



By the Numbers

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MaternalPlus™ — When you need to know more

Many of us like to start a new year with resolutions and perhaps a more streamlined, organized way of life. In planning for the new year, breeders should definitely consider starting right away with enrollment into the MaternalPlus program. Enrollment can occur at any time throughout the year, so why not make your goal to join this valuable Angus performance program right away?

Why MaternalPlus?

In a nutshell, MaternalPlus can become a long-term program for your herd by providing some of the following key advantages:

- ▶ Capture cow herd and reproductive performance data on your herd.
- ▶ Gain faster access to preweaning expected progeny differences (EPDs) as a selection tool.

- ▶ Characterize your females through heifer pregnancy EPDs tied directly to herd genetics.
- ▶ Expand new trait development for Angus reproductive and longevity measures.
- ▶ Streamline your ability to track heifer and cow reproductive records through AAA Login.

Overall benefits

The overarching goal of MaternalPlus is to capture reproductive data to enhance current EPDs and develop new selection tools. The voluntary program includes comprehensive tracking of females in the herd for breeding success, while monitoring lifetime production and allowing for details regarding why a cow leaves the herd. The MaternalPlus program is the ideal way to report heifer breeding records. In fact, this is the primary requirement to remain in the MaternalPlus system.

Another convenient benefit of MaternalPlus is the availability of calf EPDs for calving ease direct, birth weight and weaning weight, once the weaning data are processed through the Association. These selection tools are easily viewed through a participant's AAA Login account for use in preweaning selection and culling decisions even before calves are registered.

Fig. 1: AAA Login Menu to begin MaternalPlus enrollment

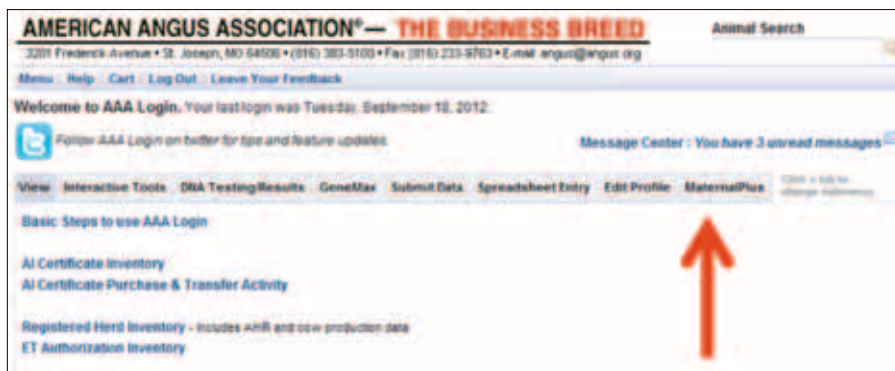


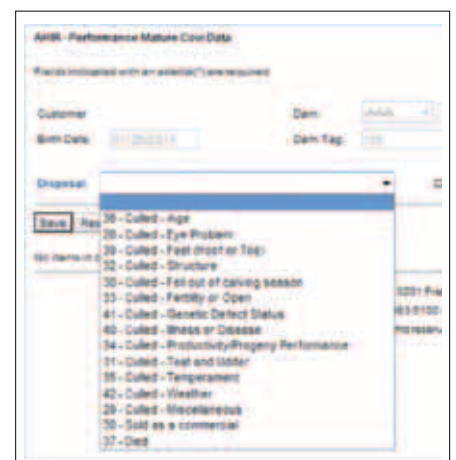
Fig. 2: Heifer inventory summary after completed enrollment

Fig. 3: Cow inventory summary after completed enrollment

Getting Started

If you are already familiar with AAA Login, you are well on your way to a streamlined enrollment. Fig. 1 illustrates the

Fig. 4: Example of cow disposal details



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MaternalPlus menu tab that you may not have utilized before. The 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, AIMS or other utilities.

Fig. 2 presents a view of the heifer inventory once enrollment is completed. In the example you will note that the first three heifers have had breeding records submitted, so their MaternalPlus requirements have been met, as checked in the last column, 'MPlus Requirements Met.' This summary tab lets you know where you stand relative to reporting information on your herd. The MaternalPlus logo appears on Login screens for active users in the program. You can use this logo in your marketing materials also.

The cow inventory summary is displayed in a similar format, as shown in Fig. 3. These example cows also have a listing of their last calf reported to the Association. It doesn't mean they have met the MaternalPlus requirement, but it provides you a reference point for that female. Again, the last column

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.

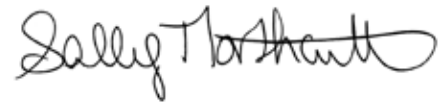
illustrates that these cows have met the program requirements.

MaternalPlus paves the way for selection tools related to cow longevity in the herd. For each cow, if a calf is not reported, a disposal code needs to be designated. Fig. 4 illustrates the menu for reporting that information.

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.

To learn more about MaternalPlus basics

and to enroll, go to your AAA Login account or 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, genetic selection and relevant technology and industry issues. If you have questions or would like to suggest a topic for a future column, contact Sally Northcutt, Bill Bowman or Tonya Amen at 816-383-5100.