

## Using the Limousin Inventory Management System

by Lauren Hyde, Ph.D., director of performance programs; Mary Zilk, bookkeeping and data processing administrator; and Kate Kusma, director of data processing

The Limousin Inventory Management System (LIMS) is an optional, Web-based way of doing business with the North American Limousin Foundation (NALF). By choosing to participate in LIMS, you pay an annual fee of \$15 per active cow and, in turn, be entitled to register, do the first transfers and record performance for that year's calf crop.

For those of you who register and transfer most of your calves, LIMS is a great way to save money. Currently, the least costly registration (\$15 for up to 120 days from birth) and transfer (\$12 for up to 60 days from sale) is \$27 per animal, but with LIMS it is only \$15 (regardless of the age at which you register)—a \$12 savings for you.

LIMS provides a number of other benefits, from incentive to capture unbiased, complete performance and reproductive information for more reliable genetic predictions to a simplified way of conducting business. LIMS also will help NALF more accurately predict revenue for budgeting, planning and prioritizing new programs.

### Sign Up Today

To participate in LIMS, you must be a founding, lifetime, annual or junior member current on your annual member-service or activity fees. Because LIMS is available only through the Web (to avoid costly mailings associated with whole-herd reporting), you also must have access to the Internet and have a valid e-mail address on file with NALF.

Enrolling in LIMS is easy. Just go to the secured, members-only portion of NALF's Web site ([www.nalf.org/members](http://www.nalf.org/members)), activate your access privileges, if you have not already done so, click the LIMS button in the upper right-hand corner of the member site's home page, then click the "Join LIMS" link. In just a few moments, all of the active cows that you (and your linked memberships and the partnerships in which you are the primary member) own will appear.

### Communications

NALF communicates to LIMS participants through e-mail only. To receive critical information about upcoming deadlines and detailed reporting procedures, verify the e-mail address NALF has on file for your account is the one you check most frequently.

NALF broadcasts e-mail messages throughout the year to all LIMS participants and each message always contains the word "LIMS" in the subject header. If you are a LIMS participant and are not receiving LIMS e-mail messages, contact the NALF office to verify your e-mail address.

### Home Page

You must complete all LIMS functions—inventory management, no-progeny reporting and heifer-retention reporting—online. The easiest way to access tools for completing those functions is to click the LIMS button in the upper right-hand corner of the member site's home page. You will then be transferred to the LIMS home page, which provides links to instructional materials; reporting forms (inventory management, heifer-retention reporting and no-progeny reporting); and, for your convenience, NALF's online recording and transfer tools.

### Inventory Management

Using the Inventory Management tool on the LIMS home page, you can maintain your herd inventory at any time. To retrieve your cow inventory, first make sure you have selected "Females"; the appropriate season (spring, fall or all); and the owners of interest, including you, your linked members and any partnerships for which you are the primary member. If you also would like to see which cows you already have designated as disposed, check the "Include Disposed Animals" box. After you have completed your selections, click the "Retrieve Inventory" button to display your inventory. It might take several

minutes, especially if you have a large herd or a dial-up connection.

After the system displays your inventory, you may dispose of a cow, change a cow's calving season or designate a cow as a donor or recipient dam by clicking the appropriate button. To dispose of a cow, select the appropriate code from the pull-down menu in the "Remove From Herd" column and enter the disposal date in "mm/dd/yyyy" format in the next column. If you disposed of a cow in error, select the blank bar above the "C-Aborted" option in the "Remove from Herd" column and clear the disposal date to reset her to active status.

After you have completed your updates, click the "Submit Changes" button. The system will display another page, asking you to approve or decline your updates. You must click the "Approve" button to ensure your changes enter NALF's database.

You must enroll all active spring-calving cows by February 15 and all active fall-calving cows by July 15. That will establish your active-cow inventory for progeny recording, registration, transfer and assessment for the upcoming production year (January 1 through December 31 for spring-calving cows and June 1 through May 31 for fall-calving cows). You cannot add or remove cows from the current inventory after those dates. If you add a female after a deadline, you cannot maintain her through LIMS until the following year. If you remove a female after a deadline, you still must pay her \$15 annual fee.

### No-Progeny Reporting

During the current production year, you must report at least one of the following for each active cow in your inventory:

- a calf record;
- a reason for no progeny reported, or
- a reason for removing her from the herd.

From November of the current production year through February 15 of

the following year, NALF will e-mail you reminders to report production data for all active cows in your current spring-calving inventory for which you have not yet reported a calf or a reason for not having one. Likewise, from April of the current production year through July 15, NALF will e-mail you reminders to report production data for all active cows in your current fall-calving inventory.

On February 15 (spring) and July 15 (fall), NALF will flag cows without production data as inactive and remove them from your inventory for the upcoming year. Calves from those cows will not be eligible for the LIMS registration, transfer and performance-recording benefits unless you reinstate them by reporting all missing production data and paying a \$45 reinstatement fee for each cow.

To complete the no-progeny report, log on to the member site, go to the LIMS home page and click the “No Progeny Reporting” link. On the “Retrieve Inventory” screen, keep the default season and click the “Retrieve Inventory” button. The system will display a list of cows for which you have not yet reported calves, reasons for not having calves, or reasons for disposal during the season and year of interest.

Using the pull-down menu in the “Select Reason for Not Reporting Progeny” column, select the appropriate no-progeny or disposal code. If you select a code in error, you can reset it by selecting the blank bar above the no-progeny-code options.

If a cow that had a calf during the current year is in the no-progeny list, you must report the calf to NALF using the online recording tool. A link to the online recording tool is available on both the LIMS home page and the member site’s home page.

After you have completed the no-progeny report, click the “Submit Changes” button. The system will display another page, asking you to approve or decline your updates. You must click the “Approve” button to ensure your changes enter NALF’s database.

To validate for yourself that you have completed the no-progeny report correctly, there should be no cows in your list when you return to the no-progeny form and attempt to retrieve your inventory.

### **Heifer-Retention Reporting**

NALF will e-mail you reminders from May through August 15 and from November through February 15 to update your respective spring-born and fall-born yearling-heifer inventories. Using the heifer-retention tool on the LIMS home page, you can designate retained and disposed heifers and record exposure data, breeding-season dates and grouping information. You also can indicate which of the retained heifers were open or culled later in the season.

Although heifer-retention reporting is optional, it will help ensure your active inventory accurately reflects incoming replacement heifers. Plus, after LIMS participants have submitted a sufficient amount of data, NALF will use it to produce heifer pregnancy expected progeny differences (EPDs).

After you click the “Heifer Retention Reporting” link on the LIMS home page, the system will display a list of heifers born during the appropriate date range for the current reporting season. If you would like to view a different set of heifers, you can change the dates in the upper left-hand corner of the form and click the “Retrieve” button.

After the system displays the heifers in which you are interested, you may enter their exposure and disposal data. To enter exposure data, first read the note at the top of the form that describes how to designate breeding-management groups. For each heifer that was exposed, enter the breeding-management code, check the “Exposed” box and enter the dates of exposure in “mm/dd/yyyy” format.

The first date of exposure is the earlier of the dates she was artificially inseminated (AI’d) or pasture exposed, and the last date of exposure is the latter of the dates she was AI’d or pasture exposed. The last date of exposure also can be a date in the near future, which is useful for situations in which the breeding season lasts until after the reporting deadline. For heifers not exposed to breeding, make sure the breeding-management code is blank, the “Exposed” box is not checked and both dates are blank.

To dispose of a heifer, whether or not she was exposed, select the appropriate code from the pull-down menu in the “Select Disposal Code” column and enter

the disposal date in “mm/dd/yyyy” format in the next column. If you disposed of a heifer in error, select the blank bar above the “H-Disposition” option and clear the disposal date to reset her to active status.

After you have completed your updates, click the “Submit Changes” button. The system will display another page, asking you to approve or decline your updates. You must click the “Approve” button to ensure your changes enter NALF’s database.

### **Billing Procedures**

The annual assessment of \$15 per active cow entitles you to register, do first transfers up to 24 months of age for females and 30 months for bulls, and record performance for that year’s calf crop. LIMS-assessed cows sold and transferred to either LIMS or non-LIMS participants carry the entitlement to registration and first transfers for their calves to the new owners.

The annual assessment on a LIMS cow used as a donor dam will cover the registration and transfer of her first reported calf that year—whether natural or by embryo transfer (ET). The annual assessment on a LIMS cow used as a recipient will cover the registration and transfer of the reported ET calf she raises. DNA parentage-testing requirements and fees will apply to any ET calf, regardless of the donor’s or recipient’s LIMS status.

Billing will occur in two equal installments based on the active cow inventory you submit. NALF will mail invoices for the first installment April 1 for spring-calving cows and October 1 for fall-calving cows. The office will mail invoices for the second installment October 1 (spring-calving cows) and April 1 (fall-calving cows). Payment will be due at the end of the month billed: April 30 or October 31.

NALF will not bill LIMS participants with 10 or fewer cows in their inventories in two installments. Instead, they will receive single bills for their full amounts. NALF will mail invoices to those members April 1 (spring-calving cows) and October 1 (fall-calving cows) with due dates of April 30 and October 31, respectively. **LW**