Tech Notes

► *by **Scott Johnson**, director of Angus Information Management Software*

Pedigree verification for AIMS

A while back, a breeder realized that the pedigree for an animal was incorrect in the producer's AIMS database — it had the wrong sire. This led to the AIMS Department working with the Association's Information Systems (IS) Department to create a new feedback file to help you locate these animals.

How it can happen

In order to understand how this can happen, I need to do a quick explanation of how pedigrees are actually built. I'm sure by now you're comfortable with the terms records and fields. In a phone book, the entry for you is the record, and each piece of data — for example, the phone number — is a field. In AIMS, each animal is a record; tattoo, tag, birth date, name, etc., are the fields.

However, there are *no* fields in an animal's record to record the name of the sire, the name of the dam, the name of the grandsire, the name of granddam, etc. Instead, there are two fields in an animal's record that point (or link) to the next two ancestors. In other words, there's a field for sire tattoo and one for dam tattoo. AIMS uses these fields to go back into the same animal's file to pull up the sire and dam by their respective tattoos. The process repeats for each generation.

Take a look at the General tab of any animal and you'll see the Sire Tattoo and Dam Tattoo fields. Go to the Pedigree tab, and you'll see how AIMS links this all together.

Now, here's where things can go wrong. Even a minor typing error in the sire's or dam's tattoo(s) will throw off the whole pedigree. Probably the most common cause is human error. However, there was a bug in old versions of AIMS that could cause this problem, but only after the third generation in adding additional animals. This bug has long since been fixed, but old records could still exist with problems and, of course, it's easy to make new mistakes at any time.

So, we worked with the IS Department and implemented a "Pedigree Verification" process. Each time you submit an expected progeny difference (EPD) request, we can use that file to check the pedigree. Simply put, the computer at the Association takes the registration number of a particular animal, and checks to see if the registrations of the sire and dam from *your* data match the official records. If they don't match, a report is generated and sent back to you.

The verification process

Now we're down to the meat of this column — an explanation of that report and how to use it. The resulting file starts with "PC," then your member code, then a ".txt" extension. This file can be opened with Word, Notepad or virtually any word processor. Once you open the file, you'll see the following explanation:

> **Note:** This report was generated as a result of an EPD Request or Pedigree Verification file you submitted. The following animals have incorrect registration numbers for the sire and/or dam in your AIMS database. To correct the problem, do a search by Reg. Number (File, Open, Animal, Advanced, Search by Reg. No.) on the sire and dam reg. numbers. Once found, note the exact tattoo and use it in the Sire Tattoo or Dam Tattoo field(s) on the General tab of the original animal. If you do not find the sire or dam by reg. number, you should delete the dam and/or sire tattoo field(s) of the original animal.

The file then has a listing of the affected animals with their incorrect information as well as the official registration numbers that should be used. The first trick is to be able to read the table. My suggestion is to open the file in Word, select everything in the file (Ctrl-A will do it quickly), then set tabs about every inch or inch and a quarter. You may need to reduce the font size (depending on your defaults). When you're done, you should have a table that looks something like Table 1 below (obviously, I've changed the information for this example).

The important thing to note is the column headers; they tell you which is the official information (AAA) vs. the information from your computer (AIMS). Let's look at a specific example.

Animal 0001 (the tattoo in AIMS) has an incorrect dam, so the tattoo in the dam field of AIMS for 0001 is incorrect. While it's possible the correct dam is not in your AIMS database, it's likely that she's there, she just has a different tattoo. To find the correct dam, go to File, Open, Animal, Advanced and enter the *registration number* for the correct dam, taken from the AAA Dam Reg. No. column. Change the "Search By" field to "Reg. No." and click "Find Now." If AIMS finds the correct animal, note its tattoo and change the dam's tattoo field for 0001.

In many cases, it's probably an issue of the correct extension for the dam. For example, the incorrect dam tattoo might be 8181 and it should be 8181-C99.

Animal 0002 has problems with the sire information and 0003 has a problem with both, but the solution is still the same.

You have the option of specifically requesting a Pedigree Verification by using the Export Operation by the same name. However, it is also an automatic process each time you submit an EPD request. If you don't receive a "PC" file back, apparently you don't have any linkage problems.

See you in Louisville

I will once again present two different workshops during the Angus events at the North American International Livestock Exposition (NAILE), in Louisville, Ky. The first workshop will be a basic AIMS workshop, geared toward new AIMS users or anyone thinking about buying AIMS. This will be held Sunday, Nov. 10, from 4 to 6 p.m. at the Executive West Hotel. Monday morning I'll have a Crystal Report Writer workshop at the Expo Center from 9 to 11 a.m. While this is also open to anyone, it is geared toward more advanced uses of AIMS, specifically how to use the third-party software — Crystal Report Writer — to customize existing reports and to create your own reports. There's no cost or reservation required.

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Table 1: Pedigree verification by registration number					
Animal Tattoo	Animal Reg. No.	AAA Sire Reg. No.	AIMS Sire Reg. No.	AAA Dam Reg. No.	AIMS Dam Reg. No.
0001	11111111			1234	4567
0002	22222222	9876	5432		
0003	33333333	1010	2020	3030	4040