

1. Important Dates

- ✚ **Tullamore Show - Sunday 9th August.** ICBF and Sheep Ireland will have stands featuring recent developments in cattle and sheep breeding.
- ✚ **Interbull & Interbeef Meetings – Sat. and Sun. 22nd & 23rd August.** In Barcelona before EAAP meeting.
- ✚ **Beef Breeding Consultation Meeting – Tuesday 1st September,** Abbeyleix Manor Hotel.
- ✚ **EBI €100 Discussion Group Open Day – Tuesday 8th September,** Paddy O’Leary’s Farm, Conna, Co. Cork.
- ✚ **ICBF & Sheep Ireland Board Meetings – Thursday 17th September,** Highfield House, Shinagh, Bandon, Co. Cork.
- ✚ **G-EN-IR-ELAND[®] Tully Open Day – Saturday 10th October,** Tully, Co. Kildare.
- ✚ **G-EN-IR-ELAND[®] Dairy Conference – Thursday 29th October,** Corrin Mart, Rathcormac, Co. Cork.

2. Teagasc Animal Bioscience Centre

On Thursday we met at Highfield House with a group of Teagasc scientists lead by Dr Richard Dewhurst who are in the process of establishing the Animal Bioscience Centre based at Grange. The purpose of the meeting was to familiarise our respective groups on each others mission, skills, capabilities, activities and resources. A copy of the two presentations that formed the basis of our discussion are in the publications section of our website (www.icbf.com).

The Animal Bioscience Centre has been established by Teagasc to utilise developments in molecular biology to bridge the gap between physiology and practical animal breeding. It was very clear from the meeting that ICBF is well placed to assist this new group by providing access to data and delivering research results to the cattle breeding industry. The Centre has attracted world class scientists who are well placed to research opportunities for our industry to benefit from the latest developments in molecular biology. We look forward to working together to bring the benefits of these exciting new technologies to cattle and sheep farmers in Ireland.

3. Strategic Plan

We are currently in the process of reviewing ICBF’s strategic plan for the next five years – 2010 to 2014. The current phase of the review is a consultation with various stakeholders. Some of the key issues that have been identified include:

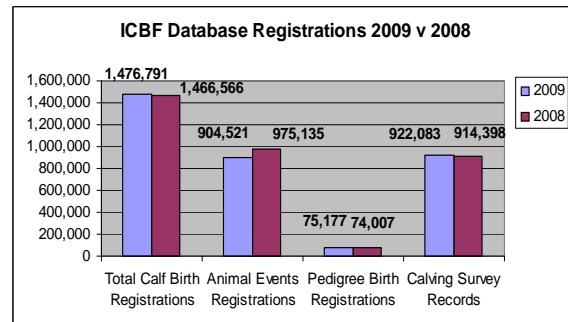
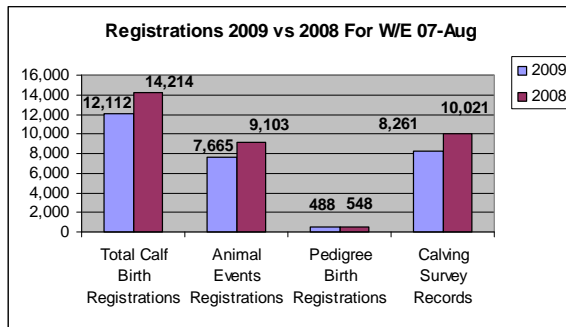
- ✚ Developments in computing, molecular biology and statistics are presenting a wide range of opportunities to save costs, to provide improved information services and to accelerate genetic improvement of the national herd.
- ✚ The current financial climate is putting pressure on all forms of funding for ICBF.
- ✚ The ICBF database has become a major asset to the farming industry and has considerable potential to support a range of new and innovative services that will help farming in Ireland to be more profitable. It is also a very valuable research resource.
- ✚ G-EN-IR-ELAND[®] is now well established with considerable potential to further increase the rate of genetic improvement of the national dairy and beef herds. It is also providing valuable research information.
- ✚ By following best practice in cattle breeding, dairy and beef farmers can achieve substantial long term increases in farm profitability.

These and other issues are the focus of the strategic plan. While I will be meeting with a number of stakeholders over the next few weeks to gather their input directly, it is not possible to meet every body. If you would like to make a submission or express a view point on any aspect of the future direction of ICBF please contact me directly.

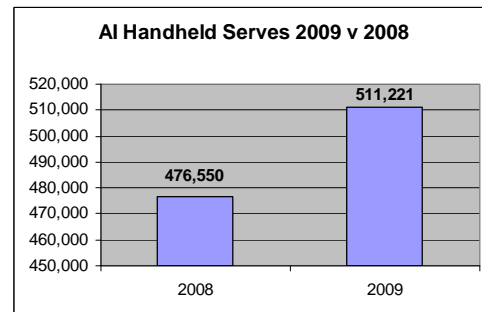
4. Highfield House

The renovation work on Highfield House is nearing completion. We are looking forward to hosting the September meeting of the Board's of ICBF and Sheep Ireland in our improved facilities.

5. Database



- ✚ The 2009 suckler forms (pre and post weaning) continue to go out to farmers. In relation to 2008 born calves, the number of calves with a meal feeding introduction has increased to 859,000, with just over 730,000 of these having been weaned.
- ✚ The revamp of the Milk Recording system continues. Testing has continued this week, and most of the modules are now completed. Testing within the milk recording organisations will begin next week.
- ✚ In conjunction with the finalisation of the milk recording solution, a number of other developments are taking place that will allow the migration of all users to a completely web-based front end, and the removal of the need for the Wide Area Network (WAN). The herdbooks will be the first to move off the WAN, before the end of August.
- ✚ The revisions to the final fertility report were completed this week.
- ✚ Design of a new on-line application for AI companies to manage their interaction with ICBF on bull codes is well underway. We expect this to be live at the end of September.
- ✚ This graph shows Inseminations recoded on AI Handhelds in 2009 compared with 2008. There are more technicians using the handhelds in 2009 than there were in 2008, so even though the number of inseminations recorded is up, it looks like the overall inseminations for the season will be down.



6. Sheep Ireland - LambPlus



Charolais - Euro-Star Sale

- ✚ The Irish Charolais Sheep Society held their Premier sale in Tullow Livestock Mart on Saturday the 1st of August.
- ✚ The Charolais Society printed a supplementary catalogue showing the Euro-Star Indexes. They also marked the Lambplus sheep by spraying a 'Star' on their backs.
- ✚ Lambplus Breeders that sold sheep on the day & examples of some of the prices received for Euro-Star Indexed sheep:

- **Michael & Mitch Power**, Cappagh, Askeaton, Co. Limerick: €1000, €840, €820, €740, €720, €660, €640, €540, €540, €480, €440.
- The Overall Supreme Champion Ewe Lamb was owned by a Lambplus Participant - Michael Power. It sold for €1000. Interestingly this Female Champion also has the maximum 5 Euro-Stars for the Maternal Sub Index.
- **Paddy & Mary D'Arcy**, Ballywilliam House, Gorey, Co.Wexford: €360
- **Gordon & Carol Nicholson**, Lissataggle, Gortalea, Tralee, Co.Kerry: €600, €570, €500,
- **Joe & Michael Byrne**, Deputy's Pass Farm, Glenealy, Co.Wicklow: €1040, €600, €560
- **Stephanie & John Burgess**, Carrigbeg, Bagenalstown, Co.Carlow: €680, €440.

Belclare - Euro-Star Sale

- ✚ The Irish Belclare Sheep Society held their Premier Sale in Kilkenny Mart on Tuesday the 4th of August.
- ✚ The Belclare Society had 2 breeders in Lambplus this year. The intention is for the remaining Breeders to switch over in the coming months.
- ✚ John Renehan sold a 5* Ram for €760. Other prices received for his indexed Rams on the day included: €460, €510, €420, €400, €360.
- ✚ Michael Gottstein also sold Rams with Euro-Star Indexes available for prices such as €600 (5* for Production), €460 & €420.

Ram Lamb Euro-Star Webpage Launched

- ✚ The new 'Ram Lamb Euro-Star' section of the website (www.sheep.ie) was launched at the Belclare Premier Sheep Sale. This section of the website will allow farmers to source Rams with Euro-Star evaluations.
- ✚ Indeed, MALP Farmers John Renehan, John Large, Richard Hogg & Richard Gorey were sourcing such rams on the day of the sale. These rams will then be used across MALP flocks. The data recorded will be used to produce evaluations on the rams themselves and will also have a knock on effect onto the evaluations of relatives of the ram.

MALP Flocks

- ✚ The compilation of MALP files for the evaluation system is ongoing. This involves linking all of the weight data recorded to-date with the DNA Parentage data received from the Labs.

Quality Lamb Producer Groups

- ✚ The Monaghan Quality Lamb Producer Group has announced their Ram Purchasing Premium scheme.
- ✚ There are 260 members in their Producer Group. 20 Producers were selected at random.
- ✚ The design of the scheme is as follows:
 - €250 premium is paid for a performance recorded Ram.
 - €100 extra is paid if the Ram is 5* for Overall Sheep Value or any one of the Sub Indices.
- ✚ This Scheme is a major benefit to the Sheep Ireland Euro-Star initiative.
- ✚ A meeting was organised by Henry Burns & Kevin Kinsella in the Killeshin Hotel Portlaoise on Wednesday evening with members of IFA Producer Groups to discuss how similar schemes could be set up elsewhere around the Country.



Overall Female & Male Champions at Charolais Premier Sale. Female Champion (on left) was bred by Lambplus Breeder Michael Power and has the maximum 5 Euro-Stars for the Maternal Sub Index.



MALP Farmers Richard Gorey, John Large & John Renehan inspecting possible Rams to purchase for the MALP Scheme.



Euro-Star explanation boards on display at the Belclare Premier sale.



TJ Gormley judging Belclare sheep at their Premier Sale.



Larry Barrett (Sheep Ireland), John Renehan (MALP Farmer), Pat Donnellan (ICBF), Richard Gorey (MALP Farmer) & Richard Hogg (MALP Farmer) launching the new Ram Euro-Star section of the Sheep Ireland website.



John Renehan selling the first Belclare Ram with Euro-Stars at the Belclare Premier sale in Kilkenny mart.

7. HerdPlus

✚ Work has began on developing three new Teagasc Discussion Group reports:

1. Beef Euro-Star Report
2. Beef Carcass Report
3. Dairy Replacement Report

✚ The 2009 Dairy Calving report is now available online for all HerdPlus members. A new feature with this report is the option of changing the calving start date so as to allow for the case where a cow calves/aborts two or three weeks before time. Users can also generate this report as often as they wish.

8. Genetic Dairy & Beef Evaluations

✚ The milk performance, linear type and fertility evaluations have been completed and respective files have been sent to INTERBULL for participation in the August evaluation.

✚ The beef and calving evaluations will commence early next week when the remaining evaluation files have been extracted from the database.

✚ Genetic parameter estimation for beef linear type traits is nearing completion and work will then commence on incorporating these new parameters into an evaluation in MIX99.

9. Milk Recording

National Milk Recording Results by County - 10 day Period 28/07/09 to 07/08/09

	<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	12	756	63	21.1	4.08	3.39	1.58	293
CAVAN	47	2,799	60	19.9	4.01	3.38	1.47	341
CLARE	21	1,028	49	21.7	3.75	3.36	1.54	246
CORK STH	206	13,541	66	20.1	3.87	3.45	1.47	278
CORK NTH	242	18,137	75	20.9	3.91	3.49	1.55	298
DONEGAL	17	1,543	91	22.4	3.84	3.30	1.60	296
DUBLIN	4	185	46	24.8	3.46	3.41	1.70	398
GALWAY	27	1,898	70	21.3	3.94	3.39	1.56	356
KERRY	105	6,551	62	22.5	3.76	3.35	1.60	334
KILDARE	24	2,326	97	19.9	3.76	3.38	1.42	360
KILKENNY	51	3,898	76	17.9	3.91	3.48	1.32	315
LAOIS	36	2,354	65	19.8	3.82	3.45	1.44	307
LEITRIM	7	367	52	21.2	3.62	3.19	1.44	444
LIMERICK	105	6,689	64	21.2	3.71	3.37	1.50	341
LONGFORD	11	704	64	20.1	3.94	3.43	1.48	308
LOUTH	12	1,127	94	21.2	3.76	3.40	1.52	451
MAYO	29	1,794	62	24.5	3.17	3.38	1.60	343
MEATH	76	7,260	96	19.8	3.92	3.38	1.45	380
MONAGHAN	39	2,245	58	22.9	3.81	3.29	1.63	358

OFFALY	14	1,057	76	18.4	3.92	3.48	1.36	375
ROSCOMMON	4	206	52	21.8	3.39	3.33	1.46	407
SLIGO	8	374	47	20.1	3.53	3.36	1.38	420
TIPPERARY NTH	44	4,017	91	19.5	4.12	3.48	1.48	292
TIPPERARY STH	82	5,680	69	20.1	3.89	3.40	1.47	287
WATERFORD	48	3,968	83	18.7	3.91	3.46	1.38	363
WESTMEATH	25	1,731	69	18.0	4.27	3.50	1.40	320
WEXFORD	50	3,508	70	19.7	3.86	3.43	1.44	269
WICKLOW E	18	1,525	85	18.5	3.62	3.39	1.30	344
WICKLOW W	11	980	89	19.2	3.89	3.35	1.39	400
	<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	1,375	98,248	70	20.6	3.81	3.39	1.48	342

National Milk Recording Averages by Province - 10 day Period 28/07/09 to 07/08/09

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	853	59,611	70	20.6	3.86	3.42	1.50	305
Leinster	344	27,411	80	19.9	3.67	3.42	1.41	348
Connacht	75	4,639	62	21.8	3.82	3.33	1.56	394
Ulster	103	6,587	64	21.7	3.89	3.32	1.57	332

National Milk Recording Statistics - Herds, Cows & EDIY 07/08/09

Milk Recording Organisation	Total Herds Recorded YTD 07/08/09	No. EDIY Herds YTD 07/08/09	% Herds EDIY	Total No. Cows Recorded YTD 07/08/09	No. EDIY Cows YTD 07/08/09	% Cows EDIY
Progressive	2,056	834	41%	172,584	69,691	40%
Dairygold	1,498	558	37%	114,750	44,973	39%
Kerry	888	66	7%	61,645	4,192	7%
SWS	856	114	13%	60,898	8,761	14%
Tipperary	135	55	41%	10,947	4,863	44%
Arrabawn	139	114	82%	11,507	9,728	85%
Connacht	136	47	35%	9,018	3,056	34%
Donegal	32	32	100%	3,659	3,660	100%
Total	5,740	1,820	32%	445,008	148,924	33%

Recorded Cows by Milk Recording Organisation - Year on Year Comparison			
Milk Recording Organisation	YTD 2008 Cows Recorded 01/01/08 - 07/08/08	YTD 2009 Cows Recorded 01/01/09 - 07/08/09	2009 vs 2008 Year on Year Difference (%)
Progressive	175,779	172,584	-1.9%
Dairygold	119,806	114,750	-4.4%
Kerry	78,017	61,645	-26.6%
SWS	60,528	60,898	0.6%
Tipperary	12,847	10,947	-17.4%
Arrabawn	12,549	11,507	-9.1%
Connacht	9,214	9,018	-2.2%
Donegal	4,593	3,659	-25.5%
Total	473,333	445,008	-6.4%

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