

It is the obligation and responsibility of the AWA to pursue, adopt and make available to its members the most up to date and advanced technologies and programs. It would be a great disservice to current and future members to turn a blind eye to systems that have been adopted and proven throughout the industry. The “total herd” method of registration has been used for many years by numerous associations to obtain the necessary data to promote genetic improvement, growth of the breed and financial security for their associations.

## Overview of CAR and Digital Beef

### Complete Animal Reporting (CAR)

The **Complete Animal Reporting (CAR)** is a “total herd” (Wagyu) data collection registry program. The focus of this program is the collection of data on all females and resulting calves within the breed association. This is vital in obtaining the most accurate data set/EPD’s on breeding animals.

The AWA structure has moved from standalone registration fees to assessment fees on breeding age females. This type of system has been used in the cattle industry for many years and has been adopted by the vast majority of breed associations including;

Red Angus  
Simmental  
Gelbvieh  
Charloais  
Hereford  
Limousin  
Salers  
Beefmaster  
Akaushi

After reaching out to the membership to submit questions they may have concerning the CAR program, 13 members submitted the following questions. I have left the questions exactly as they were submitted.

# Submitted CAR Questions

1. "There are animals I purposely don't register because I slaughter them, castrate them, or purposely don't breed. This system will require me to pay more and I don't appreciate it."

The information from all calves is vital to the system working. It is built upon knowing the data on animals that are registered and animals that are castrated or harvested. Complete Animal Reporting is built for looking at the total picture in order to have accurate data across the board. You can claim to be a straight A student if you only count the classes with A's and ignore the C's and D's. Are you number 1 in a class of 2 or number 1 in a class of 100? Or are you number 1 in a class of 100 only if you count the students born on January 1? **Total picture to get true picture.**

A look at an average AWA cow herd and the costs associated with the CAR system.

Avg AWA herd of 20 cows =  $20 * \$30 = \$600/\text{year}$  with credit for 20 registrations given.

If you register 40% of calves = 8  
Standard reg not CAR  $8 * \$40 = \$320/\text{year}$ ----difference of  $\$280/20$  cows =  $\$14/\text{female more/year}$ .

If you register 60% of calves = 12  
Standard reg not CAR  $12 * \$40 = \$480/\text{year}$ ....difference of  $\$120/20$  cows =  $\$6/\text{female more/year}$ .

If you register 75% of calves = 15  
Standard reg not CAR  $15 * \$40 = \$600/\text{year}$ .....NO difference than with CAR

Yes it will be an increase per cow over the old system....most will or should fall into the 50-60% registration rate if you are in the seed stock business. Our average member will be spending around  $\$150-\$200$  TOTAL more per year due to CAR. From that increase the members have been given a  $\$200+$  /yr. management system in Digital Beef and upcoming accurate EPD's. You will pay little more but get a bigger return for your dollar.

2. "The CAR System participation should be voluntary. Let the enthusiastic supporters of the system, get it up and running and enthusiastically work through the kinks. Once the advantage of the system is realized, others will embrace it and participate with accurate data."

The AWA has had a voluntary system in place the last several years. This has not produced the needed data, just as the majority of other breed associations have moved from a voluntary to required data system for this very reason. In order to compile the most accurate data, data from all females/calves must be included. This is the basis of the industry "total herd" or "complete animal" systems.

3. "Since I won't have weaning weights for 6 months or more how can I test for genetics to see the parentage and SCD ETC before then? Also for a bull calf I'd like to know if its quality before castration so timing is difficult. How can we test before we wean?"

The ability to request for genetic testing has not been changed. Once you enter the calf in the system it receives a "U" number. This U number will follow the calf until registration has been completed post weaning. Once the animal receives their U number, genetic testing is available.

4. "What happens to the funds submitted early in the year when no calf is registered that year?"

The assessment fee is not a registration fee. The assessment fee for the females goes toward supporting the systems that provide collection and processing of data. A registration credit is given with the assessment fee.

5. “How can data produced from this program be considered accurate with no oversight on the information that will be provided to the system. It has the potential to be very inaccurate in my opinion. Or data could be easily falsified. What will be the margin of error on the results?”

When becoming members of the AWA you have agreed to the following “I understand I am responsible for the accuracy of the information I provide to the American Wagyu Association...” Willful misrepresentation of data/info submitted to the AWA is grounds for voiding registration and/or suspension from the AWA.

The data will result in accurate data in that it includes all female and calf information, not just those applying for registration. If you are only looking at data from the top performers, then a true and accurate overall picture is lacking. Falsified data will come out in the end aided by the entry of all calf data. If a bull is used in 20 herds and all herds submit data on all calves, the breeder who inflates his data will be minimized by the other 19 herds. If it is an owned bull, and the breeder inflates data to create more “sellable EPD’s,” the true performance of that sire will come to light within a couple calf crops, perhaps sooner with the aid of genomics. The possibility of some inaccurate data that will and has proven to work itself out in the end is no reason to not move forward in establishing Wagyu EPD’s.

6. “I know entering in my recipient dams is optional – what are the positives and negatives of not entering my recip cows? “

The advantage is you will have those recips within your herd inventory and have the management tools available for them as well as your registered females. There is a fee for the PC/RC and commercial females of \$10, which will go towards the costs of registrations. So if that female has an ET calf an additional \$30 would be owed. If you clean up with a registered bull and have F1 calves from those recips, keeping track of their production record is good management and the calf may be registered after required data has been provided for no additional costs.

7. "If I have a donor Wagyu dam that I deactivate for flushing what do I need to do to reactivate her?"

Donor cow status is cleared every year. Donor cow status should only be taken on those females that will not be bred that year to calve naturally. She will be on your active list at the start of every year to be enrolled or activated. Activate her for the season/year she is scheduled to calve.

8. "If I have a donor Wagyu dam that I deactivate for flushing and she has a calf and I forget to reactivate her what happens?"

If you use the Donor cow code and she has a natural calf that year, a reactivation fee of \$40 and the cost of the registration for that calf at \$40 is due.

9. "If I have a donor Wagyu dam that is deactivated for flushing and I have an embryo calf out of that dam (who is not active) can I register this embryo calf without the dam being active? (assuming she is still in flushing program)"

Yes. ET calves can be registered for \$40 if the donor dam is not active.

10. "Is there a time period where if I continue to delay the calving season of an active cow in my herd that there is a penalty or repercussion?"

Yes. The delay for heifers is allowed. Once a female reaches 24 months, she must be enrolled. The spring or fall designation has no affect upon activation or enrollment. The split of the seasons was put into place to help with spreading out the costs for members. If you wish to enroll all your females in the spring and some calve in the fall, there is no issue. If the female is enrolled in the spring and calves past July, just move her to the fall herd and there is no issue. No additional assessment fee will be issued. Her data will be due prior to the fall cutoff date in the following June.

11. "I thought I understood that a said cow or bull must be active to register an animal out of this cow or bull. How does this work with animals that are long dead and we are trying to register an embryo calf out of said animal?"

Bulls are not enrolled. An ET calf out of a deceased donor can be registered for the \$40 registration fee. If you have ET calves from a donor you do not own and she has been made inactive by the owner and is still alive, there is no issue, the straight registration fee of \$40 is all that is needed.

12. “How do I handle heifers that I register as feeder animals or as fullbloods for breeding and then decide to feed them out for meat production?”

If heifers have been exposed to calve at 2 years they must be enrolled for the year of their predicted calving. All heifers will be listed on your breeding female list once they turn 24 months and therefore must be enrolled. Update status through the disposal codes if needed. Reproductive efficiency is a valuable trait to record. Therefore female exposure to calving rates is an important data point.

13. “How do I put all of my calves born in the same season in a contemporary group for comparison through DB?”

When you enter your calf’s birthdate, DB has a feature that will calculate for you the number of calves that will be within a contemporary group (CG) according to the chosen weaning date. For example, if you choose to wean 10 calves on Oct 1, you may have 5 calves in one CG and 5 in another. If the same group is weaned on Oct 20 it may contain 7 calves in a CG and 3 in another CG.

14. “I have been using Cattlemax several years. Can Cattlemax data be uploaded to DB and used flawlessly?”

We are currently working with DB and Cattlemax (CM) to get a process to upload data from CM to DB. Once that system has been established, the AWA will notify the membership. The transfer of data over to DB is extremely important in getting the AWA moving more quickly towards EPD’s.

15. “How does it work when I flag an animal for sale? Can all other breeders see that my animal is for sale? Is this a function we are going to use as a communication tool for breeding stock for sale?”

Yes, there is a process of posting an animal for sale that will result in a posting in the Marketplace page in DB (tab at the top of the home page). There are animals currently posted at that page.

16. “When selling a cow with a calf un-weaned, how does the calf weaning weight become important?”

Weaning weights (WW) and dates (WD) are an important data point for the calculation of EPD’s. For instance, WW is used in the calculation of the MILK EPD. The date gives us an age to use in EPD’s that deal with growth and carcass post weaning. Weaning weight and date are also required to achieve full registration status.

17. "Calves can be weaned at various stages; 70 days, 120 days, 180 days, and 200+ days. Weaning weights should be replaced by weaning **date** weights."  
Both weaning weights and dates are required.

18. "How will the weight difference at 70 days, 120 days and 200 days affect data?"  
There are adjustments built into the EPD calculations that take into account the different ages of calves at weaning. This is why it is critical to report both WW and WD.

19. "Does everyone have to purchase a scale now? Personally I think we all need one and this breed seems especially bad for not having breeders with scales but it should not be mandated. We don't even require weights in breed sales. But now that scales are mandated why wouldn't the AWA reach out to Truetest or Gallagher to get a members discount?"  
There are resources available for those who have a few head and do not wish to purchase scales such as vets, coops, FFA chapter etc. etc. Gallagher has run scale specials at our AGM and I would suspect they will do the same this year.

20. "What happens when some of these commercial guys raising Wagyu can't deal with the slow growth and light wean weights, will they put their thumb on the scale now that it's going to be public information? (Rhetorical question)"  
When becoming members of the AWA you have agreed to the following "I understand I am responsible for the accuracy of the information I provide to the American Wagyu Association..."  
The AWA has no control or ability to make people honest. Dishonest people find ways to cheat the system. Nonmembers do not sign the agreement our members do in regards to the accuracy of the information provided.

21. “What about the farms that have spent thousands to millions of dollars finding out what genetics work best for them. Will they be forced to reveal their data (intellectual property) to competition in order to register animals?”

Those that breed superior animals will have an increase in market demand for those animals. This will also result in proof that their animals are superior and therefore have a higher value. I do not consider Birth Weights (BW) and weaning weights (WW) IP. These are phenotype data points that are necessary for the production of EPD's throughout the breed. What will be posted for those animals that are registered will be actual and adjusted weights as well as corresponding EPD's, ratios and indexes. This is standard throughout the cattle industry.

22. “Why do we care about wean weights in this breed really? Why not focus on finish weights? We typically don't run calves into the sale barn like commercial calves do where wean weights are critical. What's the 30 month weights on a Steer and a mature weight on a 3 year old cow or bull, that's all I care about. Any weights earlier than that will make you second guess getting in the breed.”

As stated prior, the WW and WD are an important point for configuring EPD's. We will also be collecting finishing weights, dates, carcass weights, grade, Rib eye, marbling score, days on feed etc. etc. We are only making WW and dates mandatory so that we can get a documented data point for configuring other EPD's further down the life line of an animal. We highly encourage the submission of all data, yearling weights, mature cow weights, hip height etc. etc. We cannot manage what we don't measure.

23. “What if I lose a calf before it is weaned?”

Report the loss in Digital Beef with the proper disposal code. Reporting losses and reasons are also very important both for calves and breeding females. Wagyu have a great reputation for longevity. This trait is highly valued in the industry. Proper and complete record keeping is the backbone of this program.

24. "I hear the board vote for Digital Beef was 5 to 4, who voted which way? I suggest changes like Digital Beef should have been submitted to the members and not in the hands of a select few members who happen to be on the board of directors who have been secretive about the new process. There should have been member discussions with AWA management before the Digital Beef bomb was dropped."

Board meeting minutes are posted on the AWA website.

Digital Beef is a software program. It is the platform in which data can be uploaded and in turn downloaded to other systems for the creation of EPD's. This was not kept a secret. This type of system was needed to move the AWA forward with providing EPD's. This system is used by several other breed associations. Please refer to the previous comparisons chart between the previous system and Digital Beef. This shows without a doubt a better overall system for both the member and the AWA for our future.

25. "It seems to be contra-productive to be compelled to buy scales, submit what I think is private and proprietary data."

It is my belief that the reporting of phenotypic data for the purpose of establishing working EPD's that in turn enables the improvement of the Wagyu breed as a whole is not "contra-productive." I would consider that very productive for the betterment of all involved in the breed and an absolute necessity for the future growth of the breed within the industry  
Is pedigree/parent verification information proprietary?

26. "If I purchase a cow, or bull, or embryos from Australia, will the U.S. AWA accept those animals without additional, and clearly unneeded, DNA testing and the costs of AWA registration into Digital Beef?"

Digital Beef is a software management program. There is no cost to put animals into the software program. Animals coming from overseas will be held to the same requirements and fees as those produced in the US.

27. Why was it so urgent to leave ABRI that you signed on to CAR without input from the members and without due consideration of how this incredibly complicated and burdensome system would negatively impact the members and staff?"

ABRI would be comparable to Digital Beef. Both are software management systems. CAR is a data collection registration program.

Digital Beef offers a more complete system for the AWA to build upon. The staff issue is a reason for the move. Digital Beef will allow the members to be more active in some of the "little" things within registry process, therefore enabling staff to focus on "big" things. Other associations that use Digital Beef have similar size staff's but register 5x as many animals. The growth of the breed and the large increase in data entry in the near future required a new system where the members take a more active role in data entry and management of their animals.

28. "If it was deemed necessary to leave ABRI, why wasn't more effort taken to find a simpler system that is better suited to a small breed association such as ours?"

I think this is directed towards Digital Beef and not CAR.

Digital Beef was found to be the best fit for the AWA and its ability to use the platforms chosen to create our future EPD's. Digital Beef is used by many breed associations of all sizes: US and Canadian Gelbvieh, US and Canadian Shorthorn, Maine Anjou, US and Canadian Limousin, Black Hereford, Akaushi, Chianina just to name a few.

29. "How do you expect the members, most of whom are small producers (50 head or less) and some of whom are not computer-savvy, to take the time to learn this unwieldy, non-intuitive, confusing system when they have their hands full taking care of their herds, maintaining their property, and marketing their animals?"

I think this is directed toward Digital Beef and not CAR.

The previous list of associations that use Digital Beef presents the case that cattle breeders of many different breeds and sizes that contain the same demographics as the AWA have been able to successfully use the system. The AWA has provided written tutorials on how to enter data and use some of the basic functions of the system. We are currently working on some video tutorials to go along with the posted written tutorials. Once the system is familiar, it will actually help in the management of your herd.

30. "Have you considered that membership and revenue may drop by making the registration such a tedious and exasperating process and by eliminating easy access to data that was formerly available?"

I think this is directed towards Digital Beef and not CAR.

The AWA looked at all scenarios and spoke with other associations that have moved to Digital Beef and concluded this was a necessary move for the future growth of the AWA. The process of entering data or submitting for testing was taken straight from the previous hand written forms. The main difference is that you must "create" the calf in order for the system to recognize that animal for further processing. I am not clear on what "easy access to data" you are referring. Your herd has been downloaded into DB. You can view your herd, individual animals, vac records, breeding records, individual herds, semen and embryo inventories, DNA results, progeny, sales records etc. etc. at a click of a button. Once familiar with the system I believe you will find it is time saving and easier than the prior process.

31. "Considering that the members circa 2010 were promised that if they invested significant sums of money to test their herds for the genetic disorders, that the progeny of non-carriers would then be considered free by pedigree, why have you omitted this status on the registrations and in the database?"

Currently Digital Beef is not able to work with GeneProb. We continue to look at the situation and hopefully work towards a solution. The encouragement to have animals tested would be based upon knowing what recessives were present in your herd in order to breed accordingly. Once the animal has been tested for the recessives, then the results are posted. If a complete generation has been tested free of the recessives the resulting generations will be free. The test results can be seen for each animal when looking at the pedigree. This feature was added last year.

32. "If a heifer lose a baby or that baby is not so great, you are not going to register it. But you are playing for something that may not get used. Think about the bull calves you will steer and not need registration! Don't seem right."

As stated previously, all animals need to submit data in order to get a complete picture. The assessment fee is not a registration fee. No calf, losing a calf, below average calf are all points that will be put into the data system. The fee is associated with the costs of running these programs. The systems to run EPD's, Genomic Enhanced EPD's, and Indexes etc. are not simple software programs and are not free to access. Even though that cow may have lost a calf or produced a subpar calf, that information is put into the system and "run" through her pedigree and history.

Total production history for an individual and their pedigree is very important information. Would you pay the same amount for a cow that in the past 6 years of her life she bred up 3 times and had only one calf that was kept as breeding stock, verses a cow that bred up every year the past 6 years and 5 out of 6 calves performed above avg and were registered? Complete data for complete picture.

33. "Will the breeders be able to turn off a setting in their profile to keep their data secret?"

The goal is that registered animals will have public data. The unregistered U animals data will be used within the EPD calculations but not be seen by anyone other than the owner and administration. We are currently working with Digital Beef to complete.

34. "I have a question about contemporary groups in regard to weaning weight. Will calves that are raised by 100% Wagyu cows, half- blood cows, or bottle-fed be put into different contemporary groups? Will spring calves and fall calves be put into different contemporary groups?"

Yes. By choosing the management style of the calf, such as bottle calf, natural or AI, this will result in the calf being placed in the appropriate group. Fall and Spring will not be in the same group due to age difference. ET calves are not placed in the same group as natural born/dam raised calves. Additionally, EPD calculations/data adjustments take into account the age of the dam.

35. "If we have a cow, who blood test positive for pregnancy and she is in the CAR system but loses the calf, does that cow have to be reactivated and pay the reactivation fee. (The reactivation fee on the CAR fees page, middle of the page)"

No. Reactivation only occurs if you do not submit data on that female by the December cutoff date for the spring herd and June cutoff date for the fall herd. At that date, the data must be entered on that female in order to stay active. If she did not calve, enter that code. If she calved then the calf died, create the calf, enter the Birth Date, and then choose the proper disposal code for the calf's death. If she calved and weaned a calf, then create the calf, enter the Birth Date, and enter the WW and Weaning Date.

## Digital Beef (DB)

**Digital Beef (DB)** is a registry software program. DB has taken the place of ABRI/ILR2 program. DB will allow the AWA to build and implement important programs for the future. It is a registry software program that provides herd management to the AWA members that in turn “talks” to the AWA registry system.

Digital Beef is currently used by several breed associations including, US and Canadian Gelbvieh, US and Canadian Shorthorn, Maine Anjou, US and Canadian Limousin, Black Hereford, Akaushi, Chianina just to name a few.

Here are some of the features that Digital Beef offers over ABRI just on the member side. The internal AWA advantages are numerous as well.

	DB	ABRI
Ability to look up an animal based on various search criteria and display the animal on the computer screen	Yes	Yes
Ability to export all of a members' animal records into a spreadsheet data format so that the member can work with the data using Excel/Spreadsheet	Yes	No
Ability to export, view and/or print various "canned" reports containing information about the member's animals	Yes	No
Ability for members to record new animals by entering animal information directly into the system.	Yes	No
Ability for members to "upload" numerous animals for recording into the system without the involvement of the AWA office	Yes	No
Ability for members to perform inbreeding coefficient calculations	Yes	Yes
Ability for members to enter various animal measurement information directly into the system without involving the AWA office.	Yes	No
Ability for member to enter trait information about animals into the system.	Yes	Yes
Ability for members to upload a list of measurement data (such as weights, hip height, scrotal circumference, ultrasound REA/IMF, etc.) from existing historical computerized records	Coming Soon	No

such as spreadsheet data directly into the system without involving the AWA office.		
Ability for members to change/correct various permitted animal data without involving the AWA office.	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Ability for members to set an animal to "dead" or otherwise disposed of in order to keep the list of active animals accurate.	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Ability for members to change their own membership account information such as address, phone number, email address, etc.	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Ability for a member to organize its herd animals into various pastures to enhance ability for member to manage its herd.	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Ability for a member to enter/record/track "treatments" such as vaccinations into the system to enhance ability for member to manage its herd.	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Ability for a member to enter breeding information into the system to enhance ability to manage the breeding activity of its herd.	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Ability for a member to transfer an animal to another owner in the system without involving the AWA office.	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Ability for a member to flag an animal within the system as being "for sale" and a resultant association-wide "marketplace" for animals that are for sale on a private-treaty basis.	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Ability for a member to track semen and embryo inventory owned utilizing inventory management and reporting functionality	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>