Tech Notes

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Have your questions answered

Have you ever had a question about options or how to use Angus Information Management Software (AIMS)? I compiled a few common questions and provided answers to help AIMS users become more effecient at using this program.

Q: Microsoft® Outlook Express® says it has blocked the attachments that I'm supposed to get from the American Angus Association. How can I still get the files?

A: Thanks to all of the e-mail spam and viruses, Outlook Express has added security features to help prevent harmful attachments. So in order to still receive attachments from the Association, it may be necessary to change one of those settings. This does not necessarily increase your risk *if* you continue to be careful when looking at attachments.

In Outlook Express, click on Tools, Options, Security. Then uncheck the box next to the option that says, "Don't allow attachments to be opened or saved that could be harmful." Once you have done that, you should be able to get our attachments.

And now that you know the trick, you could turn the feature back on (recheck that option) in between times that you will be getting e-mails from us.

Q: How does the electronic transfer export work?

A: During the last couple months, AIMS has been enhanced with new features to handle several processes electronically. Let's take a look at each one.

Electronic storage of registration: As you probably know, the traditional method of registering an Angus animal is to submit the registration application to obtain a printed paper. If you then need to transfer it to someone else, you fill out the information on the back of the paper, send it to the Association, and the ownership is transferred. A new paper is sent back to you so that you can forward it to the new owner.

With this new feature — electronic storage — you can register the animal, but rather than getting the paper back, have it stored electronically at the Association. When you are ready to transfer the paper, you can submit a transfer request to the Association, and the paper can be printed for the new owner.

In AIMS this concept is a simple drop-down box on the Registry tab. When you register a new calf, the traditional option is "Print Registration Paper" — everything will be handled the way it has been for decades. However, if you choose "Electronic Paper-No Print," a paper will not be printed; it is considered "electronic storage" of the paper. If you plan to always use the electronic option, you can change the AIMS default by going to Tools, Default Options and change the Register Status to "Electronic Paper-No Print." Even with this default, you can choose "Print Registration Paper" for individual animals.

Electronic transfer: Once an animal's registration "paper" has been stored electronically, you can electronically transfer the animal's ownership. On the Registry tab, there are two buttons at the bottom of the screen. The "Reg/Transfer" button is used when you are registering a new animal and transferring it at the same time. The "Transfer Only" button is used when transferring an animal that is already registered. Both buttons go to the same transfer screen; they just need different validation steps.

Once the transfer information is filled out and valid (see the next question for more information), the transfer box will have a check mark on the Registry tab. When you create the transfer export file (File, Data, Export, Transfer) and submit it to the Association, the animals will then be transferred.

Q: How do I fill out the buyer information on the transfer screen?

A: When the concept of registering and transferring animals was added by the Association (which was enhanced with electronic capabilities soon after that), we needed a way to get buyer information into the export file. Since we already had the Customer Manager in place, we decided to build the transfer screen around AIMS' ability to store customer (buyer) names.

So, to fill out the buyer information, simply click in the white box next to Buyer ID, and it will open the Customer Manager screen. Once you find the correct customer, either double-click on it, or highlight it and use the Select button. The information will be brought back to the transfer screen. If the customer does not exist, you can add it from the Customer Manager screen. If you will be using the same customer for several head, you can simply note the Buyer ID and type it in on subsequent animals.

The Association uses a Ranch Name field for transfer information, so you will need to have the Ranch Name field filled out in the Customer Manager portion of AIMS. Sometimes, this may mean moving name information from the "First" and "Last Name" fields into the Ranch Name field. If you don't want to have the same thing listed twice, just use the Ranch Name field, or as an alternative, you could have a second record in Customer Manager that is set up just for transfers.

The Association does not require you to submit the member code; however, it is helpful. The other fields are required (ranch, address, city, state, ZIP) in order to accurately transfer ownership.

Q: What can I do with all of the past update files that you have sent me?

A: I suppose there are two options: 1) archive them or 2) delete them.

To archive files, you can use Windows Explorer to make archive folders as subfolders, such as c:\aims\files\archives, and then move the files there. Or perhaps they could be burned to a CD or saved to a 3.5-inch floppy (the files are usually not very big, so many of them will fit on a disk).

If you want to delete them, just be sure they have been imported into AIMS before you delete. As an added precaution, wait to delete them until you are sure they've been imported and you have a good backup of the entire AIMS database.

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