

# Association Updates Program Name to MaternalPlus

*Angus voluntary inventory system receives name revision.*

The American Angus Association's newly introduced PathfinderPlus program, a voluntary, inventory-based reporting system aimed at increasing reproductive trait data, will now be known as MaternalPlus.

After suggestions from Association members, the Board of Directors decided mid-February to change the name to avoid confusion with the previously established Pathfinder program started in 1978 in an effort to identify superior cows in the breed.

MaternalPlus contains PathfinderPlus capabilities to capture

## MaternalPlus Basics and Benefits

Beginning in 2012, MaternalPlus is a voluntary system to allow Angus breeders to track reproductive fitness of the cow herd, with particular emphasis on the first-calf heifer. The primary goal of the MaternalPlus program is to capture reproductive data and disposal codes to ultimately enhance current and create additional reproductive and longevity selection tools.

Breeders use their AAA Login account available at [www.angus.org](http://www.angus.org) to access inventory lists on heifers and cows. Through the initiation of an annual inventory list in AAA Login, breeders begin their participation in the program.

Enrollment requires that the breeder confirm heifers and cows in the inventory lists are part of the herd inventory. MaternalPlus enrollment is not complete until both inventory lists are reviewed, non-active females are disposed of and the female inventory is accepted. A \$3-per-cow charge is assessed at the completion of the enrollment process for any female 20 months of age or older accepted in the list. This fee includes performance reporting for the female's calf.

One helpful feature is that breeders can enroll at any time during the year. This initial enrollment establishes their anniversary date for subsequent years. Annual inventory reconciliation allows for cow disposal and reason designations.

After initial enrollment has been completed, the breeder can continue to submit performance measures, such as birth and weaning weights, as they traditionally have done. Tools to report weights and measures in AAA Login, spreadsheets and Angus Information Management Software (AIMS) are still in

additional reproductive trait data and to ultimately expand reproductive and lifetime productivity tools, such as longevity measures.

“The change is in name only,” says Bill Bowman, Association COO and director of performance programs. “The MaternalPlus program serves as a unique system that allows us to effectively capture reproductive trait data while providing participants with additional information at weaning processing time, such as calving ease, birth weight and weaning weight EPDs (expected progeny differences)

for calves out of inventoried cows.”

Breeders interested in participating in MaternalPlus can enroll through AAA Login, available at [www.angus.org](http://www.angus.org).

“MaternalPlus is the most comprehensive route to generate reproductive selection tools on your herd,” Bowman says. “The program is streamlined to capture the necessary data

for genetic predictions to assist you and your customers.”

Contact the American Angus Association at 816-383-5100 or visit [www.angus.org](http://www.angus.org) for more information.



**Editor's Note:** *This press release is from the American Angus Association.*

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**— Bill Bowman**

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place as they have been prior to MaternalPlus.

### **Benefits**

Benefits of MaternalPlus include comprehensive tracking of females in the herd for breeding, production and disposal. These records are used for heifer pregnancy expected progeny differences (HP EPDs) and future longevity selection tools.

Breeders are receiving limited HP EPDs currently unless they are already submitting heifer breeding records. The MaternalPlus program is the ideal way to report heifer breeding records. In fact, this is the primary requirement to remain in the MaternalPlus program.

Heifer breeding records are required each season, along with feedback on each calf for inventoried females (cows and heifers). Feedback reported on calves is simply what breeders turn in anyway — a calf record preweaning or reason for no calf weight, a disposal code for the cow or a reason why the cow didn't produce a calf.

Another convenient feature of MaternalPlus is the availability of calf EPDs for calving ease direct, birth weight and weaning weight, once the weaning data are processed through the Association. These selection tools are easily viewed through a participant's AAA Login account even before calves are registered for preweaning selection and culling decisions.

Since MaternalPlus is voluntary, the classic AHIR reporting remains in place for non-participants. In addition, the selection criteria and recognition for the classic Pathfinder animals remain unchanged.

**— by Sally Northcutt, director of genetic research**