Tech Notes

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Fixing contemporary groups

Quite frequently, people send in a group of weaning weights on calves, then realize they missed getting one animal (or however many) in the pen to be a contemporary group. After that, they usually do one of two things: (a) add the animal to the pen and resubmit the whole pen or (b) submit the stray in its own pen, expecting it to get in the right contemporary group. Neither of these options works!

Two options

There are two "best" ways to fix the problem. They rely on how many animals are involved.

1. Let's say you submit data on 15 weaned calves today. Then tomorrow you realize there was another calf that belonged in the group. Go ahead and add it to your system, and put it in the right pen, but *call* us with the information so the Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR) Department can manually add the calf's information. In other words, don't try to send the single animal in a new pen, and don't send a new file with 16 head. The problem with sending the 16 is that 15 of them will be rejected and the whole process gets bogged down.

Note: All 16 head will be in the revised performance file we send back to you. But there's a small chance that the 16th animal won't be automatically found, due to its tattoo. However, Angus Information Management Software (AIMS) should show you the options of what calves it could be, and you just click on the right one. In any event, be sure to double-check that 16th animal after the performance update process.

2. Now let's say you submitted 20 head today, and tomorrow you realize there should have been 25 more in the pen. The easiest way to resolve this is to resubmit the pen with all 45 head but — this is the important part — *call* the AHIR Department before you send the file, and have them completely delete the first batch of 20 head. We'll start over with the 45.

Pedigree verification

Sometimes pedigrees get mixed up. Since the sire and dam tattoo fields are the only things linking to the next generation, it's possible for typos and other inaccuracies to cause problems in pedigrees. To help you find and fix these problems, we automatically run a pedigree check on any expected progeny difference (EPD) request files submitted to us. You can also specifically request one with the Pedigree Verification export operation.

The tricky part is what to do with the file once you get it back.

The file, which starts with "PC," is actually a tab-delimited text file. You can easily open it with Word, Excel, or just about any other word-processing or spreadsheet program. Once you save it out of your e-mail program to your hard disk (be sure you remember where it is), go into your specific program (not AIMS), and use file open to get into that file. Watch the extensions when you try to open it.

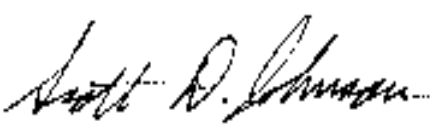
But frankly, here's what I consider to be two faster ways:

1a. Word (this will probably work with many other word-processing files). When you see the attachment in your e-mail program, try double-clicking on it. A standard Windows program called Notepad (or Wordpad) will open. In Notepad, go to Edit, Select All (or use Ctrl-A) then Edit, Copy (Ctrl-C). This copies all of the information into some "magic" location in the computer's memory. You won't see anything happen, yet.

1b. Now open Word. Once a new document is on the screen, click on Edit, Paste (Ctrl-V), and the text will be placed in that document. Now you need tabs to make sense of the data. I would recommend typing Ctrl-A again to select all of the text, changing the font size to 10 point (pt), and setting tabs at about every inch (in.). The columns will line up, and the data will start to make sense.

2. Excel (or any spreadsheet program). This one is even easier. Repeat step 1a to get the data in memory. Then open a blank spreadsheet and click on Edit, Paste (Ctrl-V). Spreadsheet programs know how to use those tabs to put the data in columns. You may need to widen some of them, but that's easily done.

Now what? Instructions are included at the top of the file. In a nutshell, you need to find the correct sire or dam for an animal, searching by its registration number. Note its correct tattoo, then fix the appropriate tattoo field on the General tab of the original animal. By the way, if you know that the pedigree is actually correct on your system, but not at the office, you need to go through the paperwork to get the pedigree fixed.



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