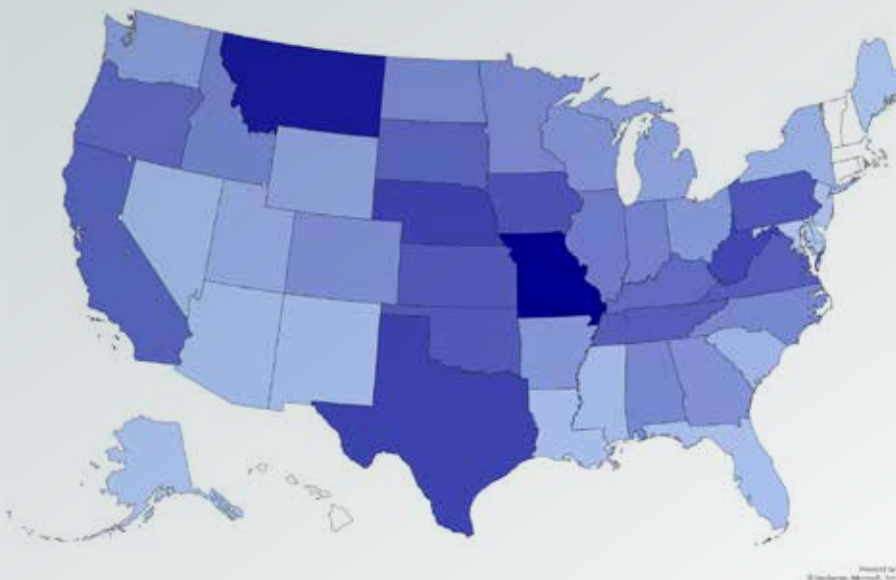
Phenotypes for foot structure come from multiple herds located in all regions. Each year, not only is there growth in the number of scores, there is growth in the number of herds recording the phenotypes. From 2021 to 2022, there was an increase of more than 100 herds recording claw shape and foot angle to have their cattle represented in their national cattle evaluation.

The importance of having phenotypes for any trait for animals in the current population cannot be overstated. If you have not already, you can begin to record foot scores on animals in your herd and have your animals represented for those phenotypes in the genetic evaluation. 

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**Figure 2: Herds recording foot scores by state.**



**SCAN FOR MORE**

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