

Send in Calving.

Instructions for completing the Calving and Weaning Report.

by American Angus Association staff

The Calving and Weaning Report is utilized by many breeders as their first introduction to Beef Improvement Records (BIR), which encompasses Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR®) and the Angus Beef Record Service (BRS). The report is a listing of all registered and commercial females in a herd that are 12 months old or older at the time of printing. If you have data to report for commercial dams that are not listed on the report, herd identification (ID) and a birth date are required.

You may complete and return the paper Calving and Weaning Report mailed to you by the American Angus Association, or complete and submit the information electronically via Angus Information Management Software (AIMS) or AAA Login, which is available online at www.angusonline.org (see Fig. 1).

Calving information

To complete the calving information, breeders fill in the sire's registration number (breeders can also enter a sire's tag number or within-herd ID number), calf tag number and tattoo, sex, actual birth date (mm/dd/yy), birth weight, and calving ease score.

Birth weights must be measured by a scale and reported in pounds. Estimated birth weights from other methods are not accepted (e.g., hoof circumference or heart girth body weight tapes).

As calves are born, it is important to consistently weigh them within 24 hours.

The birth code column is for reporting any irregular calving situation, including death loss or the sale of calves preweaning.

Weaning information

Weigh calves between 120-280 days. The date calves are weighed at weaning and the actual weight is placed in the first column under calf weight data. The acceptable range for weaning weights is between 120 and 280 days of age.

Enter management codes. The column for management code designates whether or not the calves were creep-fed or supplied supplemental feeding. Non-creep-fed calves are reported as Code 1 and creep-fed calves are reported as Code 3. The management code must be completed before weights will be processed.

Enter group code. Knowledge of calves that are "contemporaries" is critical for accurate data evaluation. A group code is used to designate a set of calves managed differently from another set of calves. Calves from different groups or pasture units are designated by using a letter code such as A, B, C, etc. For example, calves from 2-year-old dams in one pasture may be reported as Group A, and calves from mature cows in another pasture as Group B.

Breeders submitting weaning weights also have the option to have heifers and bulls (or steers) treated as separate sex groups and ratioed as separate sex groups, or treated as an entire calf crop with males and females adjusted to a bull basis and ratioed as a group. Use the group code to separate the sex groups of calves, if desired.

If not instructed differently, each weaning group is treated as one unit for calculating ratios.

A contemporary code is required when submitting calving and weaning weights.

Enter optional data. An optional column is included for a weaning hip height and scrotal circumference. When reporting heights, submit actual hip height. Also, location may be specified. User-defined codes may be placed in the custom field.

When to send in weights. As soon as a group of calves have been weighed, breeders should mail the Calving and Weaning Report in the envelope provided or electronically through AAA Login or AIMS. A new Calving and Weaning Report will then be sent to you with the Weaning Summary.

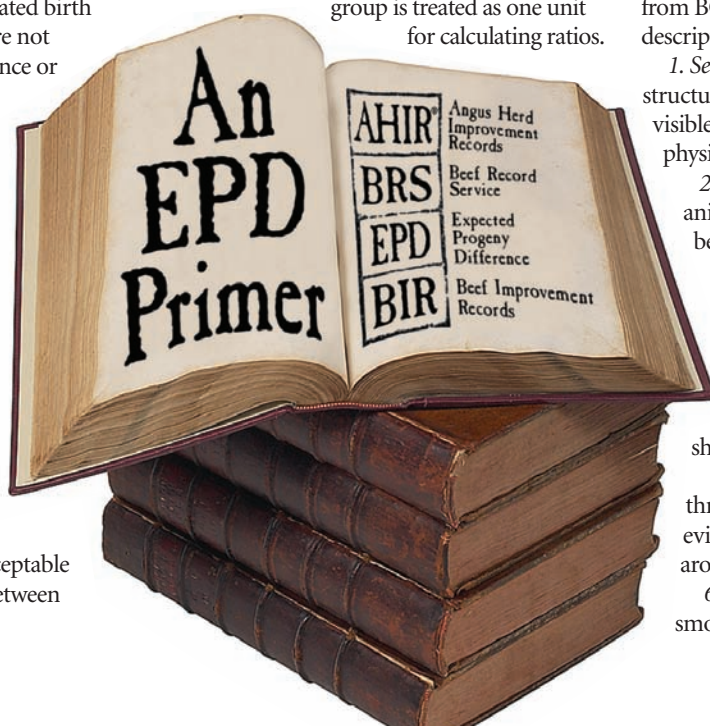
Cow information

When to collect cow data. Cows should be measured for weight, hip height and condition score within ± 45 days of the calf's weaning measure date. It is important to collect this information as the cow weans her first calf, and in subsequent years. A body condition score (BCS) must be included with the cow weight in order for data to be utilized in the National Cattle Evaluation (NCE).

Cow body condition scores — ranging from BCS 1 through BCS 9 — and their descriptions include:

1. *Severely emaciated.* All ribs and bone structure are easily visible. There is very little visible muscle tissue, and the animal will be physically weak.
2. *Emaciated.* Similar to BCS 1, but the animal will not be weakened. There will be little visible muscle tissue.
3. *Very thin.* No fat is visible over the ribs or in the brisket, and the backbone is easily visible. Muscling is more apparent than on a BCS 2.
4. *Thin.* Ribs are easily visible, but shoulders and hindquarters show fair muscling. Backbone is visible.
5. *Moderate to thin.* The last two or three ribs can be seen. There is little evidence of fat on brisket, over ribs or around the tailhead.
6. *Good condition.* The animal has a smooth appearance throughout. Slight fat

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Weaning Data

deposition is visible on brisket and over the tailhead. The ribs are covered, and backs appear slightly rounded.

7. *Very good condition.* The brisket is full. Pockets of fat are visible around the tailhead. The back appears well-rounded due to fat. Ribs are very smooth.

8. *Obese.* The back is square due to fat, and the brisket is distended. Heavy fat pockets are visible around the tailhead, and the neck appears thick.

9. *Very obese.* Rarely seen, cows with BCS 9 appear similar to BCS 8, except more extreme. They have heavy deposition of udder fat.

For more information on how to estimate body condition, visit Angus Production Inc.'s (API's) topic web site, www.cowbcs.info.

Cow disposal and reason codes. For complete herd inventory analysis, each cow listed on the Calving and Weaning Report must have birth or weaning data, a disposal code or a reason code listed.

Any cow leaving the herd throughout the production cycle must be given a disposal date (mm/dd/yy) and a disposal code.

Disposal codes are listed below.

- 28 Culled — Eye Problem
- 29 Culled — Miscellaneous
- 30 Sold — certificate not transferred, if applicable
- 31 Culled — teat and udder
- 32 Culled — feet and legs
- 33 Culled — fertility
- 34 Culled — productivity/progeny performance
- 35 Culled — temperament
- 36 Culled — age
- 37 Died

If a cow remains in your herd, but does not have a calving or weaning record for the current year, please complete the reason code for her to remain as an active dam in your herd.

- 50 Open, cow missed calving opportunity
- 51 ET program/donor dam
- 52 Cow moved to next calving season
- 53 ET program/recipient cow
- 54 Aborted/premature

Temperament codes. Temperament codes may be reported on cows when they wean their calves or on calves when yearling data is reported. The codes and their descriptions follow:

- 1. *Docile.* Docile animals have a mild

Fig. 1: Submitting the Calving and Weaning Report through AAA Login

Clicking the dam's registration number on the electronic Calving and Weaning Report will open a dialogue box in which calving and weaning data on the cow's calf may be recorded.

The figure shows two screenshots from the AHIR/BRS system. The top screenshot is a report titled "AHIR/BRS - Performance Calving Weaning Data as of 3/29/2007". It displays a table of dams with columns for Dam Assn, Dam Herd ID, Dam Tatt, Dam Birth Date, Calf Herd ID, Calf Birth Date, Calf Sex, In Cart, Wn Wt, Disp Date, and Disposal / Reason. The bottom screenshot is the "AHIR/BRS - Entry Performance Calving Weaning Data as of 3/29/2007" form. It contains various input fields for customer information, dam and sire details, calving and weaning data, and body condition scores. The form includes a "Save" button and an "Undo Changes" button.

disposition. They are gentle and easily handled. They stand and move slowly during processing. They appear undisturbed, settled and somewhat dull. A docile animal does not pull on the headgate when in the chute, and it exits a chute calmly.

2. *Restless.* Restless animals are quieter than average, but may be stubborn during processing. They may try to back out of the chute or pull back on the headgate, and they may exhibit some flicking of the tail. Restless animals will exit a chute promptly.

3. *Nervous.* Typical temperament is manageable, but nervous and impatient. Nervous animals will display a moderate amount of struggling, movement and tail-flicking, and will repeatedly push and pull on the headgate. They will exit a chute briskly.

4. *Flighty (wild).* Jumpy and out of control, flighty animals will quiver and struggle violently. They may bellow and froth at the mouth, and they will continuously flick the tail. They will defecate and urinate

during processing, will frantically run the fence line, and may jump when penned individually. They have long flight distances and exit chutes wildly.

5. *Aggressive.* Aggressive cattle may be similar to Score 4, but with added aggressive behavior, fearfulness, extreme agitation and continuous movement that may include jumping and bellowing while in the chute. An aggressive animal exits a chute frantically and may exhibit attack behavior when handled alone.

6. *Very Aggressive.* This category is for animals with extremely aggressive temperament. They may thrash about or attack wildly when confined in small, tight places. They display pronounced attack behavior.



Editor's Note: This article is available on the American Angus Association web site at www.angus.org/performance/documents/calving_wean_instr.html.