



# By the Numbers

► by *Sally Northcutt*, Angus Genetics Inc.

## Expansion of MaternalPlus® benefits

*MaternalPlus is an American Angus Association program to capture cow herd and reproductive performance data. This voluntary system provides an individual herd summary and tracking of cow reproductive success. More than 115 herds are actively participating in MaternalPlus and capitalizing on summary statistics to use in their breeding programs.*

### MaternalPlus benefits

Benefits of the MaternalPlus program include comprehensive tracking of females in the herd for breeding, production and disposal. These records are used for heifer pregnancy expected progeny differences (HP EPDs) and future longevity selection tools.

Granted, the HP EPDs are readily available in the Angus breed, but imagine the potential of having your genetics more thoroughly characterized for this trait. These EPDs are more meaningful as a selection tool when your cattle are represented.

### Latest MaternalPlus report additions

**Weaning Sire Summary Report:** The sire summary report illustrated in Fig. 1 provides an overview of the sire battery's impact on

#### MaternalPlus Reports available on AAA Login

- Weaning Sire Summary
- Calf Death Loss Summary
- Dam Disposal Report
- Cow Body Condition Score Report
- Female Age Distribution Report
- Genetic Trend for Enrolled Females
- Production Performance Report

a calf crop based on actual calf weaning weights. Each sire is given a section describing the phenotypic impact on the set of calves in an enrollment year or in a customized calving window provided by the participant.

**Calf Death Loss Summary:** MaternalPlus participants can review calf death loss trends for their herd based on the enrollment year or specified calving timeframe. Profit to the

cow-calf operation is impacted by live calves during the preweaning phase. The summary stratifies calf death loss categories overall and by dam age (Fig. 2).

**Dam Disposal Report:** Tracking of dam disposal codes for an enrolled herd is a key element to the MaternalPlus program. More importantly, these documented reasons for why a cow exits herd productivity can provide insight into management strategies and potential genetic indicators in the future.

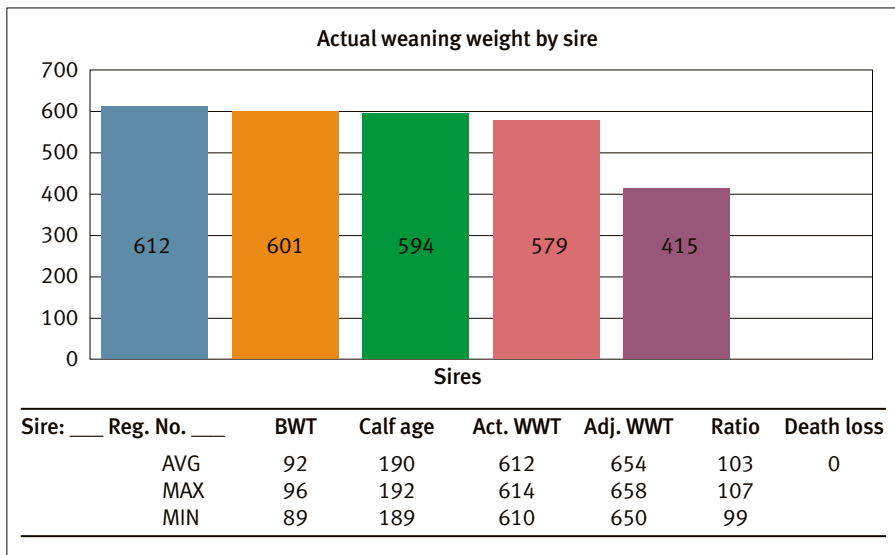
The disposal report example in Fig. 3 presents the distribution of disposal reasons across the enrolled females. The online report also includes the disposal reasons broken out by cow age. In particular, the breakdown by 2-year-old females may serve as an indicator of success areas or production problems to address.

### Cow Body Condition Score Report:

MaternalPlus reports include a body condition score (BCS) distribution for enrolled females (see Fig. 4). Reported on a 1-to-9 scale, these BCS averages and frequency counts are associated with cow herd productivity.

Cows with desirable BCS at calving and breeding, on the average, tend to outperform their thinner contemporaries. Condition scores around 6 are typically targeted to assist in better managing reproductive efficiency in the herd. Scores closer to 1 tend to be extremely thin with potential for rebreeding challenges from lack of body condition reserves. In contrast, condition scores above 7 may not be economical to feed and maintain. To learn more about body condition scores, go to [www.cowbcs.info/aboutbcs.html](http://www.cowbcs.info/aboutbcs.html).

**Fig. 1: Weaning sire summary report**



Source: Example MaternalPlus® weaning sire summary report, American Angus Association, 2014.

### Customize the reports

MaternalPlus reports found in AAA Login under the MaternalPlus menu tab can be customized to your particular herd. Many of these reports have drop-down selections to tailor summaries for heifers only, cows or all inventoried females in the program. You will see other options for enrollment year choice or calving date windows, as well, depending on the report and re-enrollment status.

### Getting started

If you are already familiar with AAA Login, you are well on your way to a streamlined enrollment. The AAA Login MaternalPlus menu tab provides program details to begin declaring the heifers and cows in your herd for the performance tracking. Once females are enrolled, breeders can continue to record their performance data through their typical methods, such as Login screens to submit data, spreadsheets, Angus Information Management Software (AIMS) or other utilities.

For additional information on

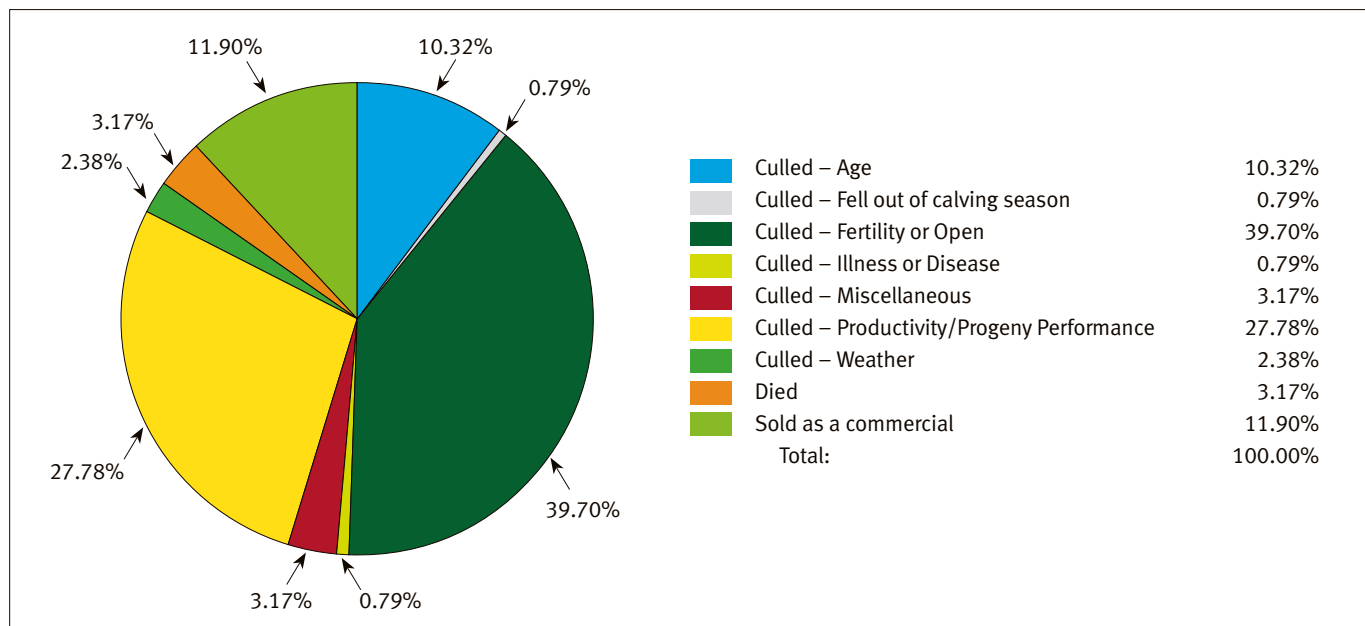


**Fig. 2: Calf death loss summary**

Herd Summary Calf Death Loss Calving Date Range 7/09/12 to 7/08/13												
Calf Death Loss	Age of dam											
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11+	Total	
Born alive, died before wn – Disease	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Born alive, died before wn – Other	4	3	2	0	3	2	2	0	0	0	0	16
Born alive, died before wn – Weather	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Died at birth – Defect	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Died at birth – Other	4	2	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	2	11	
Stillborn, carried full term	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>27</b>	

Source: Example MaternalPlus® calf death loss summary, American Angus Association, 2014.

**Fig. 3: Dam disposal report**



Source: Example MaternalPlus® dam disposal report, American Angus Association, 2014.

MaternalPlus, refer to these past “By The Numbers” columns:

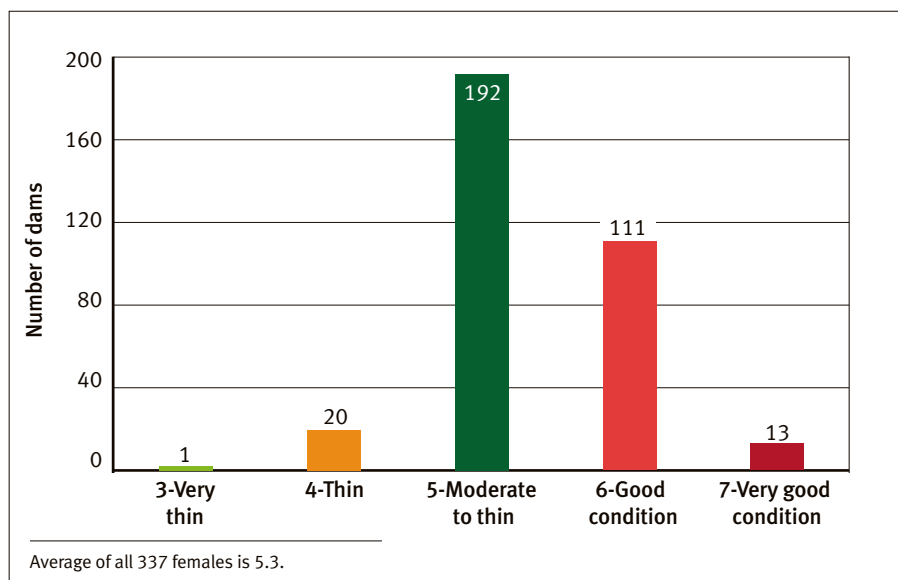
- ▶ MaternalPlus added benefits, December 2013, pages 86-87
- ▶ Submitting heifer breeding records, September 2013, page 235
- ▶ MaternalPlus: Don’t be left behind, May 2013, pages 80-81
- ▶ When you need to know more, November 2012, pages 104-105.

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**Editor’s Note:** “By The Numbers” is a column by Association performance programs staff to share insights about data collection and interpretation, National Cattle Evaluation (NCE), genetic selection and relevant technology and industry issues. Sally Northcutt is director of genetic research for the American Angus Association. If you have questions or would like to suggest a topic for a future column, contact the Association at 816-383-5100.

**Fig. 4: Example 2013 cow body condition score summary**



Source: Example MaternalPlus® cow body condition score summary, American Angus Association, 2014.