Tech Notes

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Submission of breeding data

Angus Information Management Software (AIMS) version 2.3 provides a way to submit breeding data. The collection of breeding records for the Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR) program will build a database that will be used to examine reproductive performance in the cow herd, ultimately providing the information to generate useful genetic predictions for reproductive traits. Data is submitted with a normal export operation; however, you may need to do a bit of preprocessing for it to work.

Useful information

A new field on the Breeding tab — Season Year — is used by the export operation to select the appropriate records. Your AIMS data may need to be updated with this information if you are submitting past records. Rather than do this by hand, AIMS provides a way to update all existing records in the pen according to the year. Simply go to Pen, Breeding Data, Update Season Year. This will use the actual year of the breeding record(s) and put it in the Season Year field.

Then, to enter new breeding records, fill in the Season Year. To do so, either manually enter the year when adding a new season, or use the Pen, Pen Operations, Breeding screen to advance all records to a new season, and at the same time indicate the Season Year (there's a field for this right above the new season button).

Range for weaning

In June, the Board of Directors approved a change to the range of days for weaning adjustments. The minimum age was lowered to 120 days (from 160 days). AIMS is also capable of using the 120-day minimum, but you still may be getting a warning message. If so, the validation rule needs to be changed. Go to Tools, Default Options and the Weaning Ranges tab. If you simply click the Defaults button, all ranges will be set to their defaults, including the 120-day minimum for weaning. We did not do this automatically when the program was updated since you may use other numbers for your specific operation.

This will only work if you are up-to-date with your AIMS program.

AIMS must be version 2.3 and at least build 103 (to view your software's build number, go to Help, About).

Current version of AIMS

As just mentioned, you need to verify that you are using the latest version of AIMS, which involves getting downloadable files from the Internet.

To see if you are up-to-date, start AIMS, then go to Help, About. This screen will show a version and build number (think of builds as subversion numbers). In early June 2003, we mailed a CD-ROM to all owners of AIMS, which when installed, brought AIMS up to version 2.3. Since that time, we have put update files — referred to as "patches" — on the AIMS Web site. These files contain the necessary information to change parts of AIMS, not the entire program. The changes are often bug fixes, but also include new features and enhancements to existing features.

The current build number is 113; however, by the time you read this, AIMS will have been updated again. We have changed a lot of things, especially related to how performance and registration files are imported. It's critical that you check this page on a regular basis to see if your AIMS program is current. For the quickest way to check your AIMS status, go to *www.angus.org/aims* and look at the second section "For Existing Users." This section will indicate the most current build number and when the page was updated. Compare that to the Help, About screen in AIMS, and you'll know if you're up-to-date.

If you are not up-to-date, simply click on the link to the download page, and follow the instructions.

Register and transfer new animals

AIMS users using version 2.3 now have the ability to register and transfer a new calf in one process (similar to the traditional "yellow sheets"). The "Reg/Trans" process starts with the normal registration information on the Registry tab. Once this information is complete, it's a good idea to use the Validate button at the bottom of the page to ensure everything is running smoothly.

For the transfer information, start by clicking the Transfer button at the bottom of the Registry tab screen. This will open a new window as shown in Figure 1. Be sure to indicate the Transfer Sale Date (right-click the field to enter today's date) as well as appropriate retained ownership and artificial insemination (AI) breeding privilege information.

Enter other key information like the buyer name and address. This data must be pulled from the Customer Manager section of AIMS, which makes it easy to use existing customer data. The Customer Manager screen can be opened simply by double-clicking on the white Buyer ID field, starting with Buyer 1. Once the Customer Manager window is open, find the buyers, and either double-click on their row or use the Select Customer button along the right side of the screen.

The transfer information must also be validated, either by using the Validate button or by closing the screen, which will automatically run the validation. If there are any problems, a screen will indicate what needs to be fixed. It is essential to include the complete buyer information, including name (from the Ranch field in Customer Manager), address, city, state and ZIP code. If the buyer is an Association member and you have entered his or her member code in the Customer Manager record, it
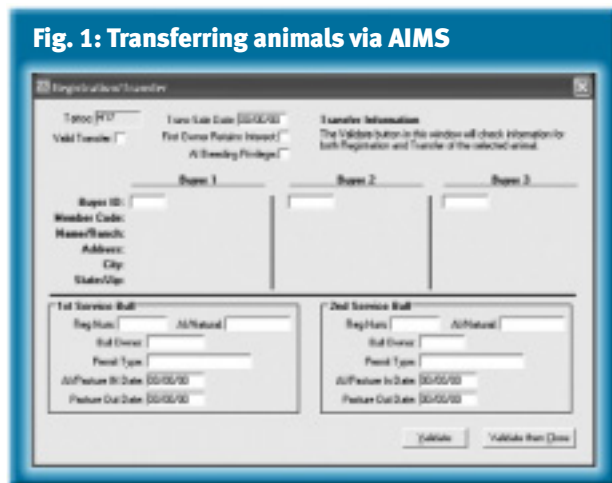

Fig. 1: Transferring animals via AIMS

will also be submitted, but it is not required.

At the bottom of the Transfer screen, bull service information can be submitted if appropriate. Simply fill in the indicated information, and the validation process will verify that it is complete.

Up to three buyers can be included; however, if the Retains Interest field is checked, there can be only two buyers.
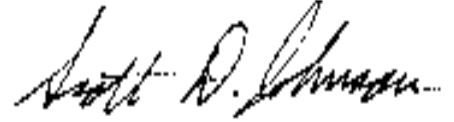
Once the Transfer screen has been completed, click the "Validate then Close" button. If the information passes validation, the window will automatically close. At this point — assuming everything is OK — the Valid Transfer check box will be marked. Only AIMS can fill in this check box, which is then used during the export operation to indicate that the animal is to be registered and transferred.

And finally, after you have exported the Reg/Trans information, a screen will appear to indicate what AIMS has exported. The window will provide the number of animals that were registered, as well as animals that were registered and transferred. Make sure these numbers match what you intended to submit in the file.

One last thing — animals that are already registered cannot be transferred with this process. But we are working on a new process that will allow transfer of existing animals — watch for this in the next few months.

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