The major benefit of genomics is the increase in reliability which it will bring about before an animal has any performance data recorded on it. Genomics will not, however, replace the need for high levels of accurate performance data to be recorded on stock in order to increase reliability figures even more. Genomics will simply make it easier to identify animals with greater genetic potential from an earlier age, but it is the subsequent performance data which will confirm this. This is why farmers are required to record data such as calving difficulty, cow milkability, calf quality, etc, as part of calving difficulty, cow milkability, etc, as part of genomics. The BDGP has ensured that these important data flows will continue over the next number of years. Farmers need to ensure that data is submitted on time each year and that it is recorded as accurately as possible. Accurate data recorded by farmers will mean accurate Euro-Star indexes at the other end.

Weaning weights
In France, approximately 1.3m weights are collected on suckler calves each year. All of these weights are recorded on farm. In Ireland, approximately 300,000 weights are collected on suckler calves each year, but the majority of these are mart weights. Less than 20,000 calves are weighed on-farm each year in Ireland. Weight-recording calves is something that all suckler farmers should consider doing. On-farm weights will allow farmers to make better management decisions and will also significantly increase the reliability figures on the Euro-Star Indexes of cows.

Tissue tags
Just under 90% of 2016 BDGP tissue tags have been returned to date. This is excellent progress and BDGP applicants who have yet to return tags are encouraged to do so ASAP in order to receive genomic evaluations in the December evaluation run. If you have any questions please contact ICBF on 1850 625 626 or email query@icbf.com.

Q. I would like to start weight recording my calves but I don’t have a weighing scales.
A. The average suckler herd size in Ireland is approximately 17 cows and many farmers may not be able to justify the cost of purchasing weighing scales. ICBF has a weighing service with technicians located all over the country. For more information, go to www.icbf.com or call 022 882 0452.

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The recurring theme throughout all of the presentations was the need for sustained flows of accurate on-farm data to ensure the continuous increase in index reliabilities and to further improve the effectiveness of genomics. The BDGP has ensured that these important data flows will continue over the next number of years. Farmers need to ensure that data is submitted on time each year and that it is recorded as accurately as possible. Accurate data recorded by farmers will mean accurate Euro-Star indexes at the other end.

Data driving output

Q. How will recording more data benefit my herd?
A. The reliability percentages for an animal’s Euro-Star Index increase as more data becomes available on that animal. Therefore, the more information that you record on your animals the more accurately the Euro-Star Index will reflect the animal’s performance on the ground. This will be important when making future breeding decisions.

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