

MEMBERSHIP TIPS

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director of member services



Data submission

BIR? BRS? AHIR? What are these acronyms? Let's review our data submission programs in detail.

What is BIR?

The Beef Improvement Records (BIR) program is a service provided by the American Angus Association to assist purebred and commercial cattle producers in making progress through genetic selection.

This service consists of two main recordkeeping programs. One is set up for registered Angus breeders and one is for commercial producers. Registered breeders and commercial producers collect phenotypic data, which is the information you can see and measure, or the expression of genes that are observable and measurable, and submit this information to the Association. A BIR number will be assigned to any commercial or unregistered animal that enters our system with weight data or DNA submission.

What is AHIR?

The Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR®) program was initiated in 1958, computerized in 1962 and is available for registered Angus breeders who are serious about making genetic progress through the use of performance records. The records submitted to the Association through AHIR include breeding records, weights and measures; as well as carcass and ultrasound data if available.

These phenotypic measures submitted by producers are then utilized in the Association's weekly National Cattle Evaluation to calculate genetic prediction tools such as expected progeny differences (EPDs) and dollar value indexes (\$Values). These selection tools are subsequently provided to Association members and their customers. They can be used to make informed breeding decisions to create the next generation of Angus seedstock.

What is BRS?

Commercial producers with an interest in Angus genetics can also participate in the collection and submission of phenotypic data. These producers have the Angus Beef Record Service (BRS) as a tool to record performance data, regardless of their herd's breed composition. Records are summarized to provide adjusted measures and within-herd ratios; however, EPDs are not generated on commercial cattle. Reports are generated by the Association to allow producers to evaluate and compare the data, to evaluate their commercial cow herds, and to work towards becoming more profitable.

How do I submit data?

Program participants can submit performance records three ways:

electronically with the use of the internet in AAA Login or with Angus Information Management Software (AIMS), or on paper via mail.

AAA Login and the AIMS software are more efficient ways to use AAA performance programs. Both AAA Login and AIMS offer the most current information on herds and eliminate the "paper shuffle."

What about the cost?

The cost of the AHIR® program is \$3 per calf assessed at the time of first weight submission, whether first weight is birth or weaning weight. This is important to remember because for years the program fee was associated with the weaning weight. Therefore, as birth weights are submitted, the one-time AHIR fee is assessed at that time. This is due to the recent upgrade to the single-step method of genetic evaluation.

The Association is able to use the correlations between birth weight, weaning weight and yearling weight, which allows the use of birth weights earlier in the evaluation to create more accurate prediction tools. Utilizing birth weight earlier allows us to characterize young sires' birth weights and growth genetics sooner and with more accuracy.

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Helpful guide

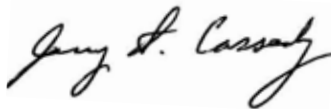
To benefit all members with data submission, a helpful guide is now available on our website. Go to www.angus.org, click on the “Member Services” tab, and under “Herd Tools” click on “AHIR Data Collection Guide.” This handy resource can be a useful reminder of what is required for proper data submission.

Download the document, and keep a copy near your computer for easy reference.

Quality data necessary for accurate EPDs

For decades, registered Angus breeders have capitalized on improving the genetic progress of their herds through performance measurements by participating in the AHIR program. It is important to remember that good, accurate EPDs come from good data. You cannot expect reliable EPDs if the data submitted is not equally as reliable.

The basic differences of each program have been discussed here, and we’ll take a closer look at accurately collecting data points and the importance of proper contemporary grouping in a future article. 



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For more information regarding data submission, please contact the Member Services Department at (816) 383-5100 or email me directly at jcassady@angus.org.

Angus Herd Improvement Record Data Collection Guide

Breeding Data

- Collect on heifers and/or cows.
- Record all AI service sires and dates, or pasture exposed sires and dates.
- Report pregnancy check data.

Birth Weight

- Collect within 24 hours after birth.
- Weigh with a scale in pounds.
- Contemporary group: sex, birth type (ET/non-ET), 90-day birth window and birth management code.

Yearling Weight

- Collect between 320-440 days of age.
- Individual weights should be recorded on the entire group on the same day.
- Contemporary group: management group code can be added. Yearling groups managed differently after weaning should be grouped as such.

Foot Scoring

- Collect at 12-18 months old or on mature females.
- Can be taken at yearling age or older.
- Multiple foot scores can be collected and used in the evaluation.

Ultrasound Data

- Collect on bulls at 320-440 days of age, heifers and steers collect between 320-460 days of age.
- Must have weaning weight reported.
- Contemporary group: Management group codes.

Carcass Data

- Calves can be out of commercial dams but need to be sire identified.
- At least five animals from two different sires need to be in a contemporary group to be eligible for national cattle evaluation.

Mature Cow Weight Data

- Taken within +/- 45 days of calf weaning date
- Body condition score (1-9) must be recorded
- Must record a calf weaning weight

Calving Ease Score

- Collect at birth.
- Scores: 1 - no assistance; 2 - some assistance; 3 - mechanical assistance; 4 - cesarean assistance; 5 - abnormal delivery.
- Contemporary group: only heifer calving ease scores are used for genetic evaluation. It is still good to record and track mature cows to ensure no problems occur.

Weaning Weight

- Collect between 120-280 days of age.
- Individual weights should be recorded on the entire weaned group on the same day.
- Contemporary groups: management codes, creep vs. non-creep fed and group code (additional codes if calves managed differently).

Yearling Hip Height

- Measure at yearling weight recording.
- Measure at the same time as yearling weight is recorded. Height should be recorded in inches.
- Contemporary group: Management group codes.

Scrotal Circumference

- Collect between 320-440 days of age.
- Does not need to be collected at same time as yearling weight or hip height, but does need to be recorded within the yearling window.

Feed Intake Data

- Collect at 160-480 days old with a minimum of five animals in the contemporary group.
- Must be a minimum of 45 days on test, with additional days for warm-up period.
- Weaning and yearling weights must be recorded, along with in and out weights.

Docility Score

- Collect 320-440 days of age.
- Scores: 1 - docile, mild disposition; 2 - restless, quieter than average; 3 - nervous, typical temperament is manageable; 4 - flighty, wild, jumpy and out of control; 5 - aggressive, added aggressive behavior; 6 - very aggressive and extremely temperamental.
- Scores should be taken as the animals are exiting the chute or lofting in a pen.
- Be consistent for the entire group.

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