

MEMBERSHIP TIPS

by Jerry Cassady
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What information should I capture at weaning time?

As spring-born calves approach the weaning stage, progressive producers know this is a key opportunity to capture data points to document genetic progress. Important data points include measurements on both the cow and the weaned calf.

Calf weaning weights can be collected between 120-280 days of age, and these individual weights should be recorded on the entire weaned group on the same day. These weights will then be adjusted to 205 days of age. You can now also include scoring calf docility at weaning. Collecting this data allows the American Angus Association to investigate whether weaning docility records are informative for the docility (Doc) expected progeny difference (EPD).

Other important weaning data points include capturing information on the dam of the weaned calf. This would include cow mature weight and height and body condition score (BCS). Mature cow size is a key

economic driver in cow-calf production and, thus, is important to the \$Maternal Weaned Calf Value (\$M) and \$Combined Value (\$C). Mature height (MH) is correlated to mature weight (MW), meaning the variation captured in MH helps us to further explain the differences in MW and vice versa.

The more data Angus producers can capture increases the accuracy of the \$Value indexes and continues to validate genomic predictions and EPD accuracy. If submitting mature weights for the National Cattle Evaluation (NCE), these weights must be accompanied by BCS.


The goal for beef producers is rapid early growth and moderation at maturity. These captured mature cow data points can assist in finding those genetics that excel in growth traits but moderate mature cow size.

Foot scores would also be useful information as an additional trait. This data can be collected each year as a repeated measure.

The American Angus Association also recommends making note of any cows culled at this time. Producers should input data as a specific disposal code for each culled female, aligning with the requirements for inventory reporting.

Lastly, weaning is a great time to collect DNA samples. It is recommended to collect multiple DNA samples on every animal — one used for testing and one for a backup sample. This insurance can be useful if multiple use is required for the sample during testing, or if samples happen to get lost in the mail.

In summary, fall weaning is the ideal time to get your spring calf crop DNA tested, reported and registered.

Gathering weaning data and submitting this to the American Angus Association, along with registration applications will allow time for the work to process, DNA results to be returned and registrations to clear. Doing this now will prevent unnecessary heartaches next spring when marketing becomes your focus. 

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Editor's note: For more information regarding weaning data collection, contact the Member Services department at (816) 383-5100 or email me directly at jcassady@angus.org.

Calf Information

Weaning Weight
Docility
DNA sample
Registration application

Cow Information

Mature Weight
Mature Height
Body Condition Score
Foot Score
Disposal code (if applicable)