

# BIR Basics

Learn the basics of the American Angus Association Beef Improvement Records.

by American Angus Association staff

**B**eef Improvement Records (BIR) is a service provided through the Performance Programs Department at the American Angus Association to assist purebred and commercial cattle producers in making progress through genetic selection. The level of participation is in the hands of the producer, but the dynamic performance system has benefits to all users.

**AHIR.** For years, registered Angus breeders have capitalized on progress through performance by enrolling and participating in the Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR) program. AHIR is available for registered Angus breeders who are serious about making genetic progress in their herds through the use of performance records.

The records submitted to the Association through AHIR include weights and measurements, as well as carcass and ultrasound data. The records are stored along with millions of other records in the Association's database, the largest beef cattle database in use.

The records submitted are utilized in the Angus National Cattle Evaluation (NCE) to calculate selection tools such as expected progeny differences (EPDs) and dollar value indexes (\$Values). These tools are then provided to Association members and their customers and can be used to make informed breeding decisions.

**BRS.** Commercial producers with an interest in Angus genetics have the Angus Beef Record Service (BRS) as a tool to record performance data at all production levels on their cow herds and calf crops, regardless of breed composition.

The program provides a unique opportunity to evaluate commercial cattle productivity by tying to the 40 years of performance data maintained by the American Angus Association. Records are summarized to provide adjusted measures and ratios;

however, EPDs are not generated on commercial cattle. Reports are generated by the Association to allow producers to evaluate and compare the data, characterize commercial cow herds, and work toward a higher-quality, more marketable product for the customer.

**Enrollment.** Cost of the program is \$3 per weaning weight submitted. To enroll in AHIR or BRS, you will need to obtain an enrollment form by contacting the Performance Programs Department at 816-383-5100 or visiting [www.angus.org/performance/ahir\\_enrollment.html](http://www.angus.org/performance/ahir_enrollment.html).

Once the enrollment form is received via fax or mail (a signature is required on file), you will receive a preprinted Calving and Weaning Report. If dams are not listed on this report (purchased, young replacement heifer or commercial dam), you may write those in the blank spaces provided at the end of the Calving and Weaning Report form.

Commercial dams require herd identification (ID)

and a birth date. Commercial sires need only a herd ID. If submitting data online, new dams can be added by clicking the box "Get Dam by Herd ID."

If members of your family or business associates manage cattle in the same herd, these cattle can be ratioed together and

processed in the same contemporary groups by using "main" and "secondary" codes. One code will need to be designated as the main code. The others will be assigned as secondaries.

The cattle in each herd will retain their rightful ownership.

All performance data

will be submitted by the main code and will be returned to the main code address. Indicate secondary codes on the enrollment form.

**Data submission.** The records submitted to the Association include breeding, calving, weaning and yearling performance, as well as carcass data and ultrasound measurements if available. Program participants can submit performance records three primary ways:

- ▶ electronically with the use of the Internet;
- ▶ electronically with Angus Information Management Software (AIMS); or
- ▶ on paper via conventional mail.

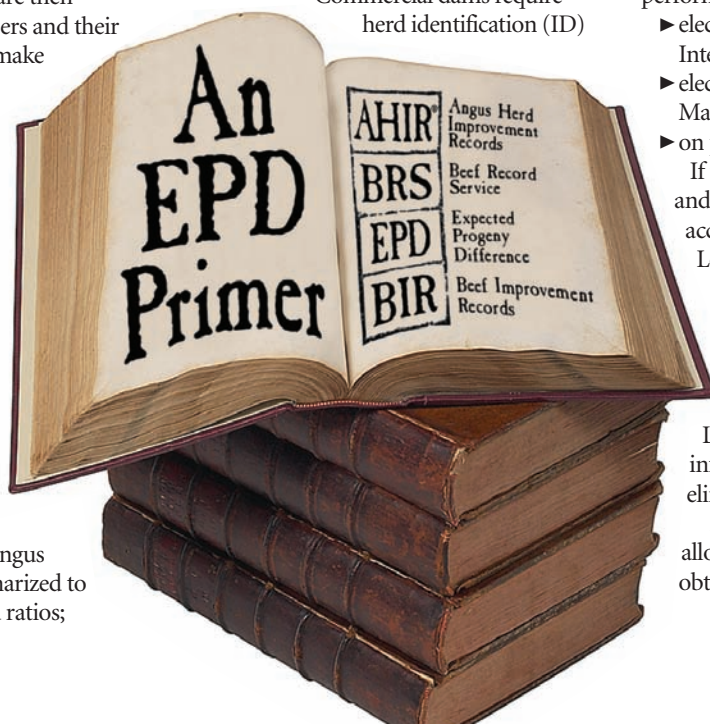
If you are interested in submitting and/or viewing your data online, you can access the information through AAA Login at [www.angusonline.org](http://www.angusonline.org).

**Submitting electronic data.** The Internet and AIMS are more efficient ways to use American Angus Association performance programs. Both AIMS and AAA Login offer users the most current information on their herds and eliminate the "paper shuffle."

AAA Login at [www.angusonline.org](http://www.angusonline.org) allows members to access information by obtaining a unique and private password.

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In our June and July 2007 issues, we go back to the basics of performance records and breed improvement in a series of articles themed "An EPD Primer." In this issue, articles consider enrolling in Beef Improvement Records, filling out the Calving and Weaning Report, most-often-asked performance questions, and the new heifer pregnancy expected progeny difference.



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Once members have their password, they can submit their performance measures and other information and view their updated information online. Information on the web site is available seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

AIMS is the recordkeeping software created for the American Angus Association and its members. Once members purchase AIMS, a listing of their herd is sent to them on disk, and they can submit weights and manage their herd via AIMS and e-mail. AIMS is available only to American Angus Association members and affiliates.

For more information or to order, contact the AIMS Department, American Angus Association, 3201 Frederick Ave., Saint Joseph, MO 64506; e-mail [aims@angus.org](mailto:aims@angus.org); or visit [www.angus.org/aims](http://www.angus.org/aims).

**Breeding records.** For the most complete use of AHIR and BRS, it is advantageous to monitor and record breeding inputs.

Submission of records is strongly encouraged. Records include fields for breeding dates and artificial insemination (AI) sires, as well as pasture mating, with details on synchronization and pregnancy results. Future research will focus on the use of these records in Angus reproductive efficiency studies and development of genetic tools.

**Calving and weaning.** As your calves are born, it is important to weigh them within 24 hours of birth *using a scale* and to record the birth weight information on the Calving and

Weaning Report. A calving ease score can be recorded.

You will want to measure your calves' weaning weights when a group of them nears an average age of 205 days. Weaning weights must be taken when an individual calf is between 120 and 280 days old. Once calving and weaning records are collected, you will submit this information to the Association.

The Performance Programs Department will process the calving and weaning information as part of the Association's database. The following items are available based on customer preferences chosen for reports and summaries:

- ▶ a Weaning Summary that lists calves both by sire group and calf ID;
- ▶ a Yearling Report; and
- ▶ an Ultrasound Barnsheet to record ultrasound information that is measured by a trained technician certified by the Ultrasound Guidelines Council (UGC).

### **Proper contemporary grouping.**

Establishing proper contemporary groups is essential in providing accurate and predictable performance records necessary to generate EPDs. A contemporary group is a set of two or more calves of the same sex and similar age that have been managed under similar practices. Contemporary groups should include as many animals as can be accurately compared.

For more information about contemporary groups, access the Association web site at [www.angus.org](http://www.angus.org), or contact the

**American Angus Association**  
**Beef Improvement Records**  
**Enrollment Form**



AHIR is a record keeping system for registered Angus cattle  
BRS is a record keeping system for commercial cattle  
[www.angus.org](http://www.angus.org)



I agree to abide by the rules and guidelines as established by the Board of Directors of the American Angus Association (AAA). Further, I release all data submitted to the Beef Improvement Records program to be used for any AAA beef or breed improvement programs or research. I understand that I am responsible for the accuracy of the information I provide to the AAA, and I release AAA from any liability for errors, mistakes or omissions in the information provided.

AAA Customer code (if available): \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
AAA Customer name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ FAX: \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Check here if you wish to submit and/or access your records via the Internet (email address is required). State Issued Premises ID (if available): \_\_\_\_\_

If members of your family are submitting data through multiple AAA customer codes and you wish to have cattle in all codes included in your summaries, please list these codes: \_\_\_\_\_

**This application must be on file with the American Angus Association before Beef Improvement Records will be processed.**

*Upon completion, return this form via FAX or mail to:*

American Angus Association  
AHIR's Beef Improvement Records Department  
3201 Frederick Avenue  
Saint Joseph, MO 64506

FAX: 816-233-9703  
Phone: 816-263-5100  
E-MAIL: [aims@angus.org](mailto:aims@angus.org)  
[ahir@angus.org](mailto:ahir@angus.org)

### **BIR Enrollment Form**

Performance Programs Department.

**Mature cow size data.** Cows should be measured for weight, hip height and body condition score (BCS) within 45 days of weaning. Cows without body condition scores will not be used in calculating mature weight and height EPDs. Only cows that wean a calf will be included in the mature size database.

**Yearling measures.** Measurements on all animals should be taken between 320 and 440 days of age to be adjusted to 365 days. The group should average as close to 365 days as possible. Enter those weights and measures (scrotal circumference, temperament, yearling height) on the Yearling Report, and submit to the Association.

**Ultrasound.** These ultrasound images are collected by a UGC-certified field technician between 320 and 440 days of age for bulls and 320 and 460 days of age for heifers. Weaning weights submitted prior to the scanning date are required to process ultrasound data.

The ultrasound field technician sends the images to one of the American Angus Association's authorized ultrasound-processing labs for interpretation by a UGC-certified lab technician, along with the barnsheet generated when weaning weights are submitted. If you do not have a barnsheet, contact the Performance Programs Department.

The interpreted records from the scans are then sent to the Association for adjustments, EPD calculations and summaries provided to the breeders.



**Editor's Note:** This article is available on the American Angus Association web site at [www.angus.org/performance/documents/guidelines\\_bif\\_ahir\\_brs.html](http://www.angus.org/performance/documents/guidelines_bif_ahir_brs.html).