

ICBF Weekly Update 16th March 2012

1 Important Dates

- ✚ **ICBF Board Meeting** - Thursday 29th March, 10:30 to 14:00, Portlaoise.
- ✚ **Sheep Board Meeting** – Thursday 5th April, 10:30 to 14:00, Portlaoise.
- ✚ **ICAR 2012 Conference** www.icar2012.ie – Monday 28th May to Friday 1st June, Cork.
- ✚ **Sheep 2012** – Saturday 30th June, Athenry.

2 Cattle Breeding Consultation Meeting

The first ICBF Cattle Breeding Consultation meeting for 2012 was held on Wednesday this week with 50 people attending representing the full range of stakeholders in Irish dairy and beef cattle breeding.

This meeting was focused on outlining research plans for 2012 and providing an update on progress. A copy of the presentations can be found in the publications section of www.icbf.com. Key developments include:

Dairy

- ✚ Genomic testing in dairy herds has increased substantially, 12,000 kits requested so far in 2012 and the turnaround time from an order being placed to a genomic EBI being published of 21 days achieved for dairy bull calves.
- ✚ Sire parentage errors of 6.5% have been detected and these have been reduced to 1.5% by finding the correct sire on-file.
- ✚ Good progress is being made with the development of the test-day-model for use in dairy milk production trait genetic evaluations. Implementation is planned for 2013. The test-day-model is the method of choice as it gives more accurate evaluation than the methods based on lactation yields which are currently used in Ireland. This method also provides evaluations for lactation persistency, a trait which could potentially help spread milk production more uniformly over the production season. This development will also result in the milk production trait evaluations moving in-house to ICBF. Currently the milk trait evaluations are computed on contract by CRV.
- ✚ A range of new data for use in dairy breeding is being explored. These include health & temperament traits from the Dairy Efficiency Program (DEP), milking speed from EDIY milk meters, and calf data from Marts.
- ✚ Ireland is in the process of developing its own linear type evaluations for dairy cattle. This will replace a system which was operated jointly with the UK.
- ✚ Further evidence that the EBI is a good measure of the contribution of genetics to farm profits has come from a Teagasc study of farm finances. ICBF has also completed a study comparing national trends which shows 50% of the annual changes in production and fertility time can be explained by genetics.
- ✚ The traits included in the EBI and their economic weight will be reviewed in 2012.
- ✚ Research work is currently examining the extent to which the EBI accounts for variation in the amount of farm labour required for animals with different characteristics.

Common to Dairy & Beef

- ✚ Research showing how carcass image data can be used to provide more accurate genetic evaluations has recently been completed. Plans for implementing these research findings are being finalised.
- ✚ The methods used for computing genetic evaluations for meat production traits is the subject of current research. The use of 30 traits in place of the current 20 traits will be evaluated in this research.

Beef

- A set of guidelines for best practice in beef cattle recording have been drafted and are currently being finalised.
- A prototype of the Herd Data Quality Index was presented and will now move to development.
- The new live-weight recording infrastructure being developed by ICBF includes weight predictions at birth, post-weaning and slaughter. The system will also include a nationwide technician based field service to be launched later in 2012.
- Initial results are now available from research on within breed genomic selection in beef cattle. Further work is being undertaken and will be reported at future meetings.
- The Euro-Star review is progressing and is focused on ensuring cattle farmers have access to the information they need to enable them to make the most profitable breeding decisions.

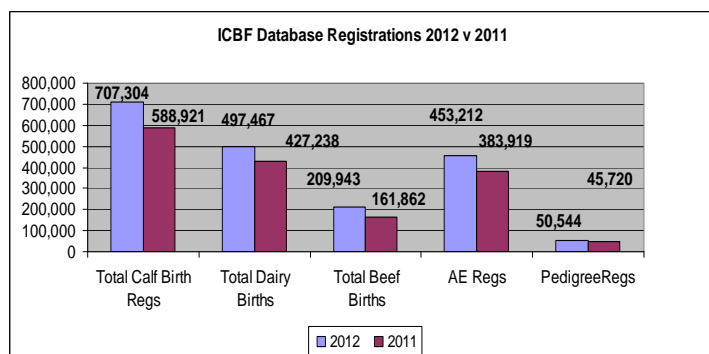
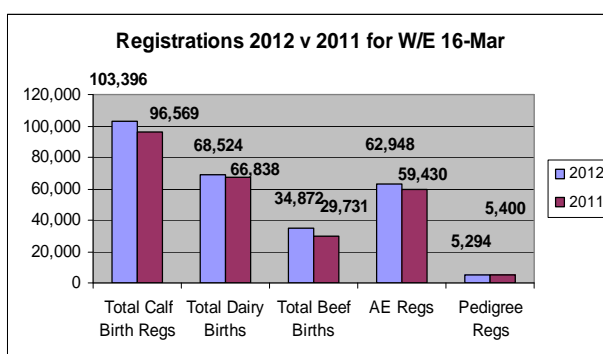
3 HerdPlus – BTAP

- Farmer response to the BTAP scheme has been very positive.
- There has been a surge in applications for the Beef HerdPlus service. As a result, the total number of herds enrolled in HerdPlus is now 13,500.
- As mentioned last week, HerdPlus is a very efficient and low cost facility that provides herd owners with a wide range of very valuable information specific to their herd for use in breeding and other decisions. That HerdPlus can be provided for €60 (inc VAT) per herd per year is a direct reflection of the efficiencies that have been achieved through the ICBF database and associated national infrastructure. All the relevant data held in a single repository, the ICBF database, and herd owners can instantly access a wide range of very useful information.

4 Audit & Finance Sub-Committee

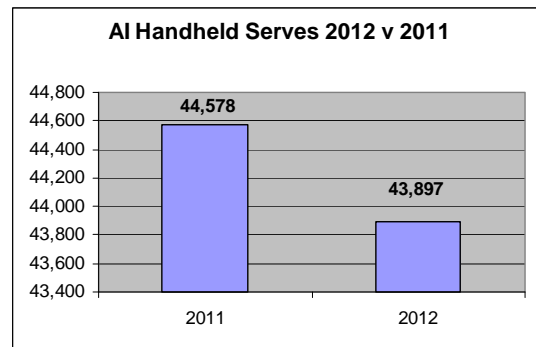
The Audit & Finance Sub-Committee of ICBF and Sheep Ireland met on Thursday. They considered the Auditors report and the Audited Accounts for 2011 and recommended their adoption by the respective Boards.

5 Database



- The stats above are compiled with the assistance of DAFF AIM systems.
- In the Suckler scheme, the number of 2011 born calves with meal introduced is 595,447 with the number of animals weaned at 514,158.
- Distribution of the 5 Year Trend report has continued this week to all Suckler Scheme participants along with a Suckler Cow 'Milk and Docility' survey. Farmers will also receive their annual supply of freepost Animal Events envelopes.

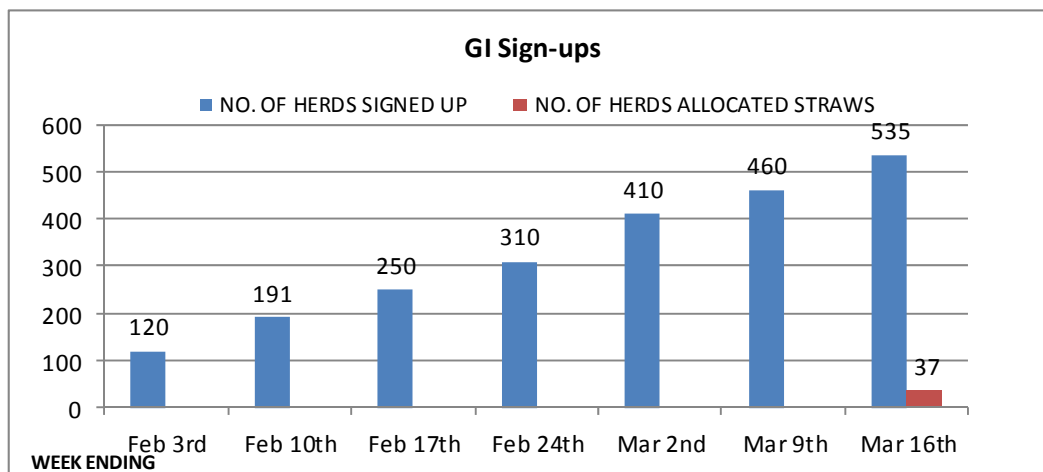
- BVD test results continue to be received at ICBF and are being processed accordingly. Around 522,000 tissue tags for BVD testing have been purchased at this stage. Around 180,000 samples have been returned, with a 0.57% BVD Virus Positive rate.
- A weight recording report is under development at the moment, which will be distributed to farmers involved in weight recording after each submission of weights.
- Some further developments to further enhance the loading of genotype information to the database is continuing.
- The graph shows Inseminations recorded on AI Handhelds in 2012 compared with 2011.



6 GENÉIRELAND®

Dairy

- Sign-ups continue to be received. Currently there is availability for all the breed packs.
- Potential bull lists and catalogues are available in the GENÉIRELAND section of the ICBF website.



7 Sheep Ireland

In the coming weeks and months Sheep Ireland will be working in association with Teagasc personnel to deliver on a number of important actions that were agreed in 2011. This week we spoke with each other to update on progress made to date. These actions covered a number of areas including:

- Reviewing the Euro-Star indexes: Covering the refinement of individual traits and the economic weighting assigned to certain records within these traits.
- Ewe mature weight: Looking at how we predict this weight in the absence of real records and how we determine our 'ideal' mature ewe weight.
- Extension material: Covering the promotional material currently developed by Sheep Ireland and the need for clearer and more easily understandable literature.
- Breeding programs: Mainly looking at how we can make performance recording accessible to commercial sheep farmers, essentially developing practical Single sire mating solutions and making use of EID in future years.

- Sharing of resources: Between Sheep Ireland & Teagasc, links are being established across all our projects which will be for the benefit of all industry stakeholders.
- Sheep Ireland specific issues: Looking at scanning, CPT performance, access to factory kill data and the potential of handhelds to make flock recording a more efficient process. Work has been on going on a number of these issues and we hope to have delivered significant improvements for the coming year.

Many of the issues highlighted above will be on-going projects as we gather more and more information on our sheep, we continually identify improvements we can make to speed up the progress we can make.

CPT

Lambing on our CPT farms is now complete. This lambing period is a hectic time but with plenty of help at hand, things went very well across all four flocks. The table below gives details of the number of lambs born on each farm with average birth weights recorded.

CPT Farm	Lambs born	Males	Av. Birth Wt. (kg)	Females	Av. Birth Wt. (kg)
Andrew Moloney	455	236	5.23	219	4.99
James Napper	730	369	5.33	361	5.06
John Large	315	169	4.78	146	4.63
UCD	403	204	4.92	199	4.66
Totals	1903	978	5.06kg	925	4.83kg

8 Milk Recording

National Milk Recording Results by County - 10 day Period 06/03/12 to 16/03/12								
	No. Herds Recorded	No. Cows Recorded	Average Herd Size	Average 24hr Milk kg/Cow	Average Fat %	Average Protein %	Average F + P kg	Average SCC
CARLOW	8	318	40	31.5	4.17	3.32	2.36	281
CAVAN	25	824	33	24.7	3.96	3.21	1.77	239
CLARE	6	783	131	25.9	4.06	3.18	1.88	188
CORK STH	221	14,330	65	26.0	4.21	3.30	1.95	199
CORK NTH	202	12,885	64	25.8	4.26	3.32	1.96	206
DONEGAL	5	211	42	26.7	3.92	3.12	1.88	127
DUBLIN	3	215	72	28.8	3.84	3.26	2.04	278
GALWAY	13	863	66	25.8	4.07	3.22	1.88	296
KERRY	96	6,265	65	25.2	3.98	3.17	1.80	250
KILDARE	21	883	42	26.4	3.98	3.29	1.92	298
KILKENNY	32	2,167	68	26.0	4.18	3.30	1.94	197
LAOIS	14	1,041	74	23.2	4.11	3.40	1.74	191
LEITRIM	8	176	22	26.5	3.78	3.27	1.87	159
LIMERICK	75	4,874	65	25.9	4.12	3.30	1.92	195
LONGFORD	8	192	24	23.3	3.98	3.23	1.68	178
LOUTH	17	1,767	104	27.5	4.00	3.38	2.03	238
MAYO	2	1,130	565	22.6	3.80	3.25	1.59	291
MEATH	42	3,221	77	25.8	3.90	3.31	1.86	263
MONAGHAN	21	971	46	27.3	3.77	3.27	1.92	168
OFFALY	7	485	69	26.9	3.85	3.23	1.90	272
ROSCOMMON	1	78	78	24.9	3.69	3.22	1.72	477
SLIGO	4	473	118	24.0	3.86	3.26	1.71	176

TIPPERARY NTH	10	675	68	24.4	4.09	3.24	1.79	247
TIPPERARY STH	10	1,307	131	25.5	4.18	3.34	1.92	219
WATERFORD	36	2,781	77	25.8	4.41	3.35	2.00	176
WESTMEATH	8	620	78	27.1	4.29	3.31	2.06	255
WEXFORD	33	2,540	77	26.2	4.13	3.38	1.97	190
WICKLOW E	22	983	45	25.3	4.07	3.29	1.86	200
WICKLOW W	9	246	27	26.3	3.71	3.32	1.85	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	959	63,304	84	25.9	4.01	3.28	1.89	231

National Milk Recording Averages by Province - 10 day Period 06/03/12 to 16/03/12

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	654	43,900	67	25.9	4.19	3.28	1.94	211
Leinster	224	14,678	66	26.5	4.00	3.31	1.94	238
Connacht	28	2,720	97	24.8	3.84	3.24	1.75	280
Ulster	51	2,006	39	26.2	3.88	3.20	1.86	178

National Milk Recording Statistics - Herds, Cows & EDIY 16/03/12

Milk Recording Organisation	Total Herds Recorded YTD 16/03/12	No. EDIY Herds YTD 16/03/12	% Herds EDIY	Total No. Cows Recorded YTD 16/03/12	No. EDIY Cows YTD 16/03/12	% Cows EDIY
Munster	1,646	135	8%	87,390	8,963	10%
Progressive	1,310	298	23%	83,153	18,222	22%
Tipperary	24	0	0%	1,162	0	0%
Total	2,980	433	15%	171,705	27,185	16%

Recorded Cows by Milk Recording Organisation - Year on Year Comparison

Milk Recording Organisation	YTD 2011 Cows Recorded 01/01/11 - 16/03/11	YTD 2012 Cows Recorded 01/01/12 - 16/03/12	2012 vs. 2011 Year on Year Difference (%)
Munster	75,649	87,390	13.4%
Progressive	84,788	83,153	-2.0%
Tipperary	1,144	1,162	1.5%
Total	161,581	171,705	5.9%

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