By the Numbers

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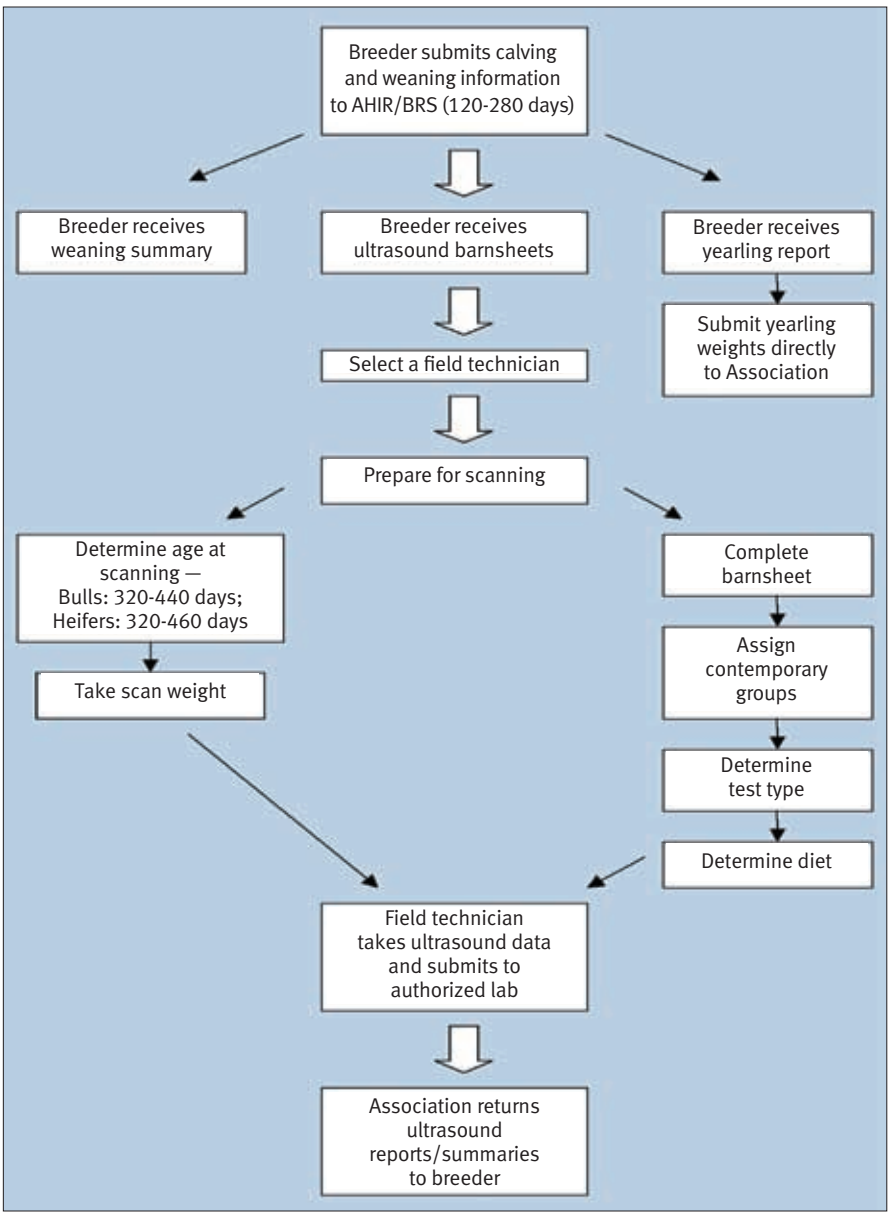
Ultrasound refresher

Ultrasound scans are an important component of the yearling measures collected. These records on your registered animals can be used to generate carcass expected progeny differences (EPDs). It is important to know the requirements for ultrasound scans to be eligible for use in EPD calculations. Otherwise, missed age windows and improper contemporary grouping can negate the use of the scan in genetic predictions. Fig. 1 illustrates the chain of events from the time you wean your calves, submit weaning information, and ultimately receive ultrasound reports from the Association.

Fig. 1: Chain of events from the time you wean your calves, submit weaning information and ultimately receive ultrasound reports from the Association



Requirements

Age window. Acceptable Angus scan age ranges are 320-440 days of age for yearling bulls and 320-460 days of age for developing heifers.

Contemporary group. The ultrasound contemporary group definition stems from the weaning contemporary group. This makes the submission of your weaning weights and the barnsheets a necessary part of the Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR®) ultrasound process. Contemporaries are from the same weaning group, and there must be at least two calves of the same sex to form a usable contemporary group for EPD calculations.

Scan weight and date. Scan weights are required and should be taken within seven days of the technician capturing the ultrasound data. For the animals within the contemporary group, they should be scanned on the same day or over no more than two consecutive days. Many breeders will schedule the scanning date to coincide with data collection for other yearling traits.

Important point to remember. Scan weights that are submitted on barnsheets with your ultrasound data are not automatically provided to the Association as yearling weights. You must submit yearling weight data directly to the Association through the appropriate channels used for this trait.

Interpretation lab options. The Association accepts ultrasound data from multiple approved labs. Consult with your ultrasound field technician as part of the decision process on where to send your scan data for interpretation. Details on ultrasound breeder protocol, field technicians, authorized labs and policy can be found at *www.angus.org/performance/index.html.*

Importance of ultrasound measures. The Association's National Cattle Evaluation (NCE) provides carcass EPDs for carcass weight, marbling score, ribeye area and fat thickness. These predictions are calculated using ultrasound and carcass phenotypic records simultaneously. Scans taken on yearling Angus bulls and heifers are important to generating informative interim and NCE carcass EPDs.

Carcass Interim EPDs. Carcass interims can reflect genetic contributions on the sire and dam, as well as the contemporary group deviation information on an individual bull or heifer. Thus, ultrasound scans from a proper contemporary group on bulls and heifers are meaningful in deriving carcass EPDs on these animals.

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Editor's Note: *"By the Numbers" is a column by Association performance programs staff to share insights with Angus members about data collection and interpretation, the NCE, genetic selection, and relevant technology and industry issues.*