



Tech Notes

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Latest upgrade at work

The latest upgrade of Angus Information Management Software (AIMS), version 2.3, will have been out for about two months when you read this column. If you have any of the old versions of AIMS but did not receive the 2.3 upgrade, the most likely reasons are: (1) your membership was inactive at the time we printed shipping labels; (2) your address is incorrect or out-of-date; (3) the official address is different than the person who actually works with the program; or (4) it got lost in the mail. We shipped the upgrade CDs the first week of June. So, if you have not received the envelope but think that you should have, be sure to let us know.

Changes for the best

The 2.3 upgrade includes more than 50 changes. Some are bug fixes, some existing features have been enhanced, and a handful of brand new features have been added. Here is a partial list of the changes:



We added extensive validation to Weaning and Yearling tabs, so only complete and valid information can be sent to the Performance Programs Department for Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR). The information can be checked for a single animal simply by clicking the Validate button at the bottom of the tab. A list of problems, if any, will be shown for that animal.



When exporting the data, the same validation is performed automatically, and a list of tattoos is shown. This list can be printed for reference when working on the individual animals. All problems must be resolved before the export will be allowed (if all else fails, remove the animal from the pen).

During the weaning export, the sires' registration numbers are checked. If found missing, the actual registration number can be added, or a series of '900 million' numbers will be added to distinguish each sire.



We virtually re-wrote the additional animal import process. The new code is now able to distinguish between existing and new animals. There are some noteworthy side effects. For example, if an animal has a sire and/or dam tattoo that does not lead to any animal, the tattoo is blanked out. This was necessary to prevent the incoming animals from becoming the ancestors of current

animals simply because their tattoos matched.



A new field called `pen_category` was added to the pen name table. This allows the user to give each pen a user-determined category name, which is displayed when opening that new pen. The idea is to provide a means to sort groups of pens together. For example, a group of pens could be titled "Cows" and another group of pens could be titled "Bulls." The Open Pen window then allows the user to sort by that category by clicking on the header column. The Category field was also added to the `pen_creation` process in the Pen Save As window. This also provides current and future possibilities of filtering certain drop-down lists to certain categories.



A new field called `planned_sire` was added to both the Simulated Breeding window and the Breeding tab. On the Simulated Breeding window, the selected sire can be saved as the planned sire for the single selected cow, or applied to all cows in the pen (double-click on the cow record to open a new window). The planned sire will then be displayed on the Breeding tab. The sire tattoo or other form of identification (ID) can also simply be added manually. Future enhancements will be added to display the planned sire on the Add Breeding Record window; but, for now, it is also visible on the Breeding tab when the Add window is open.



Fields for Disposal Date and Disposal Code were added to the General tab. These two fields are also the same as the Disposal fields at the bottom of the Weaning tab — so

a change in one place also changes the data in the other. For AHIR, the Performance Programs Department is currently collecting disposal information as part of a fertility study, so it is possible to send in Disposal information without canceling the dam. As a result, the Cancel Dam field has been changed so that only AIMS can put in the check mark indicating appropriate information is present — a date and disposal code between 28 and 37. Disposal codes 50 and greater can be reported, but they do not cancel the dam. The disposal information will continue to be sent with the Weaning export. Also, a new export operation, Disposal Reason, has been added for sending this information to the Association independent of a calf's weaning. As a result, if the Cancel Dam field has a check mark, and when the data is submitted, the dam will be cancelled.



We added a code to trap duplicate tattoos within sex, within a birth year. By Association rule, two animals of the same sex in the same birth year cannot have the same tattoo. The validation was added to Weaning, Yearling 1 & 2, Registration and Registration/Transfer export operations.



Validation checks for the tattoo on a new animal was added to make sure it doesn't exist as the sire and/or dam of another animal. This helps prevent a new animal from accidentally becoming an ancestor of an existing animal. However, since this is a possible intended operation, it is only a warning. This was also added to the Change Tattoo feature. Additionally, the tattoos can now be changed even when in a pen, not just when in the All Animals pen.



New calves can now be registered and transferred through AIMS (existing animals must still be transferred by the current methods). To record transfer information, click on the Transfer button at the bottom of the Registry tab. Once the information is filled out and validated, a check mark will indicate the data is ready to be exported.



The ability to electronically import the pedigree correction file was added, which corrects pedigree problems. The pedigree correction file is automatically generated if problems are found after the Association receives an expected progeny difference (EPD) request. It can also be specifically requested with the Pedigree Verification export operation.

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We changed a few of the weaning and yearling default ranges on the Defaults window to match the AHIR validations that have also been added.



We fixed a problem that seems to have started in 2.2 that would not move the correct animal(s) when using the Add/Remove Members window.



A new feature was added so that breeding data can be exported for submission to AHIR. This data will eventually be used for researching fertility differences. New fields were added to the Breeding tab (lower right corner) as well as a Sire Group export process. Look under the Pen, Breeding Data menu for more options. In order to export the desired season, the new Breeding Season Year field will be used to pick the export season. And since this field will be the same for all cows in a season, the field was added to the Pen, Pen Operations, Breeding window, which allows mass addition of the new season's record. Simply provide the four-digit year, and AIMS will add it to the Breeding Season Year field when it adds the new season record.



A Seasons button was also added to the Breeding tab so that the records for each season (from the bred dam table — one record per cow per season) can be edited and/or removed. More features will be added to this window, as well as to the Pen Operations update window, as needs become defined and reported. A Remove button is also provided. However, only the current season can be removed so that the numbers are consecutive.



And since the breeding export needs the Breeding Season Year to function, a menu item was also added under Pen, Breeding Data called Update Season Year. This operation, which only works on the currently open pen, takes the year of the first breeding record and adds that as a four-digit year to the Breeding Season Year field. While it's possible you may want a different year, it's better than typing them manually. This is assumed to be only a "catch up" feature, since the year can be automatically added under Pen, Pen Operations, Breeding.



We added the ability to get animal information on a sire when using the Pen,

Pen Operations, Breeding window. A future enhancement will provide a means to select from a pen of bulls.



We fixed the Breeding and Calving tabs so that Projected EPDs and Projected Pedigree buttons get the Donor's tattoo instead of using the Recipient tattoo on embryo transfer (ET) calves and breeding records.



We added the ability to double-click on the CustomerID field in Pen, Pen Operations, Sales and get to the Customer Manager so that the Customer can be selected with a double-click (or the Select button).



The Simulated Breeding window was changed so that the selected cow (from the Breeding tab) is also the selected animal when starting the Simulated Breeding process. Previously, it would always default to the first cow.



A Total Recovered option was added to the embryo update process, but it is not part of Select All since it may not include all of the intended embryos.



We fixed the Projected EPD button on the ET tab so that it selects the correct dam when using All in Pen.



The default sort order was set to Last name, First name on the Customer screens. More sorting options will be added later.



We fixed the save operation when adding a new calf so that it gets the proper sort-order value (last in the pen) when a calf is added with the Calving tab directly into a pen. We also fixed the Sort window so that the preliminary side is the same as the current sort order.



Programming was added so that a commercial dam's registration number is updated with the 900-million number that was generated by the Association. This will help match the cows to their calves when data is sent in next year.



A note was added on the export confirmation screen explaining what to do next, as well as the full path (location) and filename. It also provides a new e-mail for

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submitting files — aimsfiles@angus.org. This new e-mail does not mean you need to change your address book to the new e-mail. If you have an address that works, don't worry. We're just providing this as a generic e-mail for new users.



A button was added to the Basic Info window (for pens) so that the current pen can be set as the default the next time AIMS opens. This is a lot easier than using Tools,

Options or Default Pen (however, these options are still there).



A Group Count was added to various Customer Manager screens so that it's easy to determine how many names are in the current group.



The Pen Creation screen was changed (step 2) so that the pen_name field gets the initial focus. This will save time if no other changes are necessary. We also added the same feature for the Customer Manager group creation screen.



A new option was added to the Registration (flag) field so that calves can be designated as Pending. This is purely to help pen new calves — i.e. they must be changed to Yes before they will be exported for Registrations.



We added the ability to right-mouse-click the Recipient Tattoo field on the Registry tab to have the animal pop-up screen appear.

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