

Association unveils information exchange program

The American Angus Association recently announced a new program to help commercial producers obtain and analyze information on their herds. The Angus Beef Records Service (BRS) will provide commercial producers a system to keep performance records on their animals and a valuable decision-making tool to enhance profitability, says Bill Bowman, director of commercial relations for the Association.

He explains the service as a complement of the Association's Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR) program, which has been available to seedstock producers since 1958. The AHIR program provides the foundation for establishing the expected progeny differences (EPDs) for the Angus breed. The Angus database now includes more than 8 million weight records on purebred Angus cattle.

Still, a void has existed for a system to incorporate information on Angus genetics used in the commercial industry.

"The Angus BRS will storehouse information on a producer's cow herd, including breed composition, sire information, breeding information, calving data, and any performance or carcass data collected on a calf," says Bowman. The Association will analyze the production data and report the information back to the owner.

Producers will receive interactive reports from Angus BRS throughout their herd's production cycle (see Figure). Summary reports will include key performance measures for use in herd-management decisions.

"We also intend to develop genetic predictions (estimated dollar differences) for the cattle in terms of reproduction,

growth and end-product value using the actual data submitted, while also tying to the Angus database where possible," says Bowman.

While there are many excellent recordkeeping systems available in the beef industry, the Angus BRS will provide a unique opportunity to characterize commercial producers' cattle by tying to the 40 years of performance data maintained by the Association.

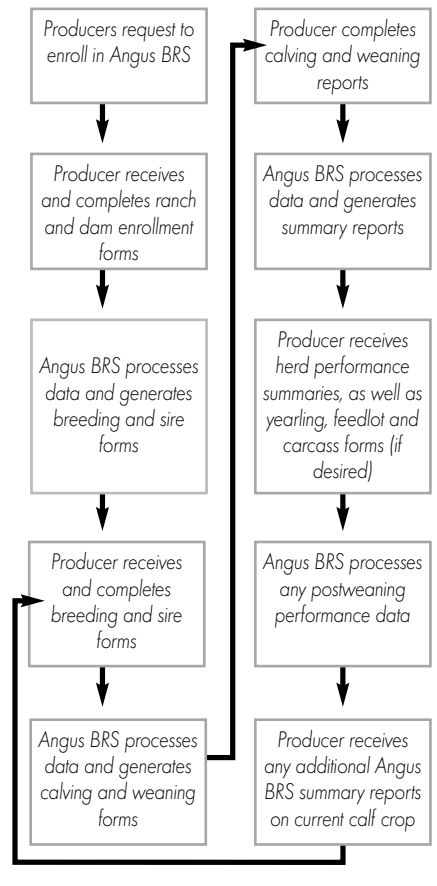
"This data will help characterize the commercial cow herds using Angus genetics, providing information and analysis on an individual-cow, cow-group and entire-herd basis," says Bowman. "Collecting data and tying that information back to an individual cow or to a group of a particular sire's daughters make it possible to base decisions on fact rather than assumption."

Bowman says these types of records will help producers identify the cow that consistently produces a calf with a 20% lighter weaning weight or whose progeny consistently produce Yield Grade (YG) 4 and 5 carcasses. By eliminating these extremes, producers will improve their chances for profit.

"Bottom line," says Bowman, "improving the pounds of calf weaned per cow exposed at breeding is a crucial economic factor in a profitable operation. Accomplishing this by increasing the number of calves weaned while simultaneously increasing weaning weights requires collecting the information and analyzing the factors to make improvements. The Angus BRS will help make these decisions."

The Angus BRS is ready to enroll herds. Contact the Association to obtain an enrollment form and a set of guide-

Figure: Angus BRS information flow



lines further explaining the service. There is no charge to enroll your cow herd in the program, but a \$2/head charge will be assessed for each calf weaning weight processed through the Angus BRS.

If you have any questions about the program, contact the Association at (816) 383-5100 or send e-mail to brs@angus.org.

LOOKING FOR A BULL?

Check out ARCNet's Bull Listing Service

Another new service provided as part of the Angus Resource Clearinghouse Network (ARCNet) is the Bull Listing Service (BLS). Commercial producers looking for specific Angus genetics can now search a database of registered Angus bulls for sale, while defining expected-progeny-difference (EPD) criteria, sire groups and even location.

Angus breeders may purchase a listing for their registered Angus bulls for sale on the BLS, which appears on the

Internet as part of the ARCNet site. The BLS can be found on the Internet at www.angus.org.

Follow the links for ARCNet or the Bull Listing Service to access the search form. If you do not have access to the Internet, feel free to call our office for assistance. This service will provide the commercial cow-calf producer looking for specific seedstock another tool to help locate Angus bulls for their operations.

