

ICBF Weekly Update 8th June 2012

1 Important Dates

- ✚ **ICBF Board Meeting** - Thursday 28th June, 10:00 to 14:00, Portlaoise.
- ✚ **Interim Sheep Board** – Thursday 28th June, 14:00 – 16:30, Portlaoise.
- ✚ **Sheep 2012** – Saturday 30th June, Athenry.

2 ICAR 2012



Minister of Agriculture Simon Coveney addressing ICAR 2012. The minister made a special effort to attend the conference. This was much appreciated by delegates.



Andrew Cromie, Victor Olori from Aviagen, previously he worked with ICBF, and Samad Khan a guest speaker from Bangladesh.

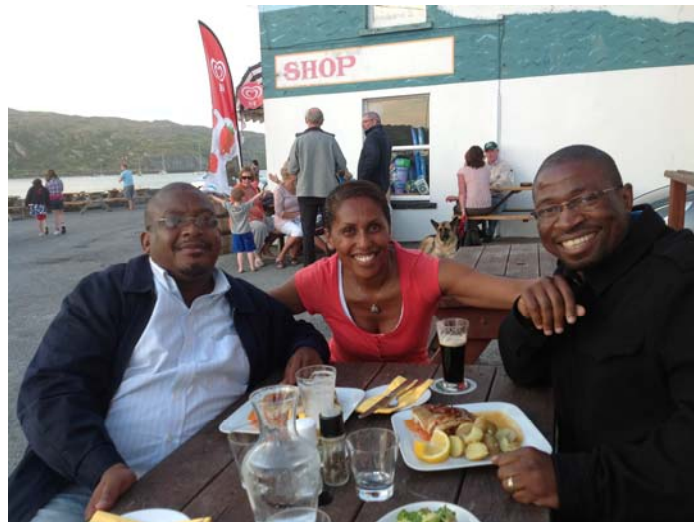
Life at ICBF is returning to normal after ICAR 2012 in Cork last week. We took a number of initiatives for this ICAR conference and these were appreciated by the many people who attended. Our initiatives included:

- **Two industry days** – one for dairy attended by 250 and one for beef & sheep attended by 150 – to which key policy makers and interested farmers were invited. Both days focused on the way recording is contributing to farm profitability. The availability of experts from around the world enabled these days to address some of the major questions facing Irish farmers and farmers world-wide.
- A **blending of the Interbull & ICAR programme** to facilitate a greater sharing of knowledge between experts involved in genetic evaluations and animal recording. Joint sessions on genomics and information for breeding decisions were well attended.
- An **Irish Country Market** social function in the grounds of the Rochestown Park Hotel. Stall holders from the Mahon Point Country Market were contracted to setup their normal stalls and to provide food for delegates. For some delegates this was the highlight of the social programme.

- A **celebration of fifteen years of achievement since the formation of ICBF**. This took place as part of the Gala Dinner on Thursday night. 100 extra people joined-in just for this event and they included former members of the ICBF Board, DAFM staff who played a key role in getting ICBF established and others who provided important and positive leadership when ICBF was being established.
- Very **focused technical tours to Irish sheep, beef and dairy farms**. These visits highlighted the integrated information system available in Ireland and the key role it plays in breeding and management decisions on Irish farms.
- A plenary session on Friday morning devoted to **future structures for data recording and genetic evaluations**. Invited speakers addressed the need for a balance between commercial, industry and public good.
- To **employ our own staff, with help from ICBF members**, to organise and host the conference. Our goal being to strengthen our personal relationships with people working in similar organisations around the world. It also gave all members of our team valuable experience in organising and participating in a truly international event of direct relevance to our day-to-day work.
- To give delegates a **free night** on Wednesday. This was also appreciated by some of our sponsors as it gave them a specific time when they could plan special events for their customers and potential customers without coming in conflict with the overall conference programme.
- All **presentations were video recorded** and will soon be available on the web. I have seen the initial results and I am sure these will be appreciated by those who were unable to attend this conference or specific presentations.



Marianna Kowalczyk (left), and Mary Madden (right) being acknowledged for their contribution to organising ICAR 2012 by Uffe Lauritsen the President of ICAR.



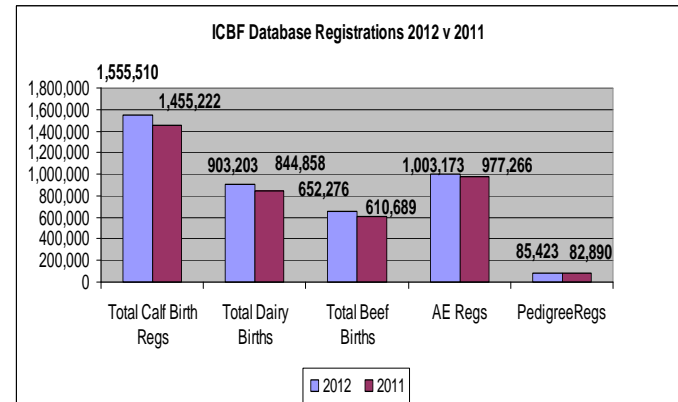
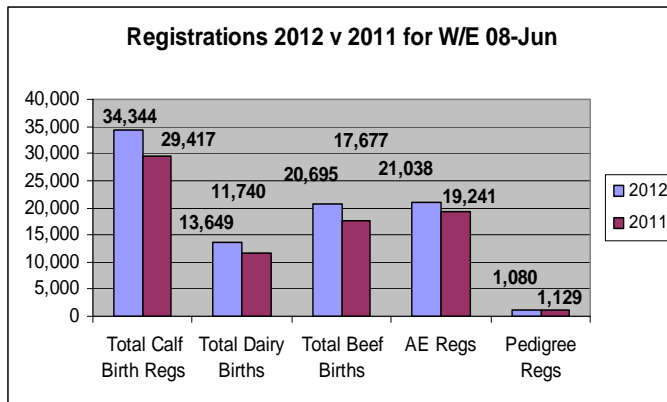
Left to right, Andrew Magadlala, Mahlako Makgahlela, and Norman Maiwashe from South Africa enjoying fish and chips in Crookhaven, Co. Cork after a week at ICAR 2012.

3 Genetic Evaluations

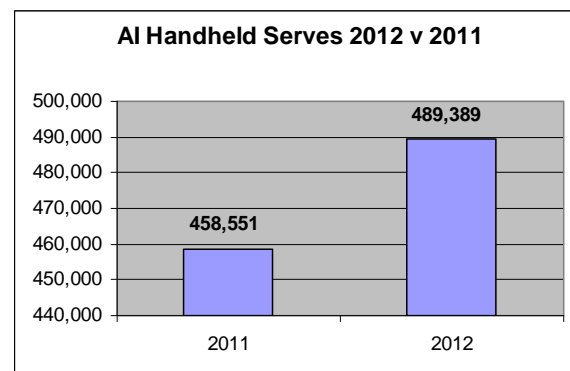
- A lot of ideas in the area of data recording and genetic evaluations were generated through discussions with delegates at the ICAR and Interbull conference and these will be considered in future work priorities. Genomics is moving rapidly towards the inclusion of females in the reference population and we are well placed to do this following the introduction of the females genotyping service this spring.

- Research work continues in both dairy and beef evaluations including calving performance, test-day model, and weight predictions. Updates will be provided at the next industry meeting.

4 Database



- The stats above are compiled with the assistance of DAFM AIM systems.
- In the Suckler scheme, the number of 2011 born calves with meal introduced is 617,425 with the number of animals weaned at 542,432.
- BVD test results continue to be received at ICBF and are being processed accordingly. Around 565,000 tissue tags for BVD testing have been purchased at this stage. Around 391,000 samples have been returned at this stage, with a 0.60% BVD Virus Positive rate.
- Final testing of the integrated weight recording solution will take place over the next two weeks, with a view to getting the first cells operational by the end of June.
- The on-going developments to further enhance the loading of genotype information to the database are continuing. The overall system for managing genotypes was well received at ICAR last week. Over the coming months, we will be tackling the issue of how to deal with full sequence data files.
- Preparations for the changes in how the Beef Eurostars are presented on ICBF outputs (Bull search, reports, web outputs, catalogues, etc.) will begin next week in advance of the Eurostar Implementation group meeting.
- Work is on-going on the back-end ICBF web infrastructure with a view to making it more standardised and robust.



- The graph shows Inseminations recorded on AI Handhelds in 2012 compared with 2011.

5 Sheep Ireland

- ICAR 2012 was the focus of much of last week's activities for Sheep Ireland. There were many hugely interesting papers presented by delegates from all over the world involved in animal recording programmes similar to our own. Presentations were made by Sheep Ireland personnel over the course of the week to demonstrate what has been happening in sheep breed improvement since 2008. We met with many very

experienced individuals from other countries, who made some great observations and suggestions about what we are currently doing – we will certainly be keeping in contact with these people going forward.

- ✚ We visited two sheep farms as part of the ICAR technical sheep tour, both of these farmers – John Large & John Renehan are thanked sincerely for their welcoming and open attitude to the visitors on the day. On each farm, those present got a detailed view of how performance recording works on each farm – all positives and indeed negatives were explored. Everyone present, especially our foreign visitors, were very impressed with what they saw on both farm visits which illustrated what can be achieved with a high level of management on an Irish sheep farm.
- ✚ Ultrasound scanning continues on our pedigree flocks. We are currently working to contact all breeders and arrange scanning days for our team of regional scanners. Our genetic evaluation continues to run on a weekly basis, there is a lot of information flowing into our database at the moment so evaluations are becoming more accurate as every week passes. Any breeder with performance data yet to be submitted should do so immediately to facilitate the inclusion of genetic evaluation information in early society sale catalogues. The first sale of the 2012 season will be the Suffolk premier sale in Roscrea in July which means time is against us to have information submitted and included in evaluations for the sale catalogue.

6 Milk Recording

| National Milk Recording Statistics - Herds, Cows & EDIY 08/06/12 | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------|
| Milk Recording Organisation | Total Herds Recorded YTD 08/06/12 | No. EDIY Herds YTD 08/06/12 | % Herds EDIY | Total No. Cows Recorded YTD 08/06/12 | No. EDIY Cows YTD 08/06/12 | % Cows EDIY |
| Munster | 3,697 | 1,069 | 29% | 283,060 | 87,350 | 31% |
| Progressive | 2,386 | 948 | 40% | 199,370 | 79,093 | 40% |
| Tipperary | 118 | 41 | 35% | 9,409 | 3,050 | 32% |
| Total | 6,201 | 2,058 | 33% | 491,839 | 169,493 | 34% |

| Recorded Cows by Milk Recording Organisation - Year on Year Comparison | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| Milk Recording Organisation | YTD 2011 Cows Recorded 01/01/11 - 08/06/11 | YTD 2012 Cows Recorded 01/01/12 - 08/06/12 | 2012 vs. 2011 Year on Year Difference (%) |
| Munster | 274,063 | 283,060 | 3.2% |
| Progressive | 190,817 | 199,370 | 4.3% |
| Tipperary | 11,700 | 9,409 | -24.3% |
| Total | 476,580 | 491,839 | 3.1% |

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