## The Association's Computer System is
# READY FOR 2000

BY SHELIA STANNARD

Y2K. Fears of the complications the year 2000 (Y2K) will have on our computer-based society have plagued the world for more than a year. People are stockpiling food, water and gas for generators, concerned that the inability of nonupdated computer systems to distinguish 2000 from 1900 could cause financial gridlock. Some are even saving cash at home instead of putting it in the bank.

Still, Angus breeders need not worry about the American Angus Association's ability to register animals or to process weights.

Under the direction of the American Angus Association's Board of Directors, Association staff have been actively preparing for the new millennium for several years. In 1995 the Information Systems Department started the planning phase for a new computer system that would be Y2K-compliant. Since November 1996, the department, along with several computer consultants representing Analysts International Corp. (AIC), a Kansas City-based firm, have been writing and working with a new system, which will replace the mainframe previously used.

The Association has been using a Wang Mainframe System installed in 1990. Now, nearly a decade later, the mainframe is being replaced by a PC-based system running a program known as RODEO, Re-engineering Of Data Elements and Outputs.

Earlier this year Association employees started using the new program in addition to the old mainframe system to learn how it works and to work out the kinks before the mainframe would be totally shut down. Since early May RODEO has been the program used to complete registrations and to process weights.

According to Lou Ann Adams, director of information systems, there are many benefits to the new program. The primary one, she notes, is that data will be more easily accessible to Association staff, which will allow them to better serve the members.
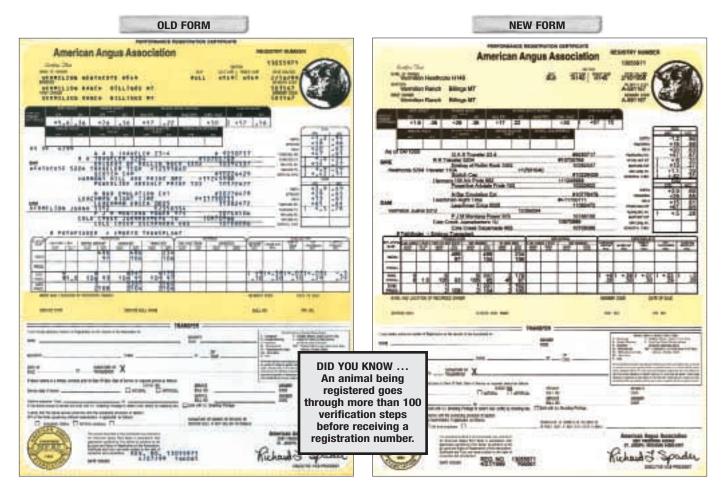
"It [RODEO] makes access to the data faster and easier," says Adams. "Writing new programs is also going to be quicker."

### ■ You'll see the difference

The most noticeable improvement, which also results in a substantial savings to the Association, is the new laser-printed easy-to-read forms. Since these forms are printed as the data is processed, the preprinted color forms have been eliminated.

Statements also will take on a new look. The statements, which used to be two parts, will change to a more updated, one-piece, perforated form with a detachable section.

Although some aspects of the forms' appearance will change,



OLD FORM



NEW FORM

**DID YOU KNOW ...**
An animal being registered goes through more than 100 verification steps before receiving a registration number.

the forms that producers complete will not. However, producers will want to take extra care to ensure that all work is accurate and complete before mailing forms to the Association. (See sidebar for tips on completing work.)

With the new RODEO system, work that is not completed will not be kept in the office. Donald Painter, director of member services, points out that a certain amount of decision making done by people with the mainframe system will be handled by a computer with the RODEO system.

For instance, incomplete work will be sent back to the Association member along with an easy-to-read letter explaining why the work could not be processed. The letter will include one page per registration with an explanation of what is wrong. A follow-up notice will be sent 60 days after the original work has left the office; and after 120 days, the work will be canceled, just as it has been in the past.

### ■ Electronic ease

RODEO will allow more members to file work electronically. In the past, some people have processed weights and sent in registrations electronically, either with or without the Angus Information Management Software (AIMS), says Adams.

"They don't have to have the software," she says. "Some people already send in the information on disk or e-mail."

From typing each registration individually in the early days of the Association to converting to computers in the 1960s to preparing for the next millennium, the Association has attempted to complete paperwork for its members in the most efficient manner possible. Problem-free registrations will continue to be processed within one day of reaching the Association office, and performance reports will be mailed twice a week.

"Efficient processing of daily work from the members is one of the most tangible services we provide," says Richard Spader, executive vice president. "The commitment by the Board of Directors to invest in, and the development and conversion to the new system after 2½ years of programming accentuates our commitment to provide the best turnaround time and service in the industry.
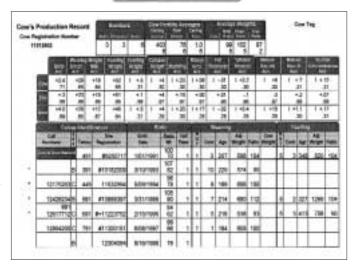
"When the conversion took place, the department converted more than 13 million pedigree records, 7 million performance records and 350,000 member and non-member records," Spader continues. "It was a huge job, and I commend the staff and employees for a job well done."

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OLD FORM



NEW FORM

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## Tips for FASTER WORK

With the American Angus Association's conversion to a PC-based computer system in mid-1999, the computer will be more heavily relied upon to determine whether work, as submitted, can be completed.

According to Donald Painter, director of member services and office management, the computer will compare dates, membership codes, owners of record and other various information. Computer-generated letters will be mailed to the breeder in cases of discrepancies.

"If the forms received in this office are filled out correctly, breeders will not encounter problems and, as a result, will not notice any change in the system or the service," Painter says.

### What causes problems?

One of the biggest problems encountered on a daily basis is the lack of Artificial Insemination (AI) Certificates in a breeder's inventory to complete the registration. Another problem with AI Certificates is that they are not always under the proper member code. Painter says that breeders with several family members

should make certain that AI Service Certificates are in the membership code for which the calves are to be registered.

Another common problem that will cause a delay of work is fee payment. Association rules state, "All fees of whatever nature due the Association shall be paid in advance, accompanying requests for services, except in the cases of state institutions and similar agencies." All work will be held until fees are paid.

To ensure speedy completion of work, Painter advises:
- List removal dates for embryo transfer (ET) calves.
- Sign breeder's certificates, if required.
- Sign bull permits, if required.
- Record owner of dam at time of calving as first owner, with the exception of ET calves.
- Record tattoos. Both ears must be tattooed alike and should not exceed four characters.
- List complete calving dates.
- List correct and complete sire and dam registration numbers.