

FAWN CALF SYNDROME UPDATE

The American Angus Association[®] has learned that the board of Angus Australia has recently decided to notify its Angus breeders that three specifically identified animals have been named as either carriers or are “highly likely” to be carriers of the Fawn Calf Syndrome (FCS) mutation. Those three animals’ names are posted on the Angus Australia website. This same posting goes on to observe that “due to the difficulties in precisely identifying and validating suspected FCS affected animals, it is not currently possible for Angus Australia to identify or publish, with sufficient certainty, any additional FCS carrier animals.”

Following the reliable and consistent advice of the geneticist to whom it looks for guidance in this area (Dr. Jonathan Beever of the University of Illinois), the American Angus Association has been unwilling to identify animals either suspected (“highly likely”) or rumored to be FCS-affected or FCS carrier animals. That unwillingness also applies to the animals listed on the Angus Australia website. Rather, the Board of the American Angus Association continues to await the results of a test that can accurately and definitively segregate carriers from non-carriers. In this regard, the American Angus Association’s Board continues to be persuaded by the reasoning contained in Dr. Beever’s posting of December 21, 2009, ([click here](#)) and the Q&A with him that was published on this website on March 25, 2010 ([click here](#)). While they are worth re-reading in their entirety, several points from each bear repeating.

First, Dr. Beever believes that a successful test will be developed soon that does not generate false positives but rather definitively identifies carriers and non-carriers. Second, he remains more convinced than ever that this mutation will affect a small percentage of AI bulls – somewhere in the range of 3% to 4%, perhaps less. Given these beliefs, the American Angus Association remains concerned that naming names in advance of such a fully-developed test runs

the risk of incorrectly – and perhaps permanently – stigmatizing entire lines of animals that may well turn out to be free of the FCS mutation.

The American Angus Association will keep you apprised on the status of Dr. Beever's ongoing efforts to develop such a test.