

# Maternal Plus helps improve ranch's herd

By **CRAIG REED**  
For the Capital Press

ROSEBURG, Ore. — Birth weights, weaning weights and heights, calving ease, disposition — Kathy Love records, studies and analyzes all of these numbers and information for her registered Angus herd.

Love has been submitting information on her 40 mother cows and their calves to the American Angus Association's Maternal Plus program since it was established three years ago. Love and her husband, Paul Heberling, have been members of the association since 2005.

"Maternal Plus helps in my goals to produce the best maternal herd I can," said Love. "Because I concentrate on functional traits in the cow, this program helps me by saving and analyzing the data I have collected. I have been using the program since it was introduced and I have been very pleased with the additional information on my whole herd and on individual cows and bulls.

"I get that information sooner and there are a number of interesting charts and graphs that show me where my herd is going," she explained. "I report data on the entire herd, not just those I decide to register. I get a more accurate picture of the changes in my whole herd over time and that helps me plan for the future."

The Love-Heberling Angus herd is one of only three in Oregon that participate in Maternal Plus. The other participants are Daniel Heath



Craig Reed/For the Capital Press  
Paul Heberling and Kathy Love check on the condition of the Angus calf crop on their Roseburg, Ore., area ranch late this summer. They participate in the American Angus Association's Maternal Plus program, sharing detailed information on the cows and their calves.

of La Grande, Ore., and the Foss Angus Ranch of Terrebonne, Ore. Across the U.S., about 160 producers submit information to Maternal Plus.

"The hope is that if everybody participates, we can see how our numbers compare to the national herds and trends, how my calves compare to the national herd," said Love.

Earlier in her life, Love, 64, was a certified public accountant who enjoyed studying data. Now she concentrates on the data she compiles on four-legged animals.

"My herd is now almost entirely registered Angus cattle, but I still consider myself primarily a commercial producer," Love said. "It took me over 20 years, but I am mostly pleased with where

my cows are today."

Love and Heberling are both from dairy and beef backgrounds in Minnesota. They moved to Oregon in 1992 to escape the severe winters of their home state.

Love was a U.S. Postal Service employee, and Heberling had a career with the state Department of Environ-

mental Quality. Love retired in 2005 to become a full-time rancher, and Heberling retired in 2011.

The couple purchased a few cows after their move west. They bought "whatever cow was cheap, preferably with a heifer calf on her." Their intention was to build up to a herd of 20.

## Online

Cattle producers can go online to [angus.org/Performance/MaternalPlusInfo.aspx](http://angus.org/Performance/MaternalPlusInfo.aspx) to learn more about the Maternal Plus program.

In 2002, they were offered three registered Angus heifers and they made the purchase from rancher George Sandberg of Roseburg.

"A year later, those three registered cows did so much better with their calves than my commercial cows," Love said. "After two years, it was easy to see the registered Angus were so superior to the rest of the cows."

Love began keeping more detailed data on her herd, she registered her young animals and she kept her registered heifers. The herd grew to 40 mother cows.

Love and Heberling concluded 40 cows and their calves would better utilize and maximize their property.

They created 10 pastures and a rotational grazing schedule for the animals. Sixteen water tanks were set up. Two springs and a well keep them filled.

"The pastures and tanks are evenly distributed throughout the ranch so we're using all the land and are able to have more cows," Heberling said. "The animals don't have to go more than a quarter mile to get water."

Considering an average of five heifers a year being kept back as replacement cows, the couple discovered providing a load of 35 uniform calves earned better money.

Most of the Love-Heberling calves are born in March. They are weaned in early September and are sold a month later, weighing 550 to 650 pounds. Some of the heifers are sold to an Oroville, Calif., cattle operation, where they become replacement cows. The rest of the heifers and steers are sold as stocker calves for the beef market.

## On the Cover

Paul Heberling is surrounded by Angus mother cows while feeding them hay on his Roseburg, Ore., area ranch. The ranch is part of the American Angus Association's Maternal Plus program, sharing detailed information on the cows and their calves in a national database.



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