

by Allen Moczygemba
CEO, American Angus Association



While the data stream begins with information on individual animals, collectively that information forms the world's largest beef database. That robust database and its interpretive data has allowed our members to use the various trait information to breed better cattle.

While the Association was at the forefront in collecting phenotypic and, later, genomic data, one area of data collection where we've fallen a bit short is whole-herd reporting.

Having access to cow and heifer production data is critical in developing tools to better measure key traits such as heifer pregnancy and cow longevity. That's why a few years back the Association created MaternalPlus®, a voluntary whole-herd reporting program to help members submit whole-herd data.

Unfortunately, the program in its early format wasn't the most user-friendly to navigate or use. As a result, participation was limited and not achieving the scale of data input required to create value on the maternal side of the breed.

As the organization's Long Range Strategic Plan was being developed in 2015, the Board of Directors recognized the importance of placing a greater emphasis and focus on whole-herd reporting by creating a specific strategy to consider incentivizing data input by members. However, before we developed an incentive program,

MaternalPlus® incentives

The American Angus Association has the privilege of being the world's largest beef breed Association. While there are a number of reasons for our success, one key reason has been our members' commitment to collecting data on their cattle.



we first needed to improve the user experience for MaternalPlus.

Kelli Retallick, genetic service director for Angus Genetics Inc. (AGI), was charged with enhancing the MaternalPlus program to make it easier for members to use. She made major improvements, beginning with enhancing the navigation both to and within the software program. Along with the improved navigation, she built a more inviting and usable working environment to make it easier to submit data.

This past February, the Board of Directors approved a staff recommendation she led to incentivize participation in MaternalPlus. Fashioned after a popular credit card program, MaternalPlus users will now receive a cash-back rebate as an incentive for submitting whole-herd data.

The program works this way: Upon completion of the first year's re-enrollment, members can receive an introductory 5% cash-back

rebate on Association fees and an additional 2.5% cash back every subsequent year re-enrollment is completed. Members enrolled on or after April 1, 2018, will be eligible for their introductory cash-back rebate on their first re-enrollment if all program requirements have been met. Members enrolled prior to April 1, 2018, will be eligible to receive the introductory cash-back rebate on their upcoming re-enrollment date if all program requirements have been met.

To receive the cash-back offer, members must complete re-enrollment, accept the cow herd inventory, and pay the re-enrollment balance due. Most importantly, re-enrollment must take place within 60 days or less of the recorded anniversary date.

Association fees eligible for the cash-back rebate include membership, registration, transfer, MaternalPlus enrollments and other Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR®) fees incurred in the past 12 months minus one day based on enrollment date.

Don't hesitate to enroll in MaternalPlus because the incentive program will end when we have 150,000 cows re-enrolled.



allenm@angus.org