

THE LINK

Program merger means greater enrollment efficiency

by Ginette Gottswiller, American Angus Association



Harvest means there aren't enough hours in the day. Taking grain to the elevator can be a little frustrating when you only drive a semi during harvest. Zipping down those four lanes with traffic merging in right and left can definitely raise the hair on the back of your neck. I don't mind driving up and down our highway, but those four lanes make me look in the mirror a few more times before I change lanes.

Next year AngusSource® will be merging all the Process Verified Programs (PVPs) into AngusLinkSM. We have always provided the option for producers to dual-enroll in both programs. This will make the enrollment process easier and more efficient for you, our producers. You will notice some favorable price adjustments because of those efficiencies.

Producers who use all registered and transferred Angus sires will receive the Angus-Sired Genetic PVP claim free and have the option to have their Genetic Merit Scores printed on their Marketing Document.

The American Angus Association will continue to have all the great, low-cost verification services housed under the AngusLink name. Those verifications include the base age-and-source program. The program-compliant tag options have been upgraded, too.

Producers have the option to purchase an AngusLink radio frequency identification (RFID) tag or an AngusLink matched pair

set combining a dangle tag with the RFID tag. Several producers indicated they wanted the option to add a visual tag to their calves. We have people who love the white visual tag from the old AngusSource program and those who felt the neon green AngusLink tag looked fantastic in the sale ring. We will offer the visual tag in both white or neon green matched-pair-set options.

NHTC option

AngusLink will continue to offer a Non-Hormone Treated Cattle (NHTC) PVP. The value of NHTC has definitely been talked about the last few months in relationship to China. Last year (2018) beef exports that were NHTC-verified weighed in at about 63 million pounds (lb.).

There is chatter in the beef industry about increased beef exports to China. That beef will have to be sourced from NHTC-verified cattle. As you get ready to calve this spring, keep current on that situation so you can make the best marketing decisions for your operation.

AL-NE3 option

Verified natural or AngusLink NeverEver3 (AL-NE3) is another PVP point that is offered in conjunction with NHTC verification. Producers have the option to add AL-NE3 to their verification lineup for an additional cost.

I have had several producers tell me they cannot bear to leave a sick animal untreated. Trust me, I can't either. Enrolling in AL-NE3 doesn't



mean you can't treat the animal; you just have to pull treated animals from the program. The treated animal cannot be enrolled in AL-NE3. Calves that are treated need to be marketed a different way.

Plus, you need to document how you know which calf was treated. When calving season starts and you have a calf that needs milk replacer or medication, write down the tag number of the calf and the date you doctored the calf. I also would suggest a second identifier, like a unique ear notch, for calves that will not meet the AL-NE3 requirement.

Management option

The largest premium in the feeder-calf market today is health. Face it, a sick calf doesn't eat well or gain. Grade suffers if the calf even recovers. Don't overlook AngusLink Calf Management (AL-CM) as a way to document your calves' preparedness.

Nearly every cattleman gives preventative vaccines to their calves. Many wean and castrate. Write down the dates, products you used and where you gave the shot. Why not? Feedyards want to know where, when and what you have given your calves. We will be glad to walk you through the requirements for AL-CM. More than likely you are already doing what is required;

you just need to provide some documentation.

Cattle care option

AngusLink Cattle Care and Handling isn't a big step away from AL-CM. Producers want to get the most out of their vaccines. They are giving shots in the proper location and handling animals quietly to keep all those hard-earned pounds on the calf. Make sure you have a current Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) certification if you plan to enroll.

In summary

These are some basic highlights of what will be offered as AngusLink when the new year rolls around.

Sometimes it is difficult to merge into traffic when you drive a loaded 18-wheeler once a year, but I have faith I'm doing the absolute best job driving I can do.

Enrolling in value-added programs once a year may feel the same way to you. The difference is the AngusLink commercial programs team is here to help guide you along the way. Give our team a call at 816-383-5100 to learn more about the merged AngusLink verification program with optional Genetic Merit Scoring for your operation. |

Editor's note: Ginette Gottswiller is the director of commercial programs for the American Angus Association.

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