

Expanding Angus Online

The American Angus Association simplifies registration storage, transfer.

by Crystal Albers

Angus cattlemen surrounded by overflowing filing cabinets and rising stacks of registration papers can take comfort in a new alternative developed by the American Angus Association.

Now members and affiliates can electronically store and transfer their performance registration certificates (PRCs) at the Association — a step that, for many breeders, will eliminate mailing costs and hours of paperwork.

Instead of receiving registration certificates for their Angus cattle through the mail, breeders may choose to electronically store certificate information at the Association headquarters in Saint Joseph, Mo. Besides saving office space, the option will allow breeders to electronically transfer their cattle without the often lengthy process of completing transfer paperwork, mailing it to the Association and then to the buyer.

Bryce Schumann, director of member services, says the process won't change how breeders register their cattle or the authenticity of their registrations or transfers. He says the new process, which became available Jan. 8, just gives cattlemen more options. All registration and transfer fees and regulations remain the same.

"The largest advantage for breeders is the convenience," Schumann says. "They can send work in anytime, 24 hours a day. If a breeder is on a deadline

and he needs to conduct business, he no longer has to do it from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Now he can just get online."

Using electronic storage, transfer

Breeders who want to begin storing registrations electronically can do so by choosing the corresponding drop-down box when registering through AAA Login at www.angus.org. To set electronic storage as

the default for all subsequent registrations, click "Registration Certificate Storage Preference" on the main menu (see Fig. 1). Click the box in the Registration Certificate Storage Preference screen to make electronic storage the default (see Fig. 2).

Once breeders choose this preference, future registration application screens will indicate electronic storage by default; however, breeders can override the default on

any registration application when necessary (see Fig. 3, page 158). Also, producers can request electronically stored certificates be printed and mailed at any time at no additional cost.

After electronically storing registration certificates, breeders have the opportunity to transfer registrations online (See Fig. 4). When an animal is sold, the buyer's preference will determine how the certificate is transferred.

If the buyer has selected electronic storage as the default for his or her member code, the registration certificate will simply be transferred electronically. Instead of receiving the printed certificate, the seller will receive a letter from the Association verifying that the transfer has been completed.

The day after the paid transfer is made, the buyer would have access to the pedigree and performance information of his or her newly purchased animal via AAA Login. At any time the buyer wishes to receive a printed copy of the official registration certificate, he or

CONTINUED ON PAGE 158

Fig. 1: Main menu for AAA Login



Fig. 2: Registration Certificate Storage Preference screen



Fig. 3: Registrations screen for registering an animal online

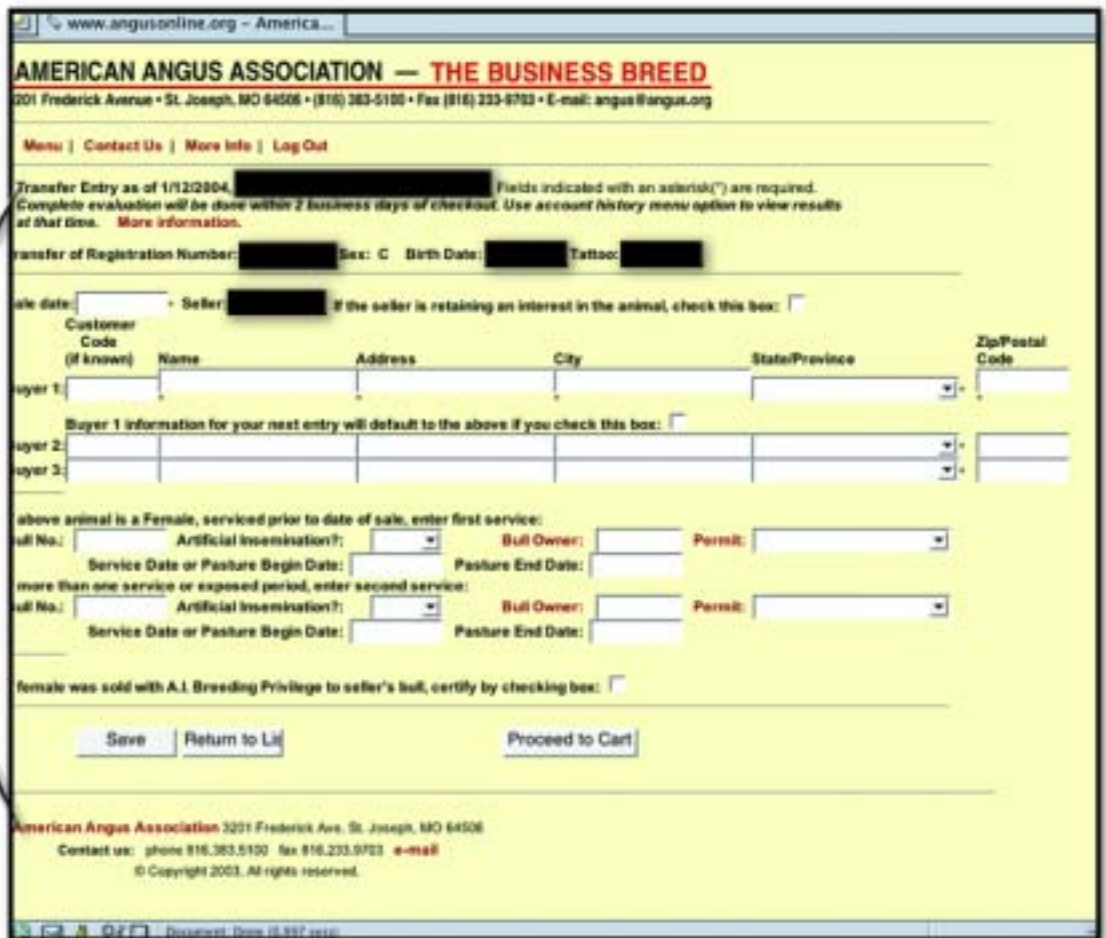


she can request the printed copy at no additional fee (see Fig. 5).

“Let’s say you have your sale and you’re transferring registrations to your buyers. After you complete your transfer requests—whether by filling out the forms on the printed certificates or using AAA Login for electronically stored certificates—the Association will process the transfers and send documents back to you,” Schumann explains. “The documents you get back depend on the buyer. If the buyer wants to receive a printed certificate, you’ll receive the printed certificate to send to him. If the buyer prefers electronic storage, you’ll get a letter back that says the transfer was stored electronically. That way, you know the work was done.”

If the buyer wishes to receive the traditional printed certificate after purchasing the animal, the official copy will be printed and mailed at no additional cost. Once official certificates are printed,

Fig. 4: Transfer screen to transfer animals with electronically stored pedigrees



Schumann says, the electronic file is flagged and cannot be used to transfer electronically.

“At that point, the one we print is the official certificate, so once it’s printed, they can’t transfer that animal electronically anymore,” Schumann says. “They can transfer the animal the traditional way — by filling out the bottom of the registration certificate. We only electronically transfer certificates that are stored electronically.

“We want to do business in the manner the member wants to do business,” Schumann says. “If they want to have that paper in their hand, we’re going to put that paper in their hand. If they would rather just have us store it, we’ll store it.”

And, he says, breeders will in the future be able to send current printed registration certificates to the Association to convert to electronic storage; however, the exact time period the Association will accept certificates has not yet been determined (watch the *Angus Journal* for future updates).

Evolving business

Schumann says the increasing number of members who register their cattle through AAA Login and Angus Information Management Software (AIMS) spurred the Board’s decision to approve electronic storage and transfer during its November meeting.

In fiscal year (FY) 2003, 43.24% of members registered their cattle electronically, a significant increase since the Association began accepting electronic registrations. In addition, 50.9% of weaning weights and 59.4% of yearling weights were submitted electronically, while 55.8% of artificial insemination (AI) certificate transactions occurred electronically.

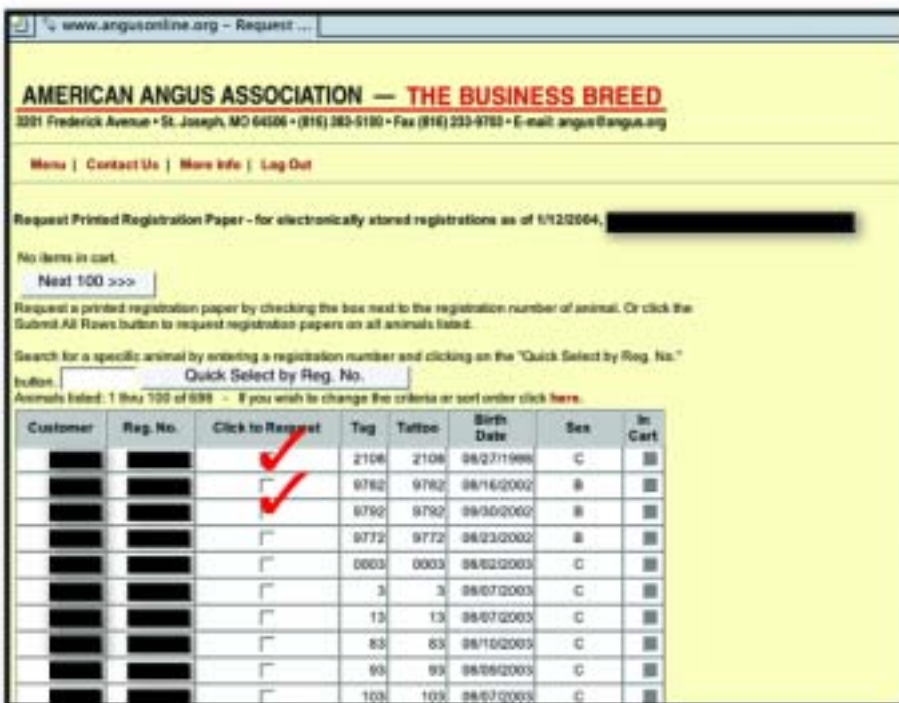
Board member Mark Gardiner, who served on the five-member committee that began developing the idea in February 2003, expects the technological trend to continue.

“I foresee that by the time I’m Dad’s age, those numbers will be at 95%, maybe even 98% or 99%,” he says. “It’s just the same evolution we have seen in the whole information age. When you look at the new, younger breeders coming along, these are the kinds of services they’re going to want. It’s a wonderful savings of time and efficiency.”

Gardiner says he marvels at how producers can access information in today’s world. “Seven to eight years ago, I couldn’t even turn a computer on. Now I have to use one every day. For some people it’s a better, more efficient way to get things done.”

Gardiner says that with the help of Information Systems Director Lou Ann Adams, he plans to eventually put his entire herd in electronic storage to utilize electronic transfer.

Fig. 5: Request Printed Registration Paper screen



“It’s a huge undertaking to transfer cattle by hand after a sale. Now we’ll have the ability to do that online,” he says. “By transferring online, we’ll be able to copy and paste addresses from our address list. Otherwise we’d have to drag out our address book to fill out the addresses of our new customers by hand. With computers, the process becomes much easier.”

Gardiner says he doesn’t expect any problems at sales regarding the new electronic option.

“All I have to do is go to AAA Login and transfer the paper. If we transfer it to another member who wants it electronically stored, it will go to his electronic file, and he won’t have to mess with the paper. But customers like our commercial bull producers will want the paper. In that case, we’ll just request that the certificate be printed.”

However, registration certificate requirements for Angus shows haven’t been determined. Currently, exhibitors must present an official registration paper to check in at an Association-sponsored show. The Activities Department will need to decide whether the printed copy of the registration will still be required or if some proof of electronic storage will be acceptable, Schumann says (watch the *Angus Journal* for updates).

Choices, choices

Schumann says storing registrations electronically will likely simplify everyday recordkeeping issues like correcting certificates.

“Rather than sending in the certificate to make corrections, now you can just drop us an e-mail or send us a fax requesting the changes be made. We can process that request for you without having to return the registration certificate,” he says. “And there’s less likelihood that certificates will be lost or destroyed, especially with the Association’s excellent backup system.”

Adams says the Association makes daily backups of its records, including electronically stored registrations. Once a week, the backup is taken to an off-site location to ensure the safety of the Association’s records.

Electronic storage and transfer of registrations may not be for everyone, and Schumann reminds breeders the new feature is just an option. Breeders will continue to receive printed certificates unless they choose otherwise. He says it all boils down to what the breeder wants.

“If members are most comfortable sending their registrations in on paper, then we’re going to do paper by mail. If they use a fax machine and want to send their applications in by fax, we’ll accept a fax. If they are comfortable submitting applications electronically, whether using AIMS or AAA Login, we’re going to use an electronic format.

“We’re going to do business in the whole gamut — from the most traditional way that we’ve done business since the Association was established in 1883 to the most technologically advanced way we can devise in 2004.”

