

by Miranda Reiman

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## The Measure of a Measure

*I don't know what the traditional six-year anniversary gift is, but for my husband and me, that was the year we purchased our 1954 Farmall Super C in lieu of jewelry, flowers or a weekend getaway. What says "I love you" more than a classic tractor, really?*

We bought the meticulously cared for machine after my great-uncle Lloyd passed away. When we picked it up, we also got a three-ring binder that was essentially its entire known history. Handwritten notes signified every oil change; when, where and what parts were purchased; the paint color, should we ever need it; and on and on. There were receipts and manuals — really a masterpiece in recordkeeping.

My husband was determined he'd keep it up in Lloyd's honor. You may find Mark Reiman's hastily scribbled additions for the first year or so, but then life intervened. We used the tractor more as a workhorse around our acreage and less as a collector. By the time we used the tractor for its intended purpose, we had no energy left for recording.

And why would we? While the log was interesting, the short story is that we didn't find the data particularly useful.

Some people keep records out of curiosity, others out of habit and some out of obligation. But to someone like me who is more naturally wired to do than to contemplate, you've got to convince me that it's worth it.

### Data-informed decisions

That's exactly what farmers and ranchers across the country do when I visit their places. I've heard countless stories about management practices or genetic decisions that have dramatically changed the trajectory of a program, and many producers credit those shifts to a new trait they started tracking.

This edition is dubbed "Measuring What Matters," which happens to be my favorite kind of measurements: the kind you'll use.

There's a story I think you'll enjoy about Dave Nichols, who was laughed at when he began recording weaning weights in the '60s. That information was the springboard to becoming a household name in the Angus business.

You'll meet an Iowa family who uses foot scoring as another way to serve their customers, and you'll get tips in our regular columns and a story that digs into best practices for collecting samples for genomic testing. They'll save you headaches down the road.


Data can help you avoid pitfalls and inspire new ways of thinking, but having an easy way to input and apply the information is critical. The Association's tools and staff members are great resources.



### Welcome to the herd

Here at the *Angus Journal* "measuring what matters" has added meaning this month. The magic numbers are 9.6, 19.5 and one — as in one 9.6 oz, 19.5 inches long, beautiful baby girl that editor Julie Mais and her husband, Matt, welcomed into the world in late March.

As we celebrate that new life, my byline will be a placeholder the next several months, and I hope it's part informative, part conversation starter.

When we meet next, just ask about that time my mom got a manure spreader to celebrate 15 years of wedded bliss. 

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