

Association Eyeing Reproductive Traits

by *Shauna Rose Hermel*

BOISE, IDAHO (Sept. 26, 2006) — During the 2006 National Angus Conference in Boise, Idaho, Sally Northcutt, director of genetic research, presented an update on what the American Angus Association is looking at with regard to reproductive traits.

“When you hear us say we want your breeding records, that’s pretty much slang for saying we want to know everything about that Angus female’s life,” Northcutt said. She encouraged producers to document artificial insemination (AI) breeding dates, rebreeding dates, pasture turnout dates, pregnancy-check results, information on opens and culling information by means of disposal codes.

While it may sound like a lot of detail, Northcutt said, it’s critical to get complete information, including breeding successes and failures, to establish useful genetic predictions.

Northcutt explained the AAA Login screen (available at www.angus.org) for entering breeding data. Other useful

information that can be entered on the screen include the service sire and synchronization method.

If you prefer offline entry of the information, Northcutt said, you can download an Excel® spreadsheet, which can be e-mailed back to the Association after it is filled out.

The Angus Information Management Software (AIMSSM) program also offers a means through which producers can record and submit breeding data.



Sally Northcutt, director of genetic research, provided an update on reproductive research being conducted by the Association.

Current research efforts

The establishment of such genetic predictions takes considerable research to ensure the best information is used to obtain the best genetic predictions. Considerations include which traits to use in the model.

“We’re always looking for the best model to try to analyze these data,” Northcutt said. “You really have to approach it conservatively and capture really large amounts of data, and that’s where we look for your continued help.”

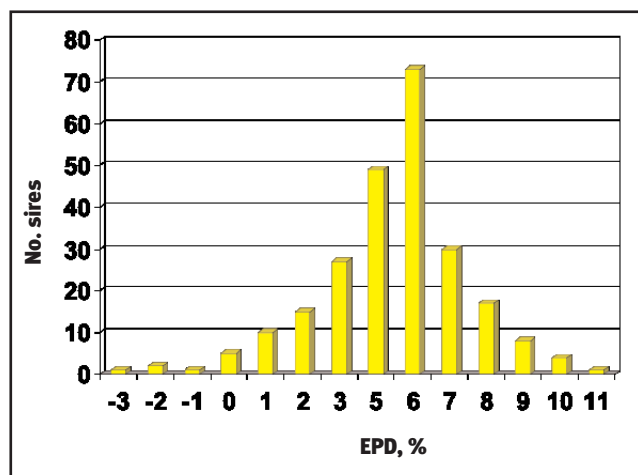
Northcutt presented a status report of Association efforts in researching possible heifer pregnancy (see Fig. 1) and stayability EPDs.

“Progress is being made, but as you can see, there’s a lot to learn,” Northcutt said. As more data come in, the Association will continue to fine-tune the models to develop genetic predictions, whether they be in the form of EPDs or dollar value indexes (\$Values).

To listen to the audio of Northcutt’s presentation and/or view the accompanying PowerPoint®, visit the newsroom at www.nationalangusconference.com.



Fig. 1: Distribution of potential heifer pregnancy EPDs



Northcutt presented the distribution of heifer pregnancy EPDs for Angus bulls during a recent research run.