

Defect Update

The American Angus Association posted the following update on contractural arachnodactyly, formerly referred to as fawn calf syndrome, to its website July 20.

At a special meeting of the Board of Directors July 14, 2010, in Denver, Colo., the Association's Board of Directors formally recognized contractural arachnodactyly (formerly referred to by the name of "fawn calf syndrome") as a genetic

defect. In the future, the defect will be referred to by the two-letter designation "CA" in keeping with standards urged on the breeds by the scientific community.

Acting pursuant to Rule 307, the Board also confirmed that it will implement a specific policy relating to the potential and known carriers of this newly recognized defect that will, *in all substantive respects except dates*, parallel the specific testing and registration policies currently in effect for AM and NH. This new policy will be published for members as soon as a commercially available and acceptably priced DNA test for the mutation is available at laboratories approved by the Association.

The Board's actions come nearly eight months after its preliminary announcement that it intended to process known and potential carriers of CA in a manner similar to the Association's handling of AM and NH animals. (See the Dec. 21, 2009, posting online). They are based on a finding by Dr. Jon Beever of the University of Illinois that the mutation is caused by a simple recessive gene and on Dr. David Steffen's opinion that this defect "has a negative impact on performance and productivity."

As a result of its recognition of CA as a defect, the Board has amended Rule 103 to add CA to those abnormalities and defects listed there. It has also amended Rule 300 to add a new definitional paragraph "h" which reads:

*Contractural Arachnodactyly (CA)
Affected calves are born with (1)
proximal limb contracture, (2) distal limb
hyperextension and joint laxity and (3)
kyphosis. The condition is associated with
postnatal improvement in the above-
referenced clinical symptoms as the calf grows
and matures.*

Dr. Beever reports that he is very close to announcing a test that can segregate carriers from noncarriers of CA and that he anticipates that the test will be priced similarly to those available for AM and NH. He continues to believe that the rate of incidence for this defect will be low — in the rate of 3% or less.

— Update posted by American Angus Association July 20, 2010

Preliminary results on AI sires available

Artificial insemination (AI) organizations requested that the American Angus Association provide to the membership the identity of and preliminary test results for Angus bulls tested by Dr. Jon Beever of the University of Illinois to determine whether they were carriers or free of the mutation identified for contractural arachnodactyly, or CA.

Dr. Beever provided the registration numbers of and test results for the animals that he tested. The AI organizations that provided Dr. Beever the semen samples for those animals have asked the Association to provide that information to the membership.

The Board has carefully considered this request and it has factored into its deliberations its understanding that the AI organizations have begun to inform their customers of how specific animals have tested. The Board's decision to provide that information to the membership is subject to the following important qualifications:

1. We understand the test used here was run on a set of animals requested by Dr. Beever from the AI companies for research purposes and therefore remains preliminary in nature. The preliminary test has not been commercialized. Accordingly, until the Association can establish a protocol for the direct receipt of results of a commercialized test from a lab approved by the Association, it will not alter or amend any other animal's Registration or Performance Pedigree Certificates.

2. THE AMERICAN ANGUS ASSOCIATION MAKES NO REPRESENTATION OR WARRANTY OF ANY KIND WITH RESPECT TO THE ACCURACY OR RELIABILITY OF EITHER THE ANIMALS IDENTIFIED OR THE TEST RESULTS SHOWN FOR EACH AND HEREBY DISCLAIMS ALL WARRANTIES, BOTH EXPRESS AND IMPLIED, OF MERCHANTABILITY AND FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE.

We will continue to keep the membership posted, including when a test becomes commercially available at laboratories approved by the Association.

For an update on the research by Dr. Beever, the list of the animals and their preliminary test results, visit www.angus.org/pub/CA/CA_Summary.pdf online.

— CA update posted by Association July 26, 2010