



# NEWS

*For Immediate Release*

*February 16, 2009*

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*This release is available electronically*

## **Gelbvieh Board Approves Aggressive Policy to Eliminate AM Gene**

The American Gelbvieh Association (AGA) Board of Directors recently approved an aggressive plan and policy to eliminate the Arthrogyrosis Multiplex (AM) gene from the Gelbvieh herdbook. Arthrogyrosis Multiplex (AM) is a genetic defect found in certain lines of Angus cattle. The Balancer® cattle registered with the American Gelbvieh Association have the possibility of being AM carriers if the Angus genetics used in the hybrid seedstock carry the AM gene.

The AGA Board began discussions on a policy at its January 2009 board meeting following recommendations from the Rules & Bylaws Committee during the 2009 AGA National Convention in Denver.

With input from the membership, the AGA Board and staff began crafting a policy that will eliminate the AM gene from the herdbook.

“The AGA Board approved an aggressive plan that requires all bulls applying for an A.I. permit to be tested AM-free before an A.I. permit will be issued,” explains Dr. Wayne Vanderwert, AGA Executive Director. “The AGA is also testing the 30 most popular A.I. sires as a risk assessment for our breed.”

Vanderwert says the Gelbvieh herdbook’s exposure to the AM gene is relatively low, but obviously may increase as more Angus sires and dams are tested. “We are in a good place and the policy will help us eliminate AM carriers from the herdbook with a step-up policy over the next three years. By January 1, 2012, all Balancer cattle will need to test AM-Free to be eligible for registry.”

The other component that makes the Gelbvieh policy more aggressive in identifying AM-Carrier animals is the requirement to test all AM-50 females in the herdbook. An AM-50 animal has one or more AM-Carrier parents or more than one AM-Carrier grandparent.

“AGA is underwriting testing on the first 500 AM-50 females in an effort to identify the AM-Free and AM-Carrier females,” explains Vanderwert. “We aren’t just concentrating on the sire-side of the pedigree to tackle this problem. By underwriting 500 tests this will cover virtually all of the AM-50 females currently identified in the Gelbvieh herdbook.”

“The AGA’s policy is aggressive and tackles the AM genetic defect from multiple angles,” says Vanderwert. “The ultimate goal is to eliminate the AM-gene from the Gelbvieh herdbook. This policy goes the distance to ensure the goal is met.”

A complete copy of the Gelbvieh policy and plan to eliminate the AM-gene is available on the AGA web site at [www.gelbvieh.org](http://www.gelbvieh.org).

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