Login Lowdown

▶ *by Kasey Miller, associate editor*

MaternalPlus® problem solving

The purpose of this column is to help producers be more comfortable using AAA Login. AAA Login can be incredibly convenient, but unless producers know how to use it, the convenience is lost. The column can also serve as a sounding board for issues and solutions that producers have had. At the Annual Meeting in November in Louisville, Ky., an Angus member was nice enough to share an issue so others could learn the solution and save some headaches (and some money).

Problem solving and service

MaternalPlus offers producers a way to make selection decisions based on reproductive trait data. It's a voluntary, inventory-based reporting system that gives producers additional information at weaning processing time — including calving ease, birth weight and weaning weight expected progeny differences (EPDs) for calves out of inventoried cows. Additionally, it allows producers to submit cow disposal codes and reason designations, which keeps an accurate record of why a cow was culled.

This column isn't going to be about why you should use MaternalPlus, though. There are plenty of articles explaining the basics of the program (which can be found by doing a back issue search on *www.angusjournal.com*), or check out the reference materials on the MaternalPlus tab on AAA Login (see Fig. 1). It will, however, address some things you may not have known about the program.

MaternalPlus enrolls both cows and heifers, both of which are displayed separately, as shown in Fig. 2. The difference is important: The enrollment fee for cows is $3, and the fee for heifers is $0 until the 20-month age cutoff. The enrollment fee is good for one year, and you are charged when you re-enroll on the anniversary of the animals' enrollment date.

With the drought this year and last, this producer said she wanted to wait a bit to enroll to see which females they would definitely keep. With that said, when she enrolled in September, some of her older heifers went into the cow category because of the 20-month cutoff. This caused two problems. Those heifers were then charged the $3 cow fee, and they were separated from the rest of her heifers, which could make it difficult to keep records straight.

Fear not, there was a solution. The Angus member called the American Angus Association customer service team, which was able to get the enrollment date rolled back to Aug. 1. This new date allowed for early weaning and, most importantly, kept her heifers together, which helped with calving records.

She said of the customer service team, "The service was wonderful. They were able to fix a problem that was my fault, and they were so helpful."

MaternalPlus extras

Lou Ann Adams, director of Association Information Systems, explains some little-known features of MaternalPlus, especially on cleaning up your cow inventory. When you click on Cow Inventory Cleanup List from the MaternalPlus tab, you can sort your cows by owner, birth year and animal set. You can select one disposal code and select multiple cows for that specific code, which speeds up the cleanup.

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Fig. 1: Links for MaternalPlus program reference

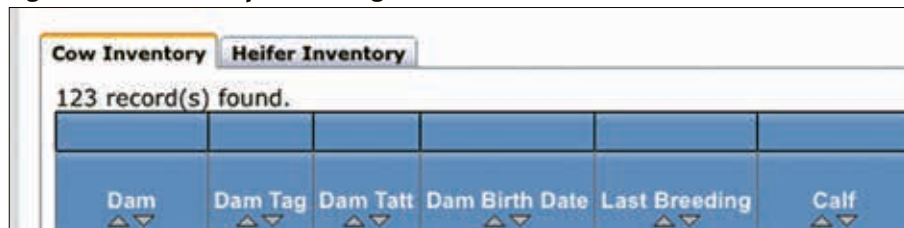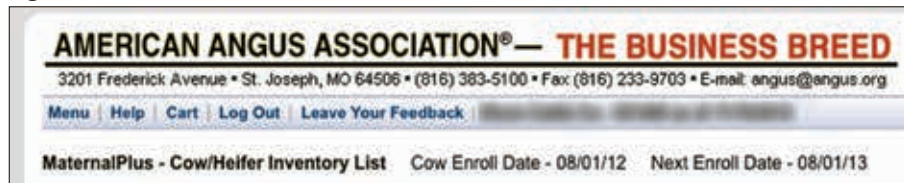**Fig. 2: MaternalPlus separate listing of cows and heifers**

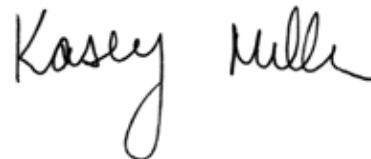**Fig. 3: MaternalPlus cow enroll date and next enroll date**

If you are hesitant about canceling cows because you won't be able to see them in AAA Login, remember that you can still see those cows in Recently Canceled Animals and in Produce of Dam (both under the View tab). Additionally, you can see any cow you have ever owned under Produce of Dam (see the November issue's column for more information on that feature).

For the renewal process, Information Systems sends a reminder email 60 days and also 30 days prior to the anniversary date. You can always see the enrollment date and the next enroll date on the top of the screen when in the MaternalPlus feature, as shown in Fig. 3).

Finally, the last two columns on the inventory screen are helpful. The "added since last enroll" will show cows that have become breeding age or were recently transferred into your herd. These cows don't have to meet the MaternalPlus requirement (they will show up with an N/A in the last column) for the current year, but will have to be enrolled the following year. The last column shows which cows meet the MaternalPlus requirements. You can sort the list to show which cows are not checked in that column, so you know to report on those unchecked.

Thanks to the Angus member who shared her story with me in Louisville. If you have a similar situation and want other people to know the solution, feel free to email me at kaseymiller@angusjournal.com.