

1. Important Dates

- ✚ **Thursday 30th April 2009.** ICBF Board Meeting (AM), AGM (PM) Maldron Hotel, Portlaoise, 10:30-16:00.
- ✚ **Thursday 2nd May 2009.** Sheep Board Meeting (AM).

2. Recommendations arising from the ICBF Beef Breeding Consultation Meeting – Tuesday 31st April

New Docility Evaluations

- ✚ New across breed docility evaluations, incorporating both historical linear scored data and new data collected through the Suckler Cow Welfare Scheme, be released to the beef industry for AI sires. These proofs to be published as official on the ICBF website and on the ICBF Active Beef Bull List for Spring 2009.
- ✚ That ICBF & the beef industry review the release of these new docility evaluations for all animals (stock bulls & young calves) over the next 6-12 months.
- ✚ Current proofs for Limousin AI & stock bulls based on within-breed BLUP methodology continue to be published, until such times as the Limousin Breed Assn are comfortable with switching solely to the new system. It is anticipated that this will take 6-12 months.
- ✚ That ICBF initiate a review of data recording systems for both farmer and linear scorer recorded docility to ensure a consolidated system in the future which is more accurate and complete than the two systems currently used.

ICBF Active Beef Bull List – Spring 2009

- ✚ The objective of the ICBF Active Beef Bull List is to promote the increased use of high index AI bulls on both commercial and pedigree beef farms.
- ✚ Key features of the ICBF Active Bull List for Spring 2009;
 - Reliability of 50% or more on Suckler Beef Value.
 - Four or five stars on Suckler Beef Value.
 - Maximum of 20 bulls for any given breed.
 - The published list in the Irish Farmers Journal would be restricted to the following economic indexes and individual traits.
 - Economic Indexes; Suckler Beef Value, Weanling Export and Milk & Fertility
 - Individual traits; Calving Difficulty, Maternal Weaning Weight and Docility.
 - The list to include reliability and both within and across breed star information.
 - Each bull must have a minimum of 1,000 doses available for sale in Ireland.
 - ICBF, AI companies and herdbooks to ensure that all bulls on the list are consistent with goals of each organisation and the further development of the relevant breed.
 - ICBF will make available an extended list of all available AI sires on the ICBF website along with their full genetic evaluation information.
- ✚ A draft list will be sent to all participating AI companies and herdbooks for feedback and refinements. List to be published in next weeks Irish Farmers Journal Sucker AI supplement (Thursday 9th April).

Genomic Selection

- ✦ Genomic selection, which is genetic evaluation using information on the DNA signature of an animal, was launched by ICBF for Irish dairy sires in Spring 2009. Ireland was the second country in the world to do so for dairy cattle but now the opportunity exists to extend our expertise to beef cattle. In dairy cattle we have seen an increase in reliability of EBV of young bulls from approximately 32% to 50%; the benefit of genomics is greater in low heritability traits such as fertility. This will increase genetic gain by 50%.
- ✦ In order for genomic selection to be successful we need to know the best DNA signature under Irish production systems. To determine this successfully for Irish beef cattle we need DNA from at least 1,000 beef bulls with moderate to high reliability for key traits such as calving difficulty and carcass traits. These bulls could be AI bulls or stock bulls. Animals with reliability figures of >60% for any trait will be useful which equates to approximately 15 to 20 progeny.
- ✦ We can get DNA from different sources such as semen or blood. The techniques to get sufficient DNA from hair to use on this technology do not yet produce consistently good results. Dr. Dawn Howard, TEAGASC is currently extracting DNA from prominent AI beef sires. We have set the target of having DNA on at least 1,000 beef bulls ready for genotyping on 1st January 2010 with the aim of having preliminary genomic proofs on beef sires by Autumn/Winter 2010. Over the coming weeks and months we will be seeking semen straws or blood samples from AI or natural mating beef bulls; the objective is to reach our target of 1,000 straws to accurately identify the best DNA signature.
- ✦ ICBF and Teagasc to compile a list of the most wanted AI sires for each breed and forward this list to the Breed Assns and AI organisations.
- ✦ ICBF and Teagasc to compile a list of the most wanted stock bulls for each breed and forward this list to the Breed Assns. This list to be accompanied by a protocol for collecting DNA from the farm (DNA button tag and/or blood sample).
- ✦ ICBF, Teagasc and Breed Assns, to develop a longer term strategy for the routine collection of DNA information for all registered stock bulls. Such an approach to cover future genomic and ancestry validation requirements.

3. ICBF Board meeting 2nd April 2009

At its meeting on Thursday the ICBF Board:

- ✦ Adopted the Audited Accounts for 2008 on a recommendation from the Audit & Finance Sub-Committee.
- ✦ Endorsed the recommendations arising from the Beef Breeding Consultation meeting held on Tuesday 31st March (see above).
- ✦ Noted that a strategic review of ICBF is to be initiated by the Chief Executive in the coming months.

4. Sheep Ireland Board meeting 2nd April 2009

At its meeting on Thursday the Interim Sheep Board:

- ✦ Noted the outcome for 2008 and the budget for 2009.
- ✦ Received and progress report from Pat Donnellen and Graham Potterton implementation of the Strategy for Sheep Ireland.

5. Lambplus[®]

- ✦ The 40-Day Weight Recording Screen was released for use on the Lambplus website this week.
 - The corresponding Recording Sheets for Flock owners signed up to the 'Paper' service were also developed and are available for use.



- ✚ An Update letter was sent out to all Lambplus Users with 4 main areas being covered:

- Recording Lambing Data
- Lamb Scanning Service
- Recording of Rearing & Mating Data
- Recording of 40-Day Weights

- ✚ It was stressed to everyone in the letter the importance of having your lambs NSIS tag numbers recorded in the database so the Lamb Scanning & Weighing work can be carried out. A copy of Lamb Scanning explanatory document is attached.



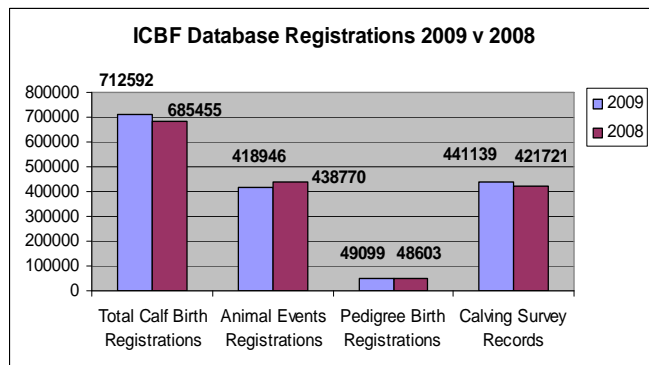
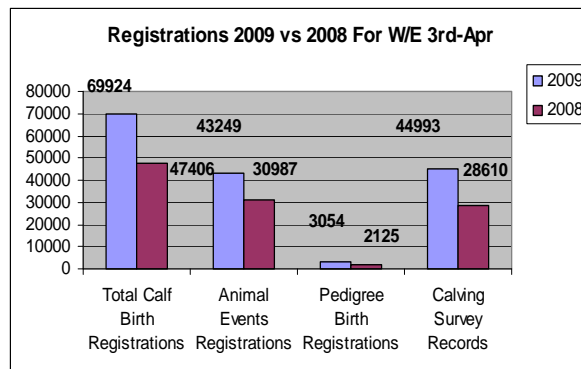
EID and DNA sample collection sheep tags.

- ✚ Completed Lambing & Mating Recording sheets for Flock owners signed up to the 'Paper' service continue to be sent in for keying.

- ✚ Another round of phone calls encouraging Users that have not already recorded any data (Inventory & Lambing in particular) was completed during the week.

- ✚ The first order of EID tags for the first MALP Flock to have lambs weighed have been received (see picture) and the delivery of the remainder of these tags is expected to arrive over the next 10 days.

6. Database



- ✚ 49,726 inseminations have been received so far in 2009, compared with 47,327 in 2008 for the same period.

- ✚ The 2009 Suckler Scheme calvings are continuing at a solid rate. In relation to 2008 born calves, the number of calves with a meal feeding introduction has increased to 764,000, with just over 670,000 of these having been weaned.

- ✚ The revamp of the Milk Recording system continues. Testing has continued this week, and it is envisaged that there are about another 2 weeks of testing left. Parallel runs on some Munster Milk Recording herds began this week and will continue next week. Munster milk recording got their first view of the system this week, and the feedback was very positive.

- ✚ Work has begun on updates to the Fertility reports for the coming AI season.

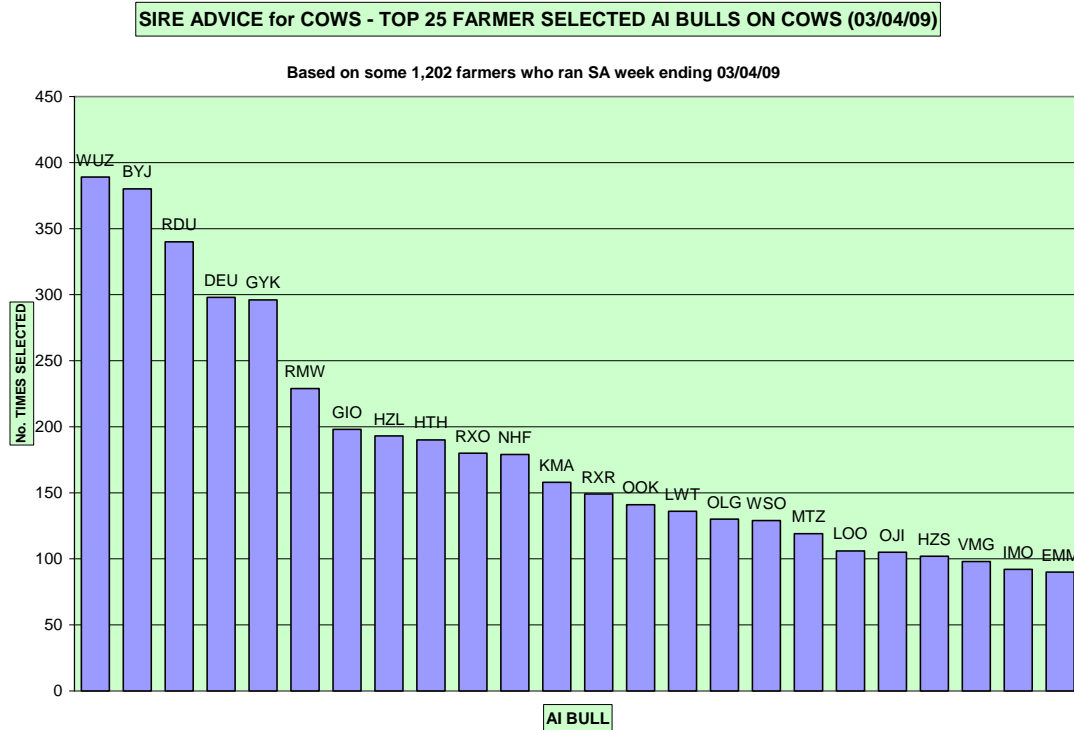
- ✚ Work on a new mechanism of sending and receiving Suckler scheme data to DAFF is beginning and will take a number of weeks to complete.

- ✚ Development on the sheep application continues, with on-going updates being released.

7. HerdPlus

Sire Advice analysis

- Some 1,202 farmers ran Sire Advice program up to 03rd April. See graph below which gives a breakdown of the most frequently selected bulls for cows. (Top 25 bulls). Farmers bull selections will be reflected on their Breeding Charts which will be posted next week. The bulls also get automatically saved to the AI Handhelds operated by AI technicians.



Fertility Report Redesign

- Redesign of the Fertility Report is nearing completion. Feature of the new version is that it gives the farmer a lot more control. It is now run off the web directly by the farmer who decides when it is runs i.e. when their data is complete. Due for release in 2 weeks.

8. Tully

- 165 applications have been received for the next intake in May and these bulls are being inspected by linear scorers with inspections to finish by the end of next week.
- Information is being put together for the Tully section of our website and it will be brought up to date over the next few weeks.
- Bulls that are purchased by A.I to date have been health tested for relevant diseases and these results are due early next week.

9. Genetic Evaluations

Dairy & Beef

The current routine evaluation is continuing with beef and calving currently being done. We expect to have these complete next week. Interbull files are due back on Tuesday 7th April. We anticipate having provisional proofs available to the industry for AI bulls late next week. Official publications dates will become clearer next week.

Genomic Update

DNA extraction is almost complete. The genotyping is expected to commence on Monday 13th April in Denmark with genotypes expected back at the end of the week. The genomic selection software will then be run to get genomic figures for these bulls.

International

Files of foreign data from France (Charolais, Limousine, Blonde d'Aquitaine, Salers, Aubrac & Parthenaise) and the United Kingdom (Limousine, Simmental, Belgian Blue) have been received from Institut de l'Elevage and Breedplan, and are being currently incorporated in the beef genetic evaluation.

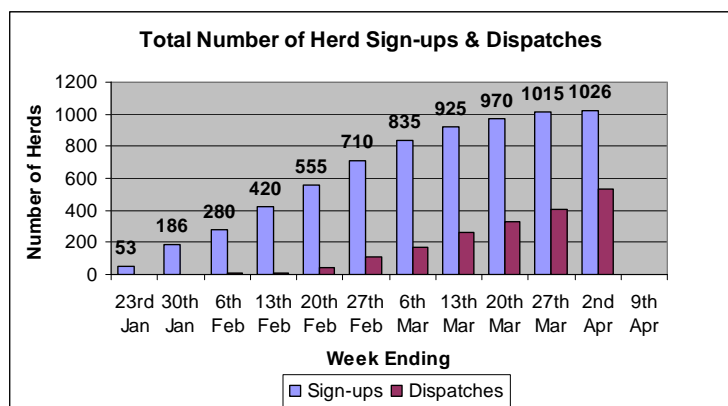
Docility for beef cattle

Results of further testing on a new joint evaluation for docility (using farmer scored docility and linear scorer docility) were presented at the beef industry meeting in Abbeyleix last Tuesday. A file of AI proofs based on the new work was sent out to the industry partners on the previous Monday. The feedback was much more positive for the new proofs and as a result the proofs will be made official for active AI sires this spring. The current official Limousine BLUP evaluation will continue to be published as well for a period of time. Subsequent feedback on the new proofs will decide when further publication for stock bulls and cows will be published.

10. GENE IRELAND[®]

Dairy

- ✚ We now have enough herds to test 65 test bulls.
- ✚ Sign-ups for the Pure FR and Norwegian Red bulls are no longer available. The Rotbunt can still be ordered separately.
- ✚ Spaces still available for the XBRED pack with the inclusion of Jersey and KiwiCross bulls from New Zealand.
- ✚ Very limited spaces available for the HOFR.
- ✚ Currently dispatching straws to herds that are due to start on the 10th April, hope to have a majority of these finished off early next week.
- ✚ Due to a time delay in semen availability it is possible that straws may be late getting to some herd-owners this year (once you allow time for sending to the various depots around the country and for Sales Reps and Technicians to obtain them). We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.



Beef

- ✚ Sign ups have reached 333 herds taking an average of 17 straws each. 110 herds ahead of the same week last year.
- ✚ A new CH bull CWB has been added to the panel. See his details on the G-EN-IR-ELAND[®] section of the website.
- ✚ Total straws sent out per bull currently on the panel are in the table below

BREED	CH	CH	LM	SI	SI	BB	PT	BA	AA	AA	AA	SH
CODE	RHI	CWB	RHF	RWV	SKU	RSA	KCP	WOA	RWB	FPG	LZE	CZB
STRAWS	355	12	100	96	466	615	242	416	287	129	220	150

11. Milk Recording

National Milk Recording Results by County - 10 day Period 24/03/09 to 03/04/09.

	<i>No. Herds Recorded</i>	<i>No. Cows Recorded</i>	<i>Average Herd Size</i>	<i>Average 24hr Milk kg/Cow</i>	<i>Average Fat %</i>	<i>Average Protein %</i>	<i>Average F + P kg</i>	<i>Average SCC</i>
CARLOW	8	480	60	23.8	4.08	3.42	1.79	327
CAVAN	21	850	40	26.5	3.94	3.22	1.90	303
CLARE	24	1,070	45	26.8	3.79	3.24	1.88	376
CORK STH	229	12,567	55	25.8	3.86	3.34	1.86	264
CORK NTH	233	13,706	59	26.7	3.85	3.34	1.92	283
DONEGAL	11	610	55	26.4	4.03	3.23	1.92	317
DUBLIN	6	377	63	22.7	4.29	3.53	1.78	358
GALWAY	19	960	51	28.9	3.86	3.25	2.05	313
KERRY	102	5,419	53	25.7	3.87	3.24	1.83	305
KILDARE	12	1,177	98	27.8	4.10	3.39	2.08	493
KILKENNY	37	2,325	63	24.6	3.94	3.29	1.78	223
LAOIS	31	1,930	62	22.0	4.16	3.42	1.67	310
LEITRIM	6	271	45	24.3	3.93	3.31	1.76	310
LIMERICK	117	6,557	56	26.6	3.76	3.28	1.87	303
LONGFORD	6	239	40	27.5	4.01	3.38	2.03	201
LOUTH	32	2,330	73	31.3	3.94	3.40	2.30	298
MAYO	23	907	39	26.2	3.52	3.28	1.78	439
MEATH	70	5,421	77	25.6	3.94	3.37	1.87	343
MONAGHAN	46	2,088	45	26.5	3.89	3.28	1.90	308
OFFALY	18	1,072	60	27.1	4.09	3.39	2.03	420
ROSCOMMON	4	205	51	23.8	4.16	3.35	1.79	562
SLIGO	10	354	35	24.3	3.30	3.18	1.57	294
TIPPERARY NTH	27	2,034	75	24.4	4.15	3.33	1.83	290
TIPPERARY STH	42	2,463	59	24.5	3.92	3.35	1.78	243
WATERFORD	49	3,442	70	25.2	3.91	3.29	1.81	241
WESTMEATH	14	883	63	25.9	3.93	3.34	1.88	417
WEXFORD	60	3,671	61	25.6	3.86	3.39	1.86	299
WICKLOW E	19	1,381	73	25.0	3.42	3.35	1.69	324
WICKLOW W	8	647	81	25.3	4.28	3.39	1.94	250
	<i>No. Herds Recorded</i>	<i>No. Cows Recorded</i>	<i>Average Herd Size</i>	<i>Average 24hr Milk kg/Cow</i>	<i>Average Fat %</i>	<i>Average Protein %</i>	<i>Average F + P kg</i>	<i>Average SCC</i>
National	1,284	75,436	59	25.8	3.92	3.33	1.87	325

National Milk Recording Averages by Province - 10 day Period 24/03/09 to 03/04/09

Provincial	No. Herds Recorded	No. Cows Recorded	Average Herd Size	Average 24hr Milk kg/Cow	Average Fat %	Average Protein %	Average F + P kg	Average SCC
Munster	823	47,258	57	25.7	4.03	3.30	1.89	288
Leinster	321	21,933	68	25.7	3.88	3.39	1.87	328
Connacht	62	2,697	44	25.5	3.82	3.27	1.81	384
Ulster	78	3,548	45	26.5	3.98	3.24	1.91	309

National Milk Recording Statistics - Herds, Cows & EDIY 03/04/09

Milk Recording Organisation	Total Herds Recorded YTD 03/04/09	No. EDIY Herds YTD 03/04/09	% Herds EDIY	Total No. Cows Recorded YTD 03/04/09	No. EDIY Cows YTD 03/04/09	% Cows EDIY
Progressive	1,424	371	26%	93,451	24,939	27%
Dairygold	898	211	23%	49,363	12,879	26%
Kerry	603	17	3%	30,068	997	3%
SWS	672	35	5%	34,161	2,111	6%
Tipperary	52	12	23%	3,279	1,150	35%
Arrabawn	45	31	69%	3,046	2,275	75%
Connacht	76	2	3%	3,847	74	2%
Donegal	3	3	100%	215	215	100%
Total	3,773	682	18%	217,430	44,640	21%

Recorded Cows by Milk Recording Organisation - Year on Year Comparison

Milk Recording Organisation	YTD 2008 Cows Recorded 01/01/08 - 03/04/08	YTD 2009 Cows Recorded 01/01/09 - 03/04/09	2009 vs 2008 Year on Year Difference (%)
Progressive	92,950	93,451	0.5%
Dairygold	47,996	49,363	2.8%
Kerry	32,988	30,068	-9.7%
SWS	34,709	34,161	-1.6%
Tipperary	3,278	3,279	0.0%
Arrabawn	3,345	3,046	-9.8%
Connacht	4,469	3,847	-16.2%
Donegal	214	215	0.5%
Total	219,949	217,430	-1.2%

12. Change in our phone numbers

The ICBF phone numbers have changed. Our new numbers have "88" added to them after the area code (023). Please amend your files as soon as possible. The old numbers will continue to work until May of 2009.

Old Number (example)	New Number (example)
Phone: 023 20222	023 88 20222
Fax: 023 20229	023 88 20229

Brian Wickham Ph.D. Chief Executive Irish Cattle Breeding Federation Soc. Ltd, Highfield House, Shinagh, Bandon, Co. Cork, Ireland, Phone office +353 (0)23 882 0222, mobile +353 (0)86 826 9911 Fax office +353 (0)23 882 0229 E-Mail bwickham@icbf.com ICBF Web site www.icbf.com



Lambplus® Lamb Scanning & Weighing Service 2009

1. Service

'Sheep Ireland' has contracted Donegal FRS to carry out the Lambplus ® Lamb Scanning & Weighing Service for all Lambplus flocks for 2009.

2. Personnel

The Donegal FRS 'Lamb Scanning Team' (Sean McHugh, Paul McGirr, Roger Hayes & Michael McHugh) have a lot of experience built up pregnancy scanning sheep in Ireland & UK. They have also completed a number of scanning contracts in New Zealand.

3. Training

The Donegal FRS team has undergone training in the use of the Scanning equipment for assessing Backfat & Muscle Depth in lambs at @ 110/120 days old. The Donegal team were trained by some of the same personnel that were responsible for this work in the old PSBIP scheme.

4. Age at Scanning

Lambs will be scanned at approximately 110/120 days old (+/- 7 days). This is the same age as they would have been previously scanned under the PSBIP Scheme.

5. Flockowners Responsibility – **Extremely Important******

- a) All Flockowners **must ensure** that all of the lambs that will be presented for scanning have already been registered with their '**NSIS Tag numbers**' in the Sheep Ireland database either through the Web or by paper.
If Lambs have not already been registered then a scanning visit cannot be setup.
- b) All Lambs must have an NSIS tag in both ears.
- c) A weighing scales should be available.
- d) Sheep should be in one location.
- e) A power supply should be available, close to where the lambs will be scanned.

6. Cost

Actual Cost

€100 Callout + €4/lamb (first 100 lambs) + €2/lamb (each lamb after the first 100).

2009 Lambplus Cost

Sheep Ireland has given a commitment that the total 'Lambplus®' cost for 2009 will be no more than what a farmer would have paid to DAF under the PSBIP scheme.

Sheep Ireland will ensure this happens by **subsidising the 'Actual Cost'** of getting lambs scanned so as each Lambplus member does not pay more than what they would have paid under the PSBIP scheme. (PSBIP Fees; €222 (first 15 Ewes) + €1.90 for each extra Ewe).

Each Flock Owner's Lambplus® membership fee will also go towards the cost of the Lamb Scanning Service. Examples as to how the costs will be calculated can be found overleaf.

7. Contact

'Donegal FRS' main contact person is Mark Deane (Tel: 074 9145386). Donegal FRS will contact you to setup the visit date.

Lambplus ® Lamb Scanning Payment Examples

Farmer : John Flock, Highfield House, Cork		Electronic Lambplus User
Number of Ewes	20	
Number of Lambs	30	
Lambplus Service:	Electronic	
Lambplus Service Cost:	€50	€50/Annum D.Debit (€60 Cheque/Cash)
Lamb Scanning Service Cost	€220	€100 + €4/Lamb for first 100 lambs +€2/Lamb >100
Total Services Cost (Incl VAT)	€270	Lambplus Service Cost + Lamb Scanning Service Cost
PSBIP Cost	€231	€222 (first 15 Ewes) + €1.90/each extra Ewe
Sheep Ireland Credit	€39	Total Services Cost - PSBIP Cost
Total Cost to Farmer (Incl VAT)	€231	This Cost should be no more than what would have been paid to DAF under the PSBIP Scheme

Farmer : Jim Flock, Highfield House, Cork		Paper Lambplus User
Number of Ewes	100	
Number of Lambs	137	
Lambplus Service:	Paper	
Lambplus Service Cost:	€190	€90 + €1/Ewe D.Debit (€100 + €1/Ewe D.Debit)
Lamb Scanning Service Cost	€574	€100 + €4/Lamb for first 100 lambs +€2/Lamb >100
Total Services Cost (Incl VAT)	€764	Lambplus Service Cost + Lamb Scanning Service Cost
PSBIP Cost	€383	€222 (first 15 Ewes) + €1.90/each extra Ewe
Sheep Ireland Credit	€381	Total Services Cost - PSBIP Cost
Total Cost to Farmer (Incl VAT)	€383	This Cost should be no more than what would have been paid to DAF under the PSBIP Scheme