



## MaternalPlus® Commonly Asked Questions

### **What is whole-herd reporting?**

Whole-herd reporting is a system where producers report what happens to every single cow in the given year. To fulfill the requirements for the Association's whole-herd reporting program, MaternalPlus®, producers must report a weaning weight on every calf born. If a calf weaning weight is not reported for a cow, a reason why the cow did not calve or a disposal code as to why she left the herd must be reported.

### **Why is whole-herd reporting important?**

Accurate data collection is crucial to the success of performance reporting programs. By reporting information on each cow every year, the value of the data increases because the genetic and environmental components are more readily expressed. Secondly, collecting production records on cows, including breeding and disposal information, helps to develop more cow production tools like longevity and improve traits, including heifer pregnancy. Finally by evaluating herds every year, breeders reflect on the success of the herd's maternal lines. It aids in making management decisions when deciding whether to eliminate females not paying their way in the operation.

### **Other than increasing the value of the data for better genetic predictions, do I receive any other benefits through MaternalPlus?**

Yes. Producers receive calving ease direct, birth weight and weaning weight EPDs on unregistered calves once the herd's birth or weaning weight records have been submitted and processed through weekly evaluation. The MaternalPlus program is the only way breeders can receive any EPDs on unregistered calves. In addition, producers have access to additional herd reports to help aid them in making management decisions, including genetic trend reports, calving distribution charts, dam disposal reports, etc.

### **If every cow has to report a weaning weight on a calf in order to meet the program requirements, what should a member do if a calf dies before weaning?**

If this unfortunate event does happen, producers should submit the calf record (ID, birthdate, birth weight, sire and dam IDs) and then submit a birth culling code clarifying why the calf died. This ensures a cow does not inappropriately get labelled a "failure" for that calving season because she did in fact get bred and have a calf, but the death of the calf prior to weaning was beyond her control.

### **Do I have to change the way I report my data if I enroll in the program?**

You do not have to change the way you report your data. Whether you report calving, weaning, breeding or disposal data, etc., through AAA Login, AIMS, GEM or another software, you do not need to change your data reporting habits. The only thing different you will have to do is upon completion of data reporting for the year. At that time, you will have to accept your herd inventory through AAA Login.

### When is the best time to enroll?

This varies from operation to operation. Your type of operation, calving season and when it best works into your schedule will determine the best time. If you want to take advantage of having the EPDs on unregistered calves as soon as birth weights are processed, enrolling before your calving season starts is most effective.

### What are the fees associated with the program?

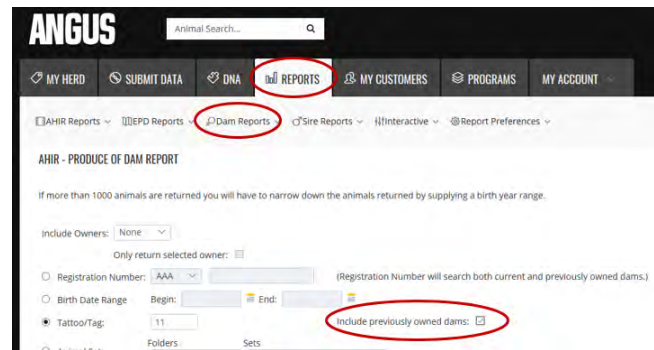
MaternalPlus is a whole-herd reporting system, so you will pay \$3 for every active cow in your herd, which replaces the AHIR performance fee you are currently paying on the calf at birth or weaning weight submission.

### I use my commercial cows as recipient females. Is it important for them to be enrolled in the program?

If you enroll your recipient females in the program, they will be charged the \$3 enrollment fee, and then the ET (embryo transfer) calf will be enrolled in AHIR. If recipient females are not enrolled, ET calves will be charged a \$3 AHIR fee when birth or weaning weights are submitted.

### Once I dispose my females, will I be able to access their production records?

Understanding that dam production records are useful when managing and marketing progeny and grand-progeny, members are still able to see production records on females that have been culled or sold out of the herd. Members simply need to go to AAA Login and navigate to Reports -> Dam Reports -> Search by "Tag" and check the box "Include previously owned dams".



### When will a cow longevity selection tool be available?

Once enough data is collected to report longevity with reasonable accuracy, a selection tool will become available. The exact timeline is yet to be determined and will really rely on the members' commitment to consistent data reporting.

### Besides cow longevity, what other selection opportunities could this type of data lend a hand in?

Collecting more production data, like breeding records for example, opens up other avenues for other research. Further research into traits like gestation length, for example, and its relationship to calving ease becomes more attainable when more members are routinely sending in the data points necessary for this type of research.