

# AIMS Tech Notes

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## AIMS not meant to calculate official adjusted weights and ratios

**Q.** *When I use the Angus Information Management Software (AIMS) to calculate the adjusted yearling weights and ratios, they don't look right. Is there a problem?*

**A.** Yes. This is a bug in AIMS. The adjusted yearling weight is calculated correctly, but the adjusted yearling ratio is normally incorrect. (There are situations where it works, but don't count on it).

I spent a couple of intense days digging into the programming for this calculation. Trust me, the formula does a lot of what it should. The correct formula uses the average of all the ADGs for the animals in the group; but AIMS currently uses the ADG of the animal, rather than the average of the group.

This exercise showed me there are a lot of misconceptions about how to calculate this ratio. It is not just the animal's weight divided by the average weight for the group. The calculation also uses the weaning information and is sex-dependent, among many other factors.

Furthermore, this situation demonstrates that AIMS never will be able to calculate the official adjusted weights and ratios. The official values can come from only the Association's computer. Reason: We have no control of the data on your computer. If a weight or date gets changed after submitting the data to us, how would we know? If the contemporary groups change, how would AIMS account for it?

The point is, we will get AIMS to calculate ratios correctly, but it never will be the official source. So, if you are trying to use AIMS to do a catalog or advertising sheet without getting the numbers from the Association, you're on your own. We cannot endorse those numbers.

By the way, you can tell if the numbers are official simply by looking at the lot-date field on the weaning or yearling screen. If there's a date, it came from the Association; if it's blank, you have run the calculations, and they are unofficial.

We're finalizing the bug fix and a way to distribute it, so be watching.

Speaking of bugs, the breeding calculations for most-likely sire and calving

date are also buggy. This concept is extremely difficult to teach a computer (or a human, for that matter), and most of what AIMS can do is correct. But in a few scenarios, especially if "Preg Check" information is present, AIMS may not get it right. Like the yearling calculations, we're working on it.

**Q.** *I received two different performance updates. How do I know what animals are in each file?*

**A.** Whenever possible, we try to combine multiple weight files into one performance update file, so this shouldn't happen as much as it used to. But there's an easy solution. With the release of 2.0c, we gave you a way to preview the information before it is imported.

Rule #1: Make a backup before you import anything. Things can go wrong during importing — including things AIMS has no control over — so it's better to be safe than sorry.

OK, to preview the data, start with the normal import steps — File, Data, Import and change the Operation to the appropriate value; for example, Performance. Next, use the Browse button to find the file, whether it's on a floppy or on the hard disk, after receiving an e-mail. At the point you would normally hit the Import button, simply click on the Preview button (lower-left corner) instead.

You will see the basic data for whatever is in the file. Scroll all the way to the bottom, and you will see how many animals are in the file. Once you have viewed the data, you can close the window (with the OK button). At this point, if you don't want to import the data, just click on Close; otherwise use the Import button to actually import the data.

It's that simple. Instead of clicking on the Import button, use Preview first. You'll have more confidence in the data and what files you've used.

### ■ Backups

Make a backup of your data right now. Put a copy on the hard disk (it's fast) and another copy on floppy disks (in case the computer crashes). Go on, do it now, then keep reading.

OK, I just wanted everyone to make a backup. It's important. We also know that sometimes things go wrong with the backups, usually due to equipment failure. So here's a renewal of a long-standing offer — send us a copy of your backup.

This accomplishes three things: (1) it forces you to make a backup; (2) it gets a copy away from your location (Heaven forbid, but fires do happen, and floppy-disk backups sitting next to a charred computer probably aren't any good either); and (3) we will test the backup to make sure it is OK.

It's this last step that can be useful since you rarely restore a backup and may never know if the backup is working. So make a backup to floppies and send it to us. Please do not e-mail them since the files can be large, and that ties up too much computer time for both of us. Also be sure to label the floppies with your member code and why you are sending them!

### ■ Credit cards

When you enter your credit-card information — whether on the Breeder Info screen or when you export a file — please just enter the numbers. Do not use any type of separators like spaces or hyphens. Our system just wants the numbers, and it will be easier for you, anyway.

### ■ Commercial dams

The first time you submit weight information on calves from commercial dams, the Association's computer assigns a "commercial dam registration number" that is in the 9-million range. Be sure to go back and put this information into AIMS after you get the paperwork. (AIMS won't change registration numbers during a performance update.)

This is especially important for a dam's second calf. If you don't have the commercial dam "registration" number in there, a "different" cow will get credit for the calf in our system.

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