



# By the Numbers

by Sally Northcutt, American Angus Association

## MaternalPlus® features

MaternalPlus® benefits continue to grow. Through AAA Login, MaternalPlus has enhanced features in enrollment, data entry and summary statistics.

### Cow herd success

While much effort in genetic improvement is focused on sire selection, the fine-tuning of a breeding program relies on monitoring cow herd productivity and reproductive success. MaternalPlus is a voluntary program available through the American Angus Association to better characterize your Angus females. Through enrollment and multiple-year participation, this cow herd lifetime tracking generates summary reports, characterizes longevity trends, and enhances your herd's heifer pregnancy (HP) expected progeny differences (EPDs).

AAA Login has a full menu tab dedicated to MaternalPlus, as illustrated in Fig. 1. New and advanced participants should gravitate to this menu for enrollment and program services.

### New features

Whether you are currently utilizing MaternalPlus or are considering enrollment, a variety of new features are available to streamline participation and program benefits. A new MaternalPlus "Calving Season" utility (Fig. 1) has been added, which is helpful to herds with spring and fall

management units. Fig. 2 illustrates options for designating seasons and animal sets, which allow filtering by calving season.

Animal sets are a handy feature throughout AAA Login and are now accessible in MaternalPlus. If you have not used animal sets before, contact the Association for more details.

Additional sorting options are now integrated into MaternalPlus features. These can be used in the inventory list for fields such as dam birth date (Fig. 3). Cow and heifer inventory tabs are used mostly during re-enrollment, as well as new-participant activity. In addition, these tabs are helpful as an overview of data submission and cow disposal reporting. New sorting options enhance the application of this MaternalPlus menu section.

As a reminder, once females are enrolled, breeders can continue to record performance data through typical methods such as Login screens, spreadsheets, Angus Information Management Software (AIMS) and other utilities.

### MaternalPlus summaries

Program participants are finding the new diagnostic reports every day under the MaternalPlus Reports link (Fig. 1). Available reports include:

- ▶ Production performance report
- ▶ Genetic trend for enrolled females
- ▶ Weaning sire summary

Fig. 1: MaternalPlus menu accessible through AAA Login

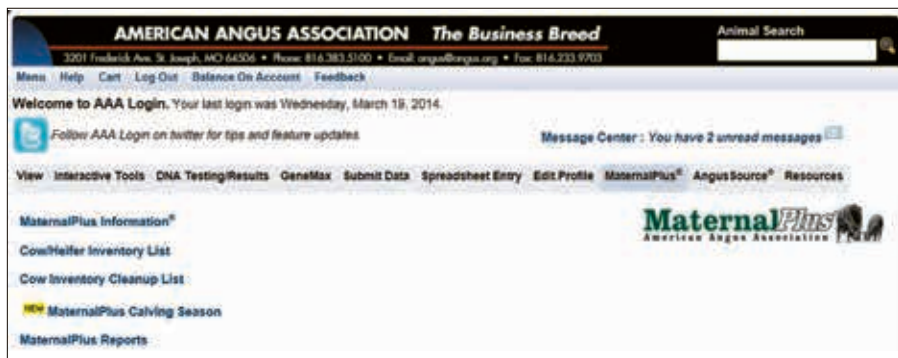


Fig. 2: Calving season designations and animal sets



Fig. 3: MaternalPlus inventory details and sorting options

Lookup Links	Dam	Dam Tag	Dam Tall	Dam Birth Date	Calving Season	Last Breeding	Calf	Calf Tag	Calf Tall	Calf Birth Date
AAA				09/09/2000	Fall	Fall Herd 2012	BR			09/11/2013
AAA				10/01/2000	Fall	Fall Herd 2012	BR			09/09/2013
AAA				02/06/2001	Fall	Fall Herd 2012	BR			09/16/2013

### MaternalPlus highlights

- ▶ To enroll, use your AAA Login account to access the MaternalPlus menu tab.
- ▶ Breeders can enroll at any time.
- ▶ The voluntary system is inventory-based.
- ▶ AAA Login is the site for enrollment and inventory counts.
- ▶ Females 20 months and older have an annual \$3-per-cow fee, which includes performance reporting for the cow's calf.
- ▶ Participants can access calf EPDs for calving ease direct, birth weight and weaning weight for qualifying calves prior to registration.

- ▶ Female age distribution report
- ▶ Calf death loss summary
- ▶ Dam disposal report
- ▶ Cow body condition score report

Active breeders can use the MaternalPlus summary reports and the program logo as part of their marketing programs. It's an avenue to convey to customers this Angus herd tracks cow herd reproductive measures for comprehensive performance reporting. For additional information on MaternalPlus reports, refer to the February 2014 "By The Numbers" column.

### **Heifer pregnancy EPDs available weekly**

MaternalPlus now has a feature to link to the heifer-breeding entry screen for ease of data entry. Heifer breeding and pregnancy check information are paramount to

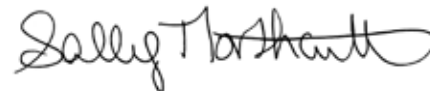
enhancing current and future reproductive selection tools.

As a reminder, the HP EPDs generated through the American Angus Association National Cattle Evaluation (NCE) are updated on a weekly basis. MaternalPlus participation provides feedback to better characterize HP EPDs in your operation. These selection tools are powered by heifer breeding records along with Association pedigree information and high-density genomic results.

The HP EPDs are designed to characterize differences among sires in the Angus breed for daughters' heifer pregnancy. When comparing two sires based on their HP EPDs (reported in units of percentage), a higher-EPD sire would be expected to have daughters with a greater probability, or chance, of becoming pregnant than a sire with the lower EPD. The HP EPDs and

accuracies are available on the Association's website and through breeder AAA Login accounts.

To learn more about MaternalPlus or to simply submit heifer breeding records electronically to receive the HP EPDs, please contact the Association at 816-383-5100.



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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.