

## ICBF Weekly Update 13<sup>th</sup> April 2012

### 1 Important Dates

- + **Breeding Industry Consultation Meeting** – Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> April, 10:30 to 16:00, Killeshin Hotel, Portlaoise. Agenda focused on two items: **€uro-Star Review**, and **G€N€IR€LAND<sup>®</sup> Beef**.
- + **ICBF Board Meeting** - Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 10:30 to 12:30, Portlaoise.
- + **ICBF AGM** - Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 12:30 to 13:30, Portlaoise.
- + **ICAR 2012 Conference** [www.icar2012.ie](http://www.icar2012.ie) – Monday 28<sup>th</sup> May to Friday 1<sup>st</sup> June, Cork.
- + **Sheep 2012** – Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> June, Athenry.

### 2 Sheep Board

At its meeting on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> April the Sheep Board reviewed progress and considered plans for establishing a more permanent structure.

The two main issues discussed included our plans for our Ultra-sound scanning service for 2012 and our €uro-Star promotional events.

#### Ultra-sound Scanning

Our main intention with any change to our scanning service is to deliver more value to the breeder that provides this hugely valuable information to their animals genetic evaluations and thus to ram buyers. In the absence of reliable factory data feeding into our evaluations, ultrasound scanning is extremely important. Our current plan will achieve a substantial reduction in the cost of the service for each breeder. The new costs will be circulated to all LambPlus breeders in the coming week.

In a further effort to deliver value for money to those breeders that scan, Sheep Ireland intend limiting entry to any LambPlus promotional events (sales) to scanned rams only for the Terminal Breeds.

#### €uro-Star promotional events.

Our first LambPlus promotional event, the sale in Kilkenny last August, was very successful. The aim of this ram sale was to promote the €uro-Star message and to make high genetic merit rams available to sheep farmers in the area. Although we acknowledge the great work being carried out by LambPlus breeders within various societies to promote €uro-Stars and genetic gain, it was felt that Sheep Ireland needs to expand this method of promotion to other areas of the country. A decision followed to hold three provincial events, one in each of Munster, Leinster & Connacht. These events would include a sale open to LambPlus breeders of all breeds that can supply rams that meet the genetic standards as set out in advance of each sale.

Sheep Ireland acknowledge the fact that breed societies around the country have a deep history when it comes to ram sales, and that sale structures exist in every region that date back many years. Our intention is not to disrupt these structures or indeed cause any upset or tension within any area, but Sheep Irelands objective is a simple one – to add value to the Irish sheep industry. The €uro-Star evaluations have the potential to deliver a lot to our industry, but this will only come through education and demonstration of the benefits that can be accrued. Currently awareness of the €uro-Stars in the Irish sheep industry is not what it should be and every possible avenue needs to be explored to improve this fact.

A €uro-Star promotional sale can achieve major results in terms of educating sheep farmers about the potential of genetic gain and we believe that the three provincial sales for 2012 will achieve this objective. These events will be sales for LambPlus breeders in each area to promote and sell their high genetic rams for the benefit of commercial sheep farmers in the area and ultimately for the future benefit of our entire sheep industry.

### 3 OptiMIR ([www.optimir.eu](http://www.optimir.eu))

On Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> April a meeting of the OptiMIR Expert Group was held in Brussels under the leadership of Brendan Horan (Teagasc, Moorepark). The purpose of the meeting was for independent experts from a range of relevant disciplines to review priorities for the OptiMIR project.

Next week the OptiMIR Steering Committee and research collaborators will meet in Moorepark.

The OptiMIR project is a collaboration involving ten milk recording organisations, six research organisations and a laboratory organisation. The goal of the project is to enable milk recording organisations to obtain more information of milk samples and to provide farmers with services that enable them to achieve better profitability and more sustainable production.

### 4 Reproduction

This week there has been a focus on addressing sub-optimal fertility in Irish dairy and beef herds. Teagasc organised an excellent and well attended conference on Wednesday and Thursday. Today AHI have arranged “*an overarching discussion with all relevant industry stakeholders to assess options to progress a coordinated response to infertility in Ireland*”.

ICBF has a very strong interest and commitment to addressing the problems of in-fertility in Irish dairy and beef herds. Our interests include:

1. Genetics – breeding objectives, genetic evaluations, genomics and breeding schemes.
2. Data – from all sources and stored in the ICBF database.
3. Information - for use by farmers (HerdPlus), advisors, veterinarians, researchers and policy makers.
4. ICBF database is providing the information infrastructure for AHI initiatives.
5. ICBF database currently covers 90% of call cattle and herds in Ireland.

### 5 ICBF Annual Report

The ICBF Annual Report for 2011 is now available on our website – under publications.

### 6 ICAR – Industry Days

As part of the ICAR 2012 conference being hosted by Ireland in Cork from 28th May to 1st June there will be two industry days to which dairy, beef and sheep, farmers and breeders, will be welcome to attend. The **draft** program for these two days includes a number of international speakers and topics very relevant to Ireland as detailed here.

#### On Monday 28<sup>th</sup> June - Information for Profitable Dairy Farming.

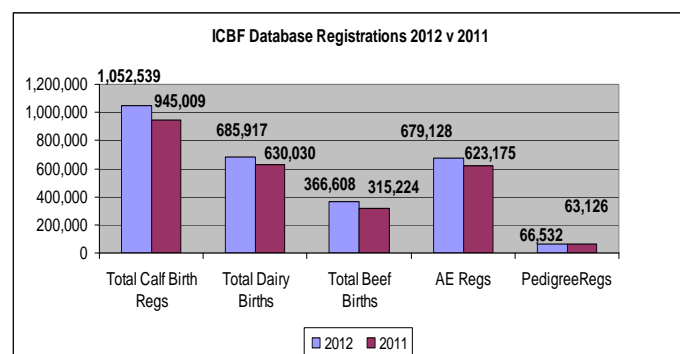
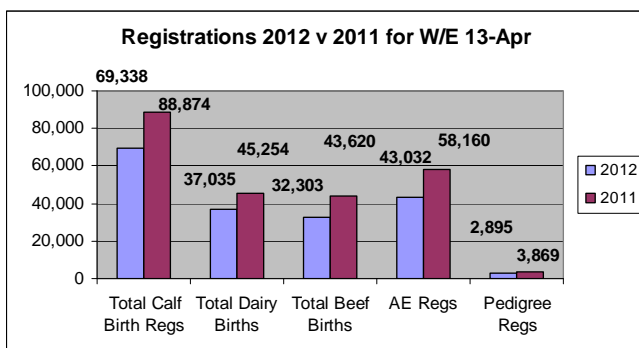
Speaker (Country)	Title of Presentation
Jacques Chesnais (Canada)	Genetic improvement: a major component of increased dairy farm profitability.
Stefan Rensing (Germany)	Two years of experience with genomics – how well does it work?
Dan Abernethy (Australia)	The development and implementation of farmer tools designed to support genetic gain and breeding decisions.
Donagh Berry	New traits for dairy cattle breeding.
Jennie Pryce (Australia)	Genomics – what does the future hold?
George Ramsbottom (Ireland)	Using extension to progress genetic improvement on Irish dairy farms.
Kevin Downing (Ireland)	Using an integrated database to increase profitability on Dairy farms.
Johannes Frandsen (Denmark)	Prognosis of Dairy Production – a tool to improve planning on dairy herds.
Jay Mattison (USA)	Characteristics of the USA dairy herd as related to management and demographic elements.

Speaker (Country)	Title of Presentation
Joe O'Flaherty (Ireland)	Animal information systems that give rise to increased dairy farm profitability by improving herd and animal health.
Stephen Butler (Ireland)	The importance of recording in establishing the value of sexed semen to dairy farmers.
Doron Bar (Israel)	Cows can't talk but we can listen (to their rumination).
Pieter Hogewerf (Netherlands)	Smart Dairy Farming, individual attention for care animals.
Kees De Koning (Netherlands)	The role of new on-farm technologies in dairy herd improvement (DHI) and farm management.
Anders Fogh (Denmark)	Use of data from electronic milking meters and perspective in use of other objective measures.

### On Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> June - Information for Profitable Beef & Sheep Farming.

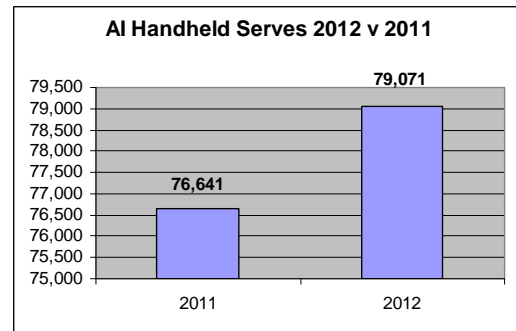
Speaker (Country)	Title of Presentation
Dave Beehan (Ireland)	Ireland's strategy for a more profitable beef & sheep industry.
Laurent Griffon (France)	France's strategy for a more profitable beef & sheep industry.
Arthur Rickards (Australia)	Breedplan <sup>®</sup> Information for Profitable Beef Production.
Patrick Donnellan (Ireland)	Ireland's Beef Breeding Information Service - Beef Herdplus.
Seung-Soo Lee (Korea)	Information system for the profitable semen selection of Hanwoo in Korea.
Alison Van Enenaam (USA)	How might DNA-based information generate value in the beef cattle sector?
Robert Williams (USA)	U.S. genetic trends, production numbers and discussion on how breed association may need to adapt.
Peter Parnell (Australia)	Genetic improvement strategies and successes by Australian Angus breeders.
Joe O'Flaherty (Ireland)	Animal Health for Beef.
Bob Webber (USA)	Feed Efficiency Project.
Thierry Pabiou (Ireland)	Carcass video image in genetic evaluation and breeding programs.
Richard Wakelin (New Zealand)	New Zealand's strategy for a more profitable beef & sheep industry.
Eamon Wall (Ireland)	Challenges facing the viability of Sheep Ireland's sheep genetic improvement program in the Irish sheep industry.

## 7 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 604,547 with the number of animals weaned at 527,271.

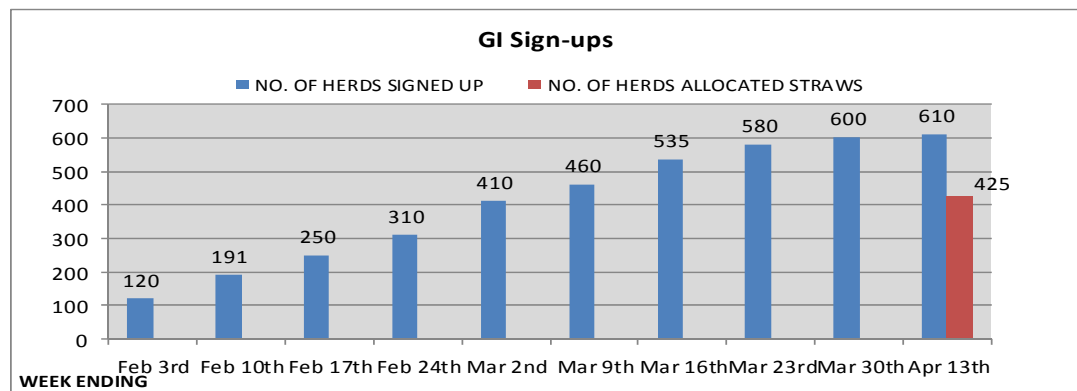
- BVD test results continue to be received at ICBF and are being processed accordingly. Around 544,000 tissue tags for BVD testing have been purchased at this stage. Around 288,000 samples have been returned at this stage, with a 0.59% BVD Virus Positive rate.
- The final elements of the technical infrastructure are being put together for the weight recording service.
- Some further developments to further enhance the loading of genotype information to the database is continuing. This process is now nearing completion, and significant progress has been made in the speeding up of loading and extracting genotypes from the database.
- The graph shows Inseminations recorded on AI Handhelds in 2012 compared with 2011.



## 8 GENRELAND®

### Dairy

- Allocation of straws is well underway. Orders are still being taken for all the breed packs.
- Call 1850 600 900 to order.



## 9 Genetic Evaluations

- New evaluations for dairy bulls have been released as well as updated genomic figures on 2012 tested males. This run saw a couple of changes to dairy evaluations including:
  - Irish only type evaluations:** Previously this was a joint evaluation between Ireland and Great Britain. As Great Britain have moved their evaluations to Canada for type, it was decided to bring the evaluations for Irish animals back to Ireland. Research work undertaken by Teagasc & UCD and supported by IHFA, AI companies and ICBF lead to the development of these new evaluations. Correlations remain very high between the old and new proofs; however the new proofs are not directly comparable to the old proofs due to the change in data as well as a new base.
  - Interbull Changes:** Interbull have changed to using a Sire-Dam model in place of a Sire-MGS model. This has resulted in some re-ranking and an increase in reliabilities. For more complete information on the change please see the fact sheet at [http://www.interbull.org/images/stories/Fact\\_sheet\\_about\\_SD-MACE.pdf](http://www.interbull.org/images/stories/Fact_sheet_about_SD-MACE.pdf)
- An issue arose with some foreign beef data which has delayed the release of beef proofs. These are currently being re-run with results expected on Tuesday.
- All proofs and profiles will be available on Tuesday, but if there are any queries in the meantime please contact us at [aeu@icbf.com](mailto:aeu@icbf.com)

**Brian Wickham** (PhD) Chief Executive, ICBF & Sheep Ireland, Highfield House, Shinagh, Bandon Co. Cork., Phone: +353 238 820 222, Mobile: +353 86 826 9911, Email [bwickham@icbf.com](mailto:bwickham@icbf.com), **Registered Office:** Irish Cattle Breeding Federation Society Ltd trading as "ICBF", Highfield House, Shinagh, Bandon, Co Cork. Registered Dublin, Ireland. Registration Number 4914R, Industrial and Provident Societies Acts, 1893 to 1978. Web: [www.icbf.com](http://www.icbf.com). **Registered Office:** Sheep Database Ltd trading as "Sheep Ireland". Highfield House, Shinagh, Bandon, Co Cork. Registered Dublin, Ireland. Registration Number 465004, Companies Acts 1963 to 2006. Web: [www.sheep.ie](http://www.sheep.ie).