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## A case for testing genetic conditions

*It was late morning on Friday, Aug. 31, when I received the call. I was heading to the airport to travel to an Angus sale that weekend when Dan Moser, Angus Genetics, Inc., president, called to let me know that a son of a popular sire, 3F Epic 4631, had tested positive for Neuropathic Hydrocephalus (NH).*

Calls of this nature are never good news. And, it was a surprise since neither of his parents were identified by pedigree as potential carriers.

Following our standard protocol, we immediately submitted a sample of Epic and the son's dam for testing. We received the positive NH result on Epic mid-afternoon on Thursday, Sept. 6. We scheduled an American Angus Association Board conference call for 9 a.m. CDT the following morning during which we updated the Board on the situation while informing them of the communications protocol we'd be following.

Immediately after the Board call, Dr. Moser and I called the three owners of the bull to inform them of the bull's genetic condition status. After the calls to the bull owners, we then had a conference call to inform the Association's regional managers of the situation. The membership was then notified with an announcement on the Association's homepage.

### Genetic conditions

Since that announcement, there's been a lot of talk out in the country regarding the situation.

One point made is that if Epic had been parentage tested this situation would have never occurred. That is simply not the case. In fact, Epic was parentage tested. However, no sample was available on his dam but even if there was, he would have matched her.

This wasn't an issue of Epic's parentage, but rather of the bull being a carrier of a genetic condition. The only way to detect carriers of genetic conditions is to test for the conditions. Having said that, a parentage issue of several generations ago could possibly hide a potential condition carrier. As it appears to have done in this case.

While there is no parentage sample on Epic's dam (she's no longer alive), the dam of the Epic son which was identified as an NH carrier (NHC) tested free of NH. Since then, we've continued to investigate potential carrier ancestors. We feel confident that the pedigree error occurred with Epic's dam; most likely she was a calf swap when calved in 2011.

Will Epic's registration be canceled? The short answer is no. While there are reasons to believe there are errors in Epic's maternal

pedigree, because no sample is available on his dam, we cannot cancel her parentage according to the Association's rules and procedures.

### New AI sire policy

As far as preventing this situation from happening again, the Board of Directors implemented a policy whereby all artificial insemination (AI) sires born on or after Jan. 1, 2018, must be tested for all recognized genetic conditions for all sires that are the source of semen for the purpose of AI.

Finally, some folks would like to find a culprit in this matter. However, there isn't one. The actions by the original breeder and subsequent owners of 3F Epic 4631 followed the Association's policies on genetic condition testing. As did the Association in announcing the change in genetic condition status of the bull.



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