



By the Numbers

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Submitting heifer breeding records

As weaning approaches, it's time to start thinking about pregnancy checking and submitting heifer breeding records to the American Angus Association. Heifer pregnancy is economically relevant to beef producers because of the capital required to develop heifers and the amount of time before heifers begin generating revenue. There are more than 37,000 heifer breeding records used in the genetic evaluation for heifer pregnancy. Producers who are submitting breeding records and pregnancy status receive a more accurate evaluation of the genetic merit of their animals for this important reproductive measure.

Use of heifer pregnancy EPDs

Heifer pregnancy (HP) expected progeny differences (EPDs) are to be used as a tool to increase the chance of a sire's daughters becoming pregnant during a normal breeding season. The unit of measure for the EPD is a percentage. A higher EPD is the more favorable direction for selection pressure. As with other EPDs, the relative difference among sires is of importance rather than the absolute value.

Table 1 provides an example of the use of HP EPDs. Assume there are 100 daughters for each of the two bulls, managed and treated alike in the same breeding environment. When comparing the two bulls, one would expect an average of five more pregnant daughters out of 100 from Bull A compared with Bull B. Essentially, Bull A's daughters

have a 5% greater chance of becoming pregnant than Bull B's daughters.

Table 1: Heifer pregnancy EPD example

Bull A	+13%
Bull B	+8%
Difference	5%

Angus Herd Improvement Records

To contribute data for HP EPDs, Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR®) participants can submit breeding and pregnancy records electronically through either AAA Login or the Angus Information Management Software (AIMS) options.

Breeding record data entry is designed to describe the event in each female's

reproductive life. From the start, her breeding records, contemporaries, breeding dates, service sires, artificial insemination (AI) and pasture details, along with outcomes and calf performance through her last production day in the herd are tracked.

Fig. 1 illustrates the breeding-data entry screen currently available in AAA Login. Data entry fields include these items, with specifics such as synchronization and disposal/reason codes. It is important to include disposal and reason codes to better identify status changes in the cow's production life.

MaternalPlus

MaternalPlus® is a voluntary whole-herd reporting program that was established to collect data relating to cow longevity. Along with the benefits of the program, one requirement for the participant is submitting breeding records on all heifers in the herd.

Every cow must either have a calf or a disposal code reported on an annual basis to better evaluate cow performance. Through data collection and feedback, MaternalPlus provides a new window to the cow herd and provides the opportunity for genetic improvement in female traits like the Angus breed has witnessed in other economically relevant traits.

Active breeders completing the enrollment can use the MaternalPlus logo as part of

their marketing program. It shares with potential buyers that heifer breedings are reported on the herd for use in genetic selection tools resulting in a more accurate assessment of genetic merit for heifer pregnancy.

Angus breeders can enroll at any time, but for fall-calving herds, now is a simple way to track the initial inventory and to begin the program. To learn more about MaternalPlus basics and to enroll, go to your AAA Login account or contact the Association at 816-383-5100.



Editor's Note: Heather Bradford is an intern and Sally Northcutt is director of genetic research for Angus Genetics Inc.

Fig 1: AAA Login for breeding-data entry

