

Breeders Aggressive Against AM

Angus breeders testing to eliminate AM from the gene pool.

by American Angus Association staff

Thank goodness for the technological advances available today.

With a test commercialized within four months of identifying the possibility of a genetic defect and five labs now available to provide testing, Angus breeders have in place the tools necessary to eliminate the propagation of the arthrogyriposis multiplex (AM) defect.

And that's just what they are doing.

"As of February 6, we've recorded the AM status on more than 21,000 animals in our database," says Don Laughlin, American Angus Association member services director. "Members are aggressively establishing the status of potentially affected animals within their own herds, and a current registration certificate displays those results for all to see."

Upon receipt of test results, the Association denotes on the pedigree whether an animal has been determined a carrier (AMC) or free (AMF) of the recessive

mutation. After July 1 (six months after the availability of the test), the Association will flag the registration and performance certificates of any animal not tested but having the potential of carrying the genetic defect.

What's that mean to commercial cattlemen?

"There is no need to abandon the proven performance of Angus genetics that still capture the same feeder-calf and harvest premiums today that they always have," says Bryce Schumann, American Angus Association chief executive officer (CEO). "It's really simple. If you don't know the genetic history of your herd, use bulls that have been determined to be AM-free or bulls that do not carry the affected bloodlines."

The Association web site (www.angus.org/ccs_info.html) carries a list of Angus cattle determined to be carriers and another list of Angus cattle determined to be free of the

mutation. This site also provides the list of labs available for testing, information about how AAA Login users can generate a report of owned animals and their potential to carry the defect, and multiple resources to provide background and transparency as to how the Association and its members have dealt with this genetic issue.

"We will come out of this as the most tested breed in the country," Schumann says. "And because of the policies the Board has established to protect the commercial cattle industry, we will eliminate it from the registered herd in short order."

Laughlin encourages producers to request a properly transferred registration certificate on any seedstock they purchase.

"That certificate carries a lot of information with it in addition to the AM status," Laughlin says. The pedigree can be helpful in making future selection decisions and can help retain the resale

value on a bull. Nonmembers who receive the properly transferred registration certificate will also receive regular updates on their bulls' expected progeny differences (EPDs) and will receive a free subscription to the *Angus Beef Bulletin*, the Association's publication devoted to commercial producers.

"We're the business breed, and our breeders are taking care of business to ensure we offer the most proven, reliable genetics in the industry," Laughlin says.

For more information regarding AM, refer to the Association web site provided above or contact Laughlin at 816-383-5100 or dlaughlin@angus.org.



Author's Note: An AM carrier is an animal that carries the recessive AM mutation in its DNA. To display the mutation, calves must inherit the genetic defect from both parents. In other words, both parents must be AM carriers. Such calves are born dead or die shortly after birth. Affected calves have a spine that is bent or twisted and their legs are often rigid and may appear hyperextended.

The latest

Being able to request printing of a registration paper with the most recent performance and pedigree information is good reason to convert your registration certificates to electronic storage, adding to a host of other advantages for you and for the Association.

With more than 21,000 individuals tested to determine their AM status in recent weeks, the AM history of animals in the American Angus Association database is changing daily. By storing your registration certificates electronically until needed, you can provide the most recent information without the cost of printing an updated certificate.

That logic holds for expected progeny differences (EPDs) and dollar values (\$Values), which change with each piece of information logged into the database, as well.

"In a time of increasing costs, everyone looks for ways to become more efficient," Bryce Schumann, American Angus Association chief executive officer (CEO), noted in his October "Movin' Forward" column. One of the ways to do that is to eliminate paper and postage costs of printing registration certificates until a paper copy is necessary.

And, he pointed out, certificates stored electronically can be transferred electronically, saving mail costs and streamlining your paperwork. Time savings are garnered by eliminating days the paperwork would traditionally spend in the mail.

If your certificate is stored electronically, it can be corrected without the bother of returning the printed original. If it is stored electronically, it cannot be lost, so you never have to incur the cost of requesting a duplicate certificate.

If you would like to convert your printed certificates to electronic storage, they are converted free of charge. For more information contact the Member Services Department at 816-383-5100.