Data for Reliable Genetic Selection Decisions

Producers can use interactive elements of AAA Login to provide potential buyers with the most recent EPD updates.

*by **Linda Robbins***

Since fall 2010, the American Angus Association and Angus Genetics Inc. (AGI) have offered weekly updates on the selection of genomic-enhanced EPDs for carcass, docility and residual average daily gain (RADG). The updated carcass EPDs are released on more than 2 million animals every Friday, providing the industry's most rapid and current selection tools to help make reliable genetic selection decisions. However, during sale season, how can producers get the most up-to-date EPDs to potential buyers when sale books have to be mailed three or four weeks in advance of the sale?

Don Laughlin, director of member services for the Association, suggests using AAA Login, an interactive tool available on the Association's website (See Fig.1), to create an animal set with sale animals in it, and then download the updated EPDs in an Excel

YOUR ASSOCIATION
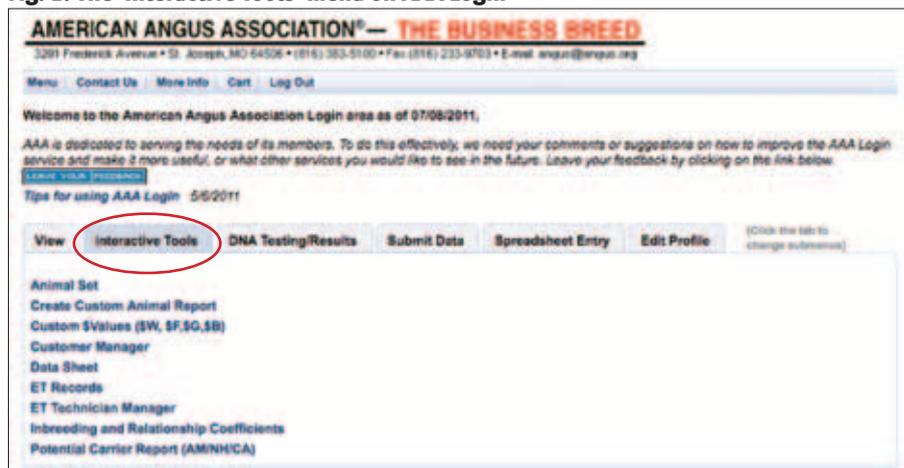*Your Business*
THIS MONTH: Using AAA Login

spreadsheet or in a data sheet available on the site. The interactive options in Login allow sellers to add their lot numbers to the list of
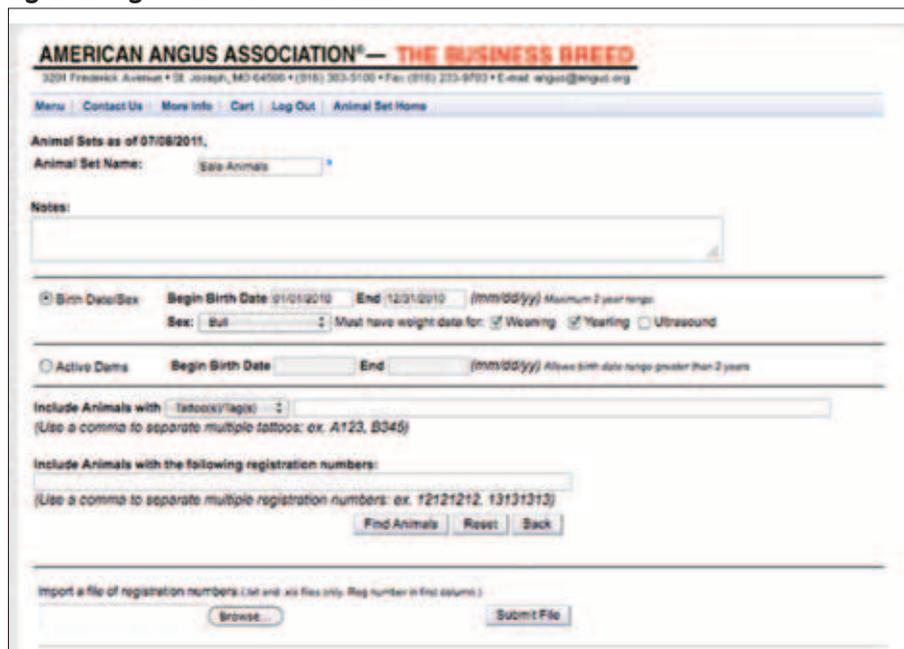
animals to provide the latest weekly EPDs, literally at the last minute, to prospective buyers at the sale.

Whether the animal set will be bulls, open heifers or spring-calving cows, Laughlin says it is easy to choose the animals you want (see Figs. 2 and 3), create a custom animal report by choosing the EPDs you

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Fig. 1: The 'Interactive Tools' menu on AAA Login

Fig. 2: Dialogue box to create an animal set

Table 1: Steps to creating forms to display updated EPDs

1. Log in to AAA Login at *www.angus.org*.
2. Access the "Interactive Tools" tab.
3. Click "Animal Set."
4. Select group of animals by setting parameters as requested.
5. Select "Find Animals." Save or modify an animal set.
6. Return to "Interactive Tools" on main menu.

Option a:

7a. Select "Create Custom Animal Report."
8a. Define animal set by choosing the animal set you just made.
9a. Click the box in front of Excel Spreadsheet.
10a. Choose the performance data to include in the report.
11a. Click "Search" to create the Excel spreadsheet.

Obtion b:

7b. Select "Data Sheet."
8b. Define your data sheet as instructed.
8c. Click "View Sheet" to create output pages.

want (see Fig. 4), download the new EPDs into an Excel spreadsheet, add in your lot numbers and then print the spreadsheet for prospective buyers.

In addition to using an Excel spreadsheet to display the data, sellers can also choose from four styles of data display templates or data sheets built into the interactive menu (See Fig. 5). The output looks similar to a salebook page.

► Style 1 includes a two-generation pedigree with a predetermined list of EPDs available to be updated, and prints information for eight animals per page.

► Style 2 includes a predetermined set of EPDs, along with a sire and maternal grandsire. It prints in a horizontal listing, with 16 animals listed per printed page.

► Style 3 also has two-generation pedigrees, but it permits users to choose whatever updated EPDs they want. The updated EPDs are listed in the same way as on Style 1, but graphs and bar charts are created to give EPD percentiles for each animal.

► Style 4 is similar to Style 1 but doesn't have all of the $Values in the predetermined list of EPDs.

"While everyone can use this tool, it is truly beneficial for small-scale breeders with just a few head to sell or someone selling private treaty," Laughlin says. "It's the slickest thing in the world, because you can cherry-pick whatever information you want on that Excel report or use the data sheets in whatever style you like, and you've got all you need right there."
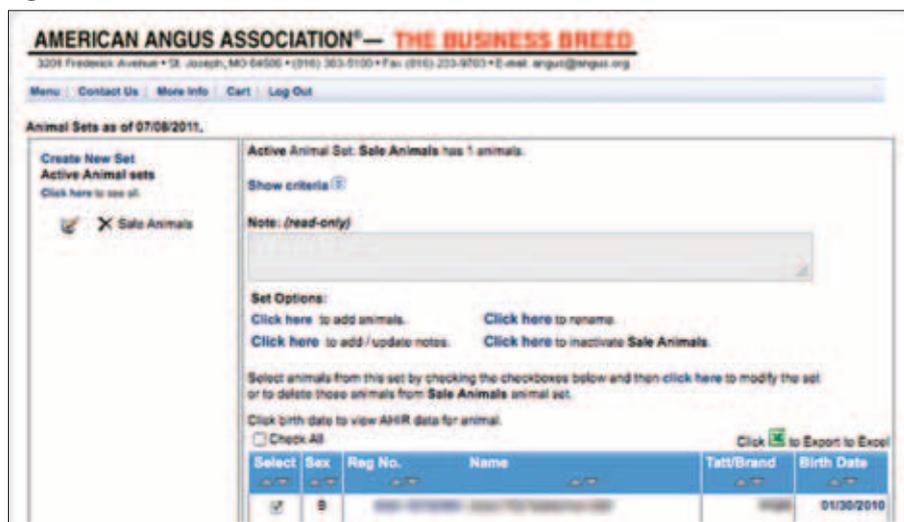
All four styles permit the user to add footnotes or comments, and each column used in the created file is sortable, so if sale customers are looking for a specific EPD range or percentile in ascending or descending order, the information can be sorted and printed for handout at the sale.

Laughlin emphasized that there are many other uses for creating animal sets and custom animal reports, including culling or breeding decisions.
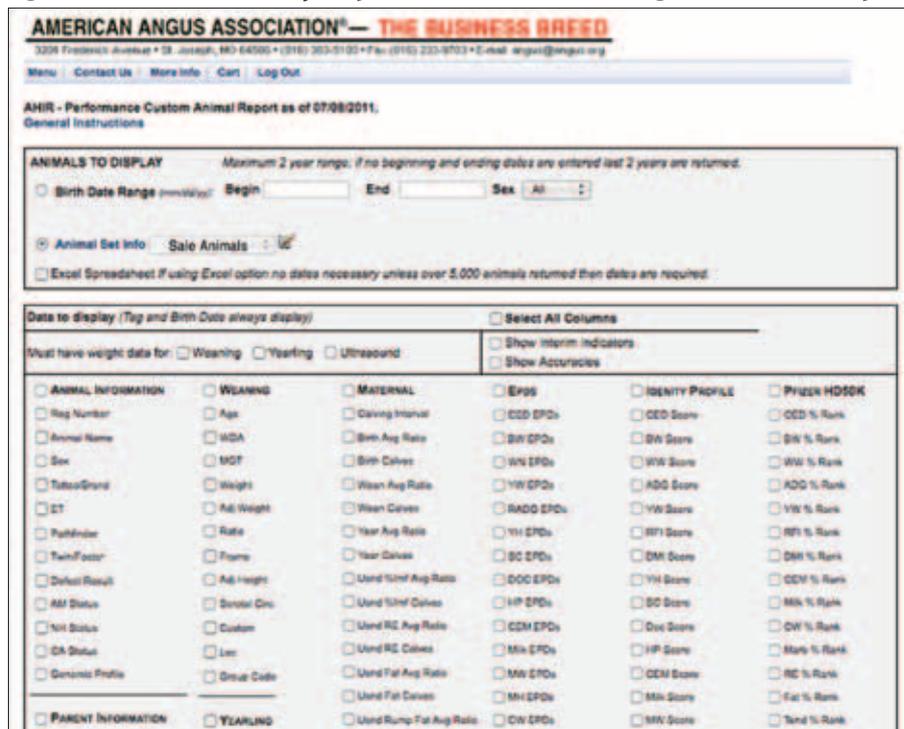
There are currently nine interactive tools on AAA Login, including three that are new: Customer Manager, ET Records and ET Technician Manager.

"The Association has these tools available for everyone, and they can be particularly beneficial for small-scale breeders if they will take some time to study the options and use them," Laughlin says. "There are applications for these tools that haven't been thought about yet, but the breeders who use them now will ask the questions that will help us develop new ones."

Fig. 3: Animal sets can be modified once created

Fig. 4: Members have a variety of options available when creating a custom animal report

Fig. 5: Pull animal sets into a data display template using the 'Data Sheet' option