By the Numbers

▶by **Sally Northcutt,** *American Angus Association*

Submit breeding data now

One of the American Angus Association's research initiatives is to characterize reproduction in the Angus breed. It's perhaps the most difficult class of traits to face in terms of creating genetic values. That is not to downplay the importance of these traits. Seedstock and commercial producers continually ask about the availability of reproductive selection tools to use in their herds.

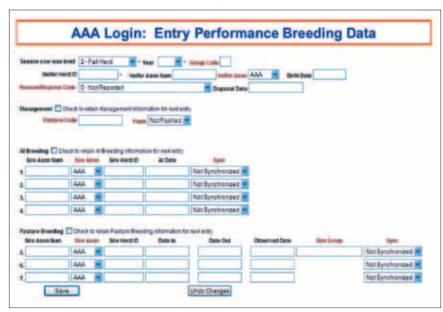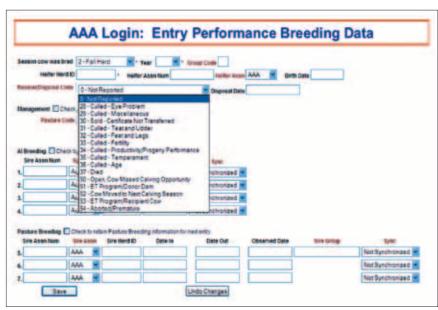**Fig. 1: AAA Login: breeding data entry page**

Fig. 2: AAA Login: disposal and reason codes

A large database for research would enhance the ability to develop genetic predictions, such as expected progeny differences (EPDs) and indexes, for the reproductive complex. With an updated release of heifer pregnancy (HP) EPDs just around the corner, breeders are encouraged to submit breeding records, particularly on heifers, to the Association.

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

Breeding record data entry is designed to describe the events in each female's reproductive herd life. From the start, her breeding records, contemporaries, breeding dates, service sires, 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 (see Fig. 2). It is important to include disposal and reason codes to better identify status changes in the cow's production life.

Table 1: HP EPD example

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

Although heifer breeding records are in greatest demand for the project, breeding data may be submitted for the entire herd.

Use of HP EPDs

HP 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 this 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.

To learn more about the Association's HP genetic evaluation, visit *www.angussiresearch.com.*

E-MAIL: snorthcutt@angus.org
www.angus.org