

The Angus Connection

September 2025

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Association
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A Letter From Your President...

Walter Nichols



Virginia Angus Association
Members,

It is a great pleasure and a profound honor to be serving as the President of the Board of Directors for the Virginia Angus Association. As we move into the third quarter of this year, I am proud to be part of this incredible community of breeders, producers, and enthusiasts who share a deep commitment to the Angus breed. The trust you have placed in me is a responsibility I take seriously, and I am excited to continue working with each of you to uphold the legacy of excellence that defines our association.

Our association has a rich history built on a foundation of hard work, integrity, and a shared passion for raising top-quality Angus cattle. This is a legacy we must not only maintain but also build upon. As we look to the future, we face both opportunities and challenges. The agricultural landscape is constantly evolving, and it is crucial that we adapt and innovate to ensure the continued prosperity of our members and the Angus breed in Virginia.

As we head into the busy fall season, I want to extend my best wishes to all of you as you prepare for your upcoming production sales.

I wish you nothing but the best for a successful sale season. The hard work and dedication you put into your breeding programs are a testament to your commitment to the Angus breed, and I am confident your efforts will be rewarded.

I also want to remind you of a valuable benefit of your membership. We are here to help you get the word out about your sales! Please be sure to send us your sale flier and information. We will happily share it on our social media channels and on the association website, for free. The more we can promote your sale, the more potential buyers will see it. Let's work together to make this a successful season for everyone.

As we look ahead to October, our thoughts are with the many junior members who are preparing to show at the Virginia State Fair. We are praying for safe travels and hope that all our junior exhibitors have a great time and make lasting memories. It is through their passion and dedication that the future of the Angus breed is secured.

As always, we look forward to hearing from all of you. Your suggestions, comments, and yes, even your complaints, are essential for us to serve you better. We encourage you to reach out and

A Letter From Your President, (cont.)

share your thoughts.

I am confident that by working together, we can achieve great things. The dedication and passion of our members are our greatest assets. I invite you to join me in this exciting chapter for the Virginia Angus Association. Your insights and commitment are invaluable, and I look forward to connecting with many of you at our upcoming events and meetings.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication to the Angus breed.

Best regards,
Walter Nichols
President
Virginia Angus Association

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MARCH 7, 2026

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American Angus Board Update

By Paul Bennett

Dear Fellow AAA Members,

Thanks for the opportunity to give you a brief update of happenings at the American Angus Association. As your director, I've had a fast paced summer with many exciting Association matters and interactions with our membership. Our board just finished a busy week of committee Zoom meetings to give us a running start on the upcoming quarterly board meeting. The agenda for our September board meeting looks to create a busy three days in St Joseph. I'll highlight a few of the topics that will be covered:

- Review the recently completed Member Survey results
- Consider the 2026-28 Long Range Objectives and Core Strategies
- Review the FY2025 year-end financial projections and FY2026 budget approval
- Review the AAA Genomic Ownership Policy
- Review the rollout of the Data Driven Herd recognition program

- Review feedback on new EPDs- Functional Longevity, Teat Size, and Udder Suspension
- Consider the addition of a mating tool to project parent average EPDs and inbreeding coefficient
- Review of the 2025 National Angus Junior Show
- Review show judge selections
- Review AngusLink and summer video sales success
- Review the Powered by Angus national ad campaign
- Review Angus Foundation scholarship process and procedures
- Consider reestablishment of the Resource Development Committee at AF
- Discuss the Angus Foundation strategic plan
- Discuss supply and sales analysis at CAB
- Discuss Targeting CAB Prime-EPD research for a best practices recommendation
- Discuss the AGI strategic plan

- Discuss the Methane and efficiency research project
- Discuss the Heart Health research project
- Review AGI's customer service survey results
- Receive GeneMax update and growth plans
- Review of genetic evaluation clients
- Receive Ag Media and Livestock Publication Council awards and recognition of API
- Review new advertising features and options

As always, I welcome the opportunity to discuss Association matters with you at any time. Our breed is well positioned to be at the forefront of the beef industry, but staff and board are constantly looking for new opportunities to provide added value to an American Angus Association membership.

Best wishes for a successful Fall 2025!
Respectfully, Paul Bennett

Smashed Tacos

RECIPE COURTESY OF:
CERTIFIED ANGUS BEEF
TEST KITCHEN



Ingredients

- 2 pounds Certified Angus Beef ® ground beef, 75% lean, divided into 12 portions
- 2 teaspoons coarse kosher salt
- 2 teaspoons chili powder, divided
- 1 teaspoon granulated garlic
- 1 teaspoon granulated onion
- 1/2 teaspoon cracked black pepper
- 1 teaspoon bouillon concentrate (or 1 bouillon cube)
- 1 packet (5 grams) Sazon seasoning mix
- 2 teaspoons hot sauce
- 12 corn tortillas
- 8 ounces shredded quesadilla cheese (or Monterrey Jack)
- 1 small white onion, diced
- 2/3 cup chopped cilantro

Preparation Instructions

1. PREP SEASONING AND SAUCE. Combine salt, 1 teaspoon chili powder, granulated garlic, granulated onion and black pepper to make taco seasoning; set aside. For sauce, bring 1 cup water to simmer; add 1 teaspoon taco seasoning, 1 teaspoon chili powder, bouillon, Sazon seasoning and hot sauce. Stir sauce to dissolve ingredients; pour into squeeze bottle or glass measuring cup.
2. SMASH. Roll each portion of ground beef (about 3 ounces each) into a ball; preheat griddle to medium-high. Place balls of ground beef on griddle, leaving plenty of room between each. (Note: sear in batches based on surface space.) Use a large spatula to smash each ball of ground beef extremely thin to a diameter slightly larger than tortilla. Add some remaining seasoning on each patty, squirt each with about 1 tablespoon sauce. Top each with a tortilla.
3. CREATE TACO. Once beef develops a deep brown crust, flip tortilla side down, making sure to fully scrape up beef and keep crust intact. Evenly top each beef patty with cheese. Once cheese melts and tortillas begin to crisp, top each patty with about 1 tablespoon onion and cilantro. Use spatula edge to press a crease down middle of each patty, fold tortilla over to form taco. Remove from heat; serve with remaining taco sauce.

Ginger Hill

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Are you a Data Drive Herd?

Since Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR®) was established in 1958, Angus breeders have answered the call to collect and submit phenotypes on their herds. These phenotypes have been used to create numerous genetic selection tools for registered Angus cattle and continue to fuel the weekly genetic evaluation. In the last several years, the American Angus Association Board of Directors has been discussing ways to better recognize herds who continue to contribute to the AHIR program. Data Driven Herd highlights those committed to improving both their own herd and the Angus breed.

Current AHIR programs

The Pathfinder program that was established in 1978 to identify individual females that breed early as heifers and consistently remain in production while weaning above average calves for the herd.

Inventory Reporting is the Association's whole-herd reporting program that ensures complete production records on all females in a herd are reported annually. All herds participating in Inventory Reporting and its second-tier, MaternalPlus®, are recognized on angus.org. Females who qualify for MaternalPlus also display the logo on EPD/Pedigree Look-up.

In 2021, phenotypic traits submitted for individual animals were listed on their registration certificate and EPD/Pedigree Look-up. The traits listed in bold indicate those phenotypes that are currently included in the genetic evaluation.

In August 2025, a new recognition program, Data Driven Herd, was launched. This program aims to recognize herds who contribute to AHIR by submitting sets of phenotypes on a variety of traits each year. Qualifying herds will be recognized annually at one of three levels: bronze, silver or gold.

How to qualify as a Data Driven Herd

The first step to qualify for this recognition program is to be enrolled in Inventory Reporting with at least five cows enrolled.

Herds must be actively participating in whole herd reporting to establish their active inventory of females. The number of enrolled cows in your herd establishes the base for the minimum number of required phenotypes for each trait.

In addition, a herd's registrations during the award year must equal at least 50% of the active cow herd inventory. For example, if a herd has 50 cows enrolled in Inventory Reporting, there must have been at least 25 animals registered during the award year.

To qualify for the Bronze level, herds must also submit at least 8 traits, meeting the minimum number required for your individual herd, which is based on the number of cows enrolled in Inventory Reporting.

To earn the Silver level recognition, herds must report at least 10 traits, meeting the minimum number required for your individual herd.

To earn the top recognition level, Gold, herds must also be earning Inventory Reporting's MaternalPlus® status, and submit at least 12 traits, meeting the minimum number of required phenotypes for each trait. Each award year includes data submitted Oct. 1 – Sept. 30. The period aligns with the Association's fiscal year.

Percent required for each trait

Table 1 lists the required percentage needed for each trait. For example, if a herd has 100 cows enrolled in Inventory Reporting, to meet the minimum requirements for birth weight, 75 birth weights would need to be submitted from Oct. 1 – Sept. 30. This allows room for females that may not have a calf born because they were a donor, moved a calving season or a calf dies, etc.

Looking at another example, scrotal requires a minimum of 20%. For a herd with 100 cows enrolled, at least 20 yearling scrotal measures are required. Twenty percent is required for scrotal as we consider that approximately 50% of the calf crop will be bulls, and not all those bulls will remain in the herd until yearling age.

The percentages were set to be attainable to achieve, but also realistic

regarding each specific trait and the number of records a herd may be able to collect. Keep in mind, while the minimum number of phenotypes were set for meeting the requirements of the program, submitting complete contemporary groups is still the best practice for genetic comparisons. Complete contemporary groups are the best way to ensure that calves receive credit for their performance within the herd. If records are not reported, then it affects all the calves within a group, not just the calf with a missing record.

For phenotypes to meet requirements for each trait, they must be collected within the appropriate age window for the individual trait. The program is designed to recognize herds that are contributing at an above average level; the parameters for the program may be reviewed and updated as needed.

Herd recognition

Recognition will be awarded annually at Angus Convention. Herds earning the Data Driven Herd status will also have access to the logo for use in advertising.

The first recognition will be awarded at the 2025 Angus Convention in Kansas City, Mo.

How to determine your status

To view your current status, you can visit your AAA Login account on angus.org. On the homepage in the AHIR widget, click on the green "New AHIR Data Driven Herd Recognition Program" button.

This will load a dashboard that lists details about the program as well as your herd's current status. The current status of the herd is for data submitted during the fiscal year (Oct. 1 – Sept. 30). Listed are the number of cows currently enrolled for your herd, the number of registrations since Oct. 1, 2024, and the number of completed traits. There is also a table that lists the minimum number of phenotypes needed for each trait for your herd as well as how many are submitted. If a trait has a green check mark next to it, the minimum has been met for this program.

For decades, Angus breeders like you have been dedicated to collecting and submitting phenotypes. Due to this commitment, the Angus breed has the largest single beef breed database in the world. These continued efforts are what continues to support the genetic advancement of the breed and ensures seedstock and commercial herds have accurate selection tools for their breeding programs.




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New Calves, New Opportunities

Fall calving is here. Set the calves up for successful data collection.

By Esther Tarpoff, Director of Performance Programs

For those who have fall-calving females, now is the time to prepare for a successful calving season. The contemporary group a calf is in at birth will continue to follow that calf as it gets older. Records from calving are also fueling the three new traits released in May 2025: functional longevity (FL), teat size (Teat) and udder suspension (UDDR).

When to measure

Calving records should be recorded within 24 hours of the birth to have an accurate measure for the birth weight of the calf and udder quality of the dam. For complete information on calving records, visit www.angus.org/ahir/how-to-collect/calving.

There are several data points that should be collected at calving for both the calf and the dam. For the calf, tag, tattoo, sex, sire, dam, date of birth, recipient dam if an embryo transfer, calving ease and birth weight should be recorded. In addition, if the calf dies prior to weaning, it is important to still record the calf in the calving book but include a birth disposal code for the cause of death. Keeping records of calves born, even those that may not be registered, is important for calculating the dam's calving interval and maintaining complete cow production records as well as providing records for the FL EPD.

For the dam, calving is the time to record scores for teat size and udder suspension. These scores are used in the Teat EPD and UDDR EPD.

How to measure

When measuring birth weights on calves, using a digital or spring scale is the best method and the only method accepted by the Association. Options like hoof tapes or heart and girth measurements provide only an estimated weight, often overestimating the weight of smaller calves and underestimating the weight of larger calves.

Birth weight is the greatest recorded trait each year. In fiscal year 2024, there were more than 347,000 birth weights submitted to Angus Herd Improvement Records (AHIR®).

For calving ease scores, use the 1-to-5 scoring scale from the Association. Table 1 lists the scores and their description. While all females can have a calving-ease score recorded, only calving-ease scores from first-calf heifers are included in the calving-ease traits.

For the dam, birth of the calf is the time to collect scores on the udder. Teat and udder scores are collected at calf birth because that is a critical time in that calf's life to ensure colostrum is received. If a calf is unable to nurse after birth because of udder problems, inadequate colostrum intake can have

long-lasting effects for the calf.

Teat size and udder suspension are both scored on the combined worst quarter of the udder and each trait is scored independently on a 1-to-9 scale. In fiscal year 2024, there were more than 100,000 scores submitted for udder conformation. For more information, visit www.angus.org.

How to record

Each member has their own system for successful data collection. Some choose a notebook and hand record the information. Others use the Angus Black Book, while others use a digital device or the calving-book feature in the Angus Mobile App.

After collection of quality and accurate records, the next step is reporting the data to the American Angus Association to have those phenotypes included in the weekly National Cattle Evaluation.

Table 1

Score	Description
1	No assistance
2	Some assistance
3	Mechanical assistance
4	Caesarean assistance
5	Abnormal delivery

Advertise with Us!

Breaking News! We are excited to announce that 2026 will be bringing some fresh changes to the Angus Connection Newsletter. It will no longer be a quarterly newsletter and it will become the Angus Connection MAGAZINE! This new publication will come out twice a year in the Spring and Fall. Check out our new advertising rates below and reach out to Stefanie at vaangus1933@gmail.com with questions.

Full Page	\$350	Quarter Page	\$100
Half Page	\$175	Breeder Business Card	\$40

Virginia Angus Association

644 Greenville Ave #220
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Upcoming Events

October 4	Point Pleasant Angus Production Sale, Bland VA
October 18	Whitestone Farm Brand of Quality Sale, Aldie VA
October 31	Hokie Harvest Sale, Blacksburg VA
November 1	MC Livestock Fall Bull Sale, Greenville VA
November 1	Mystic Hill Bull & Female Sale, Culpeper VA
November 28	Pratt Cattle Company Black Friday Bull & Female Sale, Atkins VA
December 5	Knoll Crest Total Performance Bull Sale, Redhouse VA
December 12-14	VA Angus Breeders Show in Harrisonburg, VA
December 13	BCIA Culpeper Bull Sale, Culpeper VA
March 7	VAA Annual Meeting