



# Tech Notes

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## Preview your performance update

*As a result of user feedback, we've added a feature to AIMS 2.1 that allows you to preview the contents of most import files before you actually import the data. Here's why that's important and useful and how to accomplish it.*

### How to preview updates

When we send back a file to update your AIMS data after a registration submission, the filename is always "D," followed by your member code (padded with 0's in front of it), with an extension of ".exp" at the end. When that file is downloaded from an e-mail message to your computer, it may overwrite the previous file, although it will ask you first. (There are other import files, but for this discussion, we'll use a registration file.)

If, on the other hand, you have a system (or e-mail program) where files are *not* overwritten, there is a possibility that you will be importing old data. For certain types of import files, this is okay, but for things like expected progeny difference (EPD) updates, it could revert your system to old data.

Here's what I would do if I were running my own recordkeeping system:

**1.** Use Windows Explorer to create a folder for "old" files.

I've described Windows Explorer (Explorer for short, and we're *not* talking about Internet Explorer) in previous "Tech Notes" columns, but let me quickly describe what to do.

Right-click on the Start button, then left-click on Explorer — that starts Windows Explorer. On the left side of that screen, click on the "+" next to the AIMS20 folder. Under that folder will be a Files folder. Highlight the Files folder, then go to the File command at the top of Explorer, then New, then Folder. Type in the new name — perhaps PreviousFiles — and press Enter.

**2.** Go back and highlight the Files folder, and then highlight all of the files in the folder, *except* the PreviousFiles folder. Click-and-drag them all to the PreviousFiles folder. You can also use Cut and Paste commands from the main menu — the point is to move everything from the Files folder into the PreviousFiles folder. Note: Assuming you used the AIMS default location when exporting files, the Files folder will include all

of the previous files you have exported. With this step, we're moving them into a new folder simply to archive them.

**3.** The next time you receive a file to be imported from us, save it to the "normal" location, which is the Files folder under the AIMS20 folder.

**4.** Before you import the file, make a backup (I'll cover that later in this column).

**5.** Start AIMS or simply return to it if it is already running. Remember, Windows can run more than one program at a time. The icons are there at the bottom of the screen along the same row as the Start button.

**6.** Here's where we get to the Preview part. To import the D file, go through the normal steps of File, Data, Import and change the Operation to EPD Updates/Registrations. Use the Browse button and navigate to the file you just downloaded. This is when you Preview the file by using the button labeled "Preview data before Import" in the lower left corner of the import screen.

As the button says, you will be able to see which animals will be updated and much of the new data; it won't include all of the new data columns, but enough for you to know what's going on. And if you scroll to the bottom of the Preview screen, it will tell you how many animals are in the pen. By reviewing the data — checking the identification (ID) of some of the animals and checking the head count — you can probably verify that this is the file you were expecting.

If it is, close the Preview window, click on the Import button and let AIMS do its work. If not, close the Preview window and cancel the Import process, or go looking for the correct file.

**7a.** Once the file has been imported, go

into the pen that includes the appropriate animals and verify that the data was changed. For a Performance Update file, the Lot Date and Lot ID files will now have data. By the way, it does *not* matter what pen is highlighted when you Import — AIMS finds the animals by their tattoo, not by their pen.

**7b.** If something goes terribly wrong, you can Restore the backup you made in Step 4.

**8.** Move the file that you just imported from the Files folder to the PreviousFiles folder that we created above. At this point, it may also be a good idea to rename existing files in the PreviousFiles folder so that new incoming files won't have a conflicting name. For example, you could change an old file from P0123456.exp to P0123456-1-21-03.exp (I added the date to the file) so that it won't conflict with new files. After you are confident that the data is updated, you can probably go back and delete old files from that PreviousFiles folder.

I realize it took me a lot of words to describe something that's really not all that complicated. I hope you have learned some things about Windows Explorer to help you manage files. By the way, you can get to a similar program by double-clicking on the My Computer icon on your desktop.

### Backups

If I had a nickel for every support call we get that centers on *not* having a backup, I could pay Wendy and Tammy a much higher salary — maybe even what they're worth. So I implore you to learn how to make backups and then to verify they're OK. Here's a short description.

A backup can be made in three clicks — File, Backup, Save. That's it — you have created a backup that is now stored in the Backup folder under the AIMS20 folder on your C: hard disk. Since it's so easy, please do this fairly frequently. By default, AIMS will name it "B" then your member code, then an

extension like ".bk3." You could keep a three-way rotation where the fourth backup you make overwrites the first one; the fifth one overwrites the second and so on.

