

# Data recording forms arriving on BDGP farms

**D**ata recording forms have started arriving on Beef Data and Genomic Programme (BDGP) farms this week. The forms are designed to facilitate the collection of valuable cattle breeding data. Having this data allows ICBF provide scheme participants with more accurate genetic evaluations (ie, Euro-Star index) for animals on their farms.

The following is a list of data that must be recorded as part of the BDGP.

- Calf docility and quality.
- Dam docility and milk ability.
- Stock bull docility and bull functionality.

These are the same traits, that were recorded as part of the previous beef data programme, so herd-owners should have little problem completing the required data.

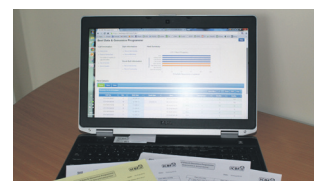
**How to record?** The approach to recording each trait is quite simple, with each farmer asked to assess animals on a one-to-five scale, with one indicating the animal is very poor for the trait in question and five indicating that the animal is very good for the trait in question. A score of three indicates the animal is about average.

**Which animals?** The report lists all calves born from 1 January 2015 and that were on participants farms at five months of age (regardless of whether they have since been sold or not). In addition, all dams of these calves and any stock bulls that produced these calves are listed. Participants must record relevant data

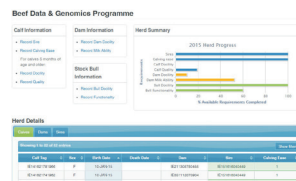
on all such listed animals. In scenarios where animals have since been sold (eg a cull cow or stock bull), herd-owners should return a score based on their experience of the animal. Where weanlings are about to be sold and you have not yet received your form, then simply record the relevant data (calf quality and docility) on a notepad and then transfer to the forms once you receive them.

**Missing sires and calving surveys?** In addition to the traits above, some herd-owners will also receive a "missing sire and calving ease" recording form (a yellow form), requesting any data that was not recorded at the time of calf registration. It is critical that this data is also returned as these traits are also part of the BDGP. Herd-owners will be expected to record this data at the time of calf registration either through Agfood.ie, Animal Events or via an approved farm software package.

**How to return the data?** Herd-owners can return data in two ways, either using the FREEPOST envelopes provided or electronically via the ICBF or DAFM websites. At this stage, an increasing number of farmers are opting to record the data electronically as the option provides herd-owners with an excellent overview of the level of valid data recorded for their herd for each of the traits in question. We will be devoting a full article to this option in next week's BDGP page. Herd-owners are encouraged to return all data within 28 days of receiving their forms.



BDGP surveys can be recorded online at [www.icbf.com](http://www.icbf.com) or via the forms received in the post.



Sample page for recording BDGP survey data online at [www.icbf.com](http://www.icbf.com)



One of Tom Gannon's freshly calved heifers with a Replacement Index of €150 (5 Stars). She was sired by IS4 (SEPA TEE JAY) with a Replacement Index of €146.

## Q&A

**Q. How do I register births online?** Calf births can be registered online at [www.agfood.ie](http://www.agfood.ie). Herds that have not used the service before must first register their details online. A letter will then be sent to you with your login details, which will allow you to access all relevant online services. Births can also be registered via farm software providers.

**Q. How do I record survey data on [www.icbf.com](http://www.icbf.com)?** BDGP survey data can be recorded by logging on to "Online Services" at [www.icbf.com](http://www.icbf.com). From the menu options select "Services" and then "Beef Data Genomics Programme". Herds that have not used the service before can text the word "PASS" to 089 4577663 to receive their password. Where the mobile number is not on the ICBF database, herds should contact ICBF on 1850 625 626 to receive their login details. Data can also be recorded via farm software providers.

## FARMER FOCUS: TOM GANNON

### 'AI suits my farming system'

**Name:** Tom Gannon, Charlestown, Co Sligo.  
**Farming System:** Suckler to beef.  
**BDGP cow reference No:** 48  
**4 or 5 Star Females:** 23 Cows; 12 Heifers.  
**Stock Bull or AI:** 100% AI  
**Replacement Strategy:** Breeding all my own replacements.

**Why did you join the BDGP?** It's hard to make money in suckling; hopefully there will be long-term gains from participating in the programme.

**What replacement strategy do you plan to implement in light of the scheme?** I weigh all my calves twice a year. Based on weaning weights, I identify my milkiest cows. When I am selecting heifers to keep as replacements, I pick heifers from my highest Index, milkiest (cows with calves with the best weaning weights) and my quietest cows. The scheme isn't going to change how I pick heifers; I am meeting the scheme requirements with this plan already.

**What criteria do you use when selecting AI bulls?** I am an AI man for Progressive Genetics and do all my own AI. The farm is very fragmented but I calve the cows from September which allows me to AI most of the cows indoors. When I am selecting bulls to use, number one for me is high Replacement Index bulls with very good milk and docility. I am not picky about breed. Where I can, I try to use high-reliability bulls. I try my best to select bulls to suit each cow. AI suits my system and fits in well with the scheme.

**How do you currently record animal data?** Currently, I register all my calves online at [www.agfood.ie](http://www.agfood.ie).



Tom Gannon with his son Hugh.

[agfood.ie](http://agfood.ie). For last year's scheme I recorded all other required scheme data on [www.icbf.com](http://www.icbf.com). I find it much quicker and handier compared with filling and posting back the paper forms. I wouldn't be the best at computers, but I find the websites are easy to operate and straightforward. I will continue recording online.

## DATES FOR THE DIARY

**September:** Genotyping tags, paper survey forms and any remaining BDGP Euro-Star reports arriving on farms.  
**Sat 19 September:** Shorthorn high replacement index open day on the farm of Peter Luttrell, Athy, Co Kildare. For more info, phone 086 0461442.  
**22-24 September:** National Ploughing Championships, Ratheniska, Co Laois. Livestock demonstrations at the *Irish Farmers Journal* stand. Your BDGP questions answered at the Department of Agriculture stand.