

ICBF Weekly Update 17th August 2012

1 Important Dates

- ✚ **€uro-Star Implementation Meeting** – Tuesday 21st Aug, 10:00 to 12:30, Killeshin Hotel, Portlaoise.
- ✚ **Herdbook Technical Meeting** – Tuesday 21st Aug, 13:30 to 16:30, Killeshin Hotel, Portlaoise.
- ✚ **Sheep Ireland Multi-breed €uro-Star ram Sale** – Saturday 25th Aug, Tulamore Mart, Co. Offaly.
- ✚ **Irish Grasslands Beef Conference & Farm Walk 2012** www.irishgrassland.com – Tuesday 4th Sept, Horse & Jockey Hotel.
- ✚ **ICBF Board Meeting** - Thursday 6th September, 10:30 to 14:00, ICBF, Highfield House, Bandon.
- ✚ **Dairy & Beef Industry Consultation Meetings** – Wednesday 12th Sept, 10:00 – 17:00, ICBF, Killeshin Hotel, Portlaoise.
- ✚ **Interim Sheep Board** – Thursday 20th September, 11:00 – 14:00, ICBF, Highfield House, Bandon.
- ✚ **Launch of Tully Open Day** – Tuesday 2nd October from 11:00 to 13:00 at Tully.
- ✚ **Beef Breeding Day at Tully** – Saturday 10th November from 10:00 to 14:00 at Tully.

2 Beef Breeding Developments

Over the last month we have made major progress with implementation of the findings of the Beef Breeding Review. Significant developments include:

€uro-Star Review

- ✚ **Bull Search & €uro-Star Profile Update.** The review resulted in a number of significant changes to the way beef indexes are computed and presented. The first of these, the bull search, is due to go-live next Wednesday (22nd August). The two new indexes – the Maternal Index and Terminal Index expressed in €uro-Stars – will be available on the bull search for all beef bulls which have been genetically evaluated. At the same time, €uro-Star profile will be updated for Beef HerdPlus® users.
- ✚ **Further Changes.** Over the coming weeks changes will be implemented for catalogues, online herd books, the active bull list and other HerdPlus reports.
- ✚ **Education & Information.** A round of educational and information meetings is also being organized to ensure the beef industry and beef farmers are well informed on the changes, their reason for them and the implications for beef breeding decisions.

Weight Recording Infrastructure

- ✚ Currently there are 18 technicians setup and live with the new weight recording systems. Two more should be set up within the next week which will bring us to 20. These technicians are spread throughout the 26 counties.
- ✚ Interviews were conducted on Monday and Tuesday this week and technicians have been provisionally chosen for the vacant areas in the north-west and north-east.
- ✚ There are still vacancies in West Cork, North Kerry and possibly mid Galway (circa Athenry, Tuam) depending on demand.
- ✚ Weights are coming into the system steadily and we expect momentum will build once the remaining technicians are setup.
- ✚ When training is completed we will move our focus to marketing the service and giving it maximum exposure.
- ✚ It is in years two (2013) and three (2014) of BTAP that we expect widespread uptake.

G-EN-€IR-€LAND® Beef

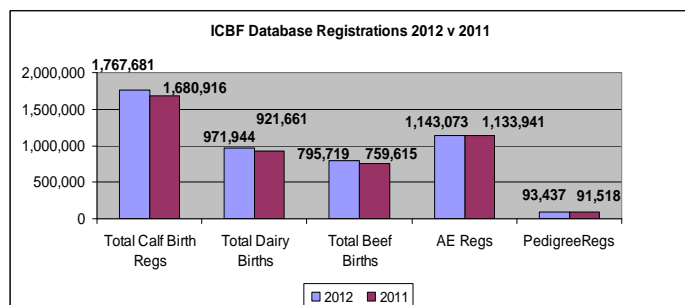
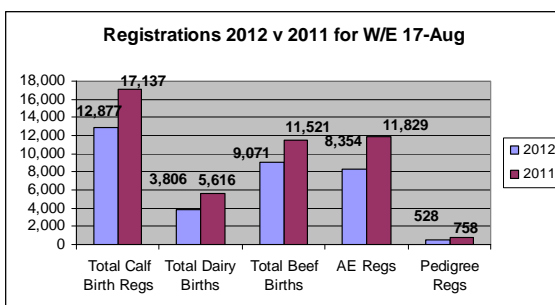
- ✚ Tully has been converted from a **performance test** for potential breeding bulls to a **progeny test** of beef bulls.
- ✚ At Tully there are now 77 bull progeny of 34 sires and known maternal grand-sires, representing ten breeds, which have recently been purchased from thirteen herds, of which ten are G-EN-€IR-€LAND® progeny testing herds.
- ✚ The test will start next week on the 20th of August and run to 20th November. During this period all animals will be fed the same diet, and all feed intakes will be measured for each animal. They will be weighed weekly, and linear scored at the start of the test. At the start and end of test each animal will be ultra-sound scanned for muscle and fat, and have scrotal circumference measured.
- ✚ All animals have been DNA parentage tested and they will also be genotyped using the Illumina 50K SNP chip.
- ✚ At the end of the test they will all be slaughtered and assessed for a range of carcass and meat eating quality traits.
- ✚ Over the coming months further animals will be purchased based on their date of birth and to ensure sufficient progeny for each sire being progeny tested.

Beef Breeding Event at Tully

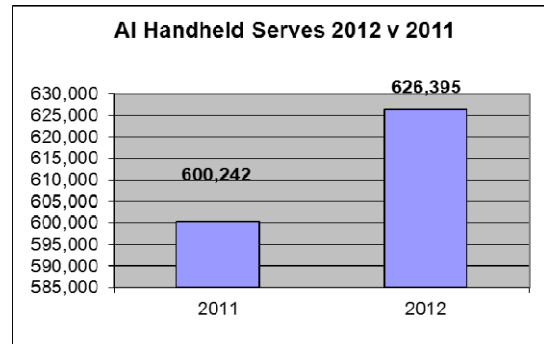
- ✚ A major beef cattle breeding event is being organized for Saturday 10th November (please put the date in your diary) to coincide with the completion of the progeny test at Tully.
- ✚ This event will provide beef farmers and breeders with an update and insight into the major changes which have resulted from our review of beef cattle breeding. Features will include:
 - The **new** Terminal and Maternal indexes including live animal demonstrations.
 - **Commercial progeny, ready for slaughter**, of G-EN-€IR-€LAND® AI sires.
 - The **new** G-EN-€IR-€LAND® bull breeder service.
 - The G-EN-€IR-€LAND® progeny test, including the **new** central test for feed intake, health & carcass traits.
 - HerdPlus® for Beef, including the **new** weight recording infrastructure and service.
 - Breeding industry stands.
- ✚ Our sponsor for the event is the FBD Trust.



3 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 647,088 with the number of animals weaned at 589,054.
- ✚ BVD test results continue to be received at ICBF and are being processed accordingly. Around 580,000 tissue tags for BVD testing have been purchased at this stage. Around 426,000 samples have been returned at this stage, with a 0.62% BVD Virus Positive rate.
- ✚ A significant amount of work continues on the modification of systems to incorporate proposed changes to the Beef Euro-Star indexes.
- ✚ Work is continuing 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.



4 Weight Recording

- ✚ New Weight Recorders continue to be recruited. It is hoped to have the entire country covered within the next 2 weeks.
- ✚ The promotion of the service has been on-going over the past week.
 - ICBF had a prominent Weight Recording display at the Tullamore show.
 - ICBF Weight Recorder Damien Scahill in conjunction with Teagasc Advisor John Noonan were also promoting the ICBF Weight Recording Service recently.
 - In the past week 6 of the weight recorders have weighed a total of 441 animals across 15 herds. This is a great start given that the service has not yet been advertised or promoted on a National scale.



Clew Bay discussion group.



Demonstration of weighing.



Left and previous page - Clew Bay suckler group having a BTAP meeting on the farm of Owen and Carmel O'Malley, Fairhill, Islandeady, Co Mayo getting a demonstration on the new cattle weighing service by Damien Scahill of ICBF. The group is facilitated by John Noonan Teagasc Westport. There was a great interest in the service and how easy it can be done at farm level.



Stand at Tullamore show.



Two 9 month old Limousin heifers were on the stand.



The heifer above weighed 420Kgs. The crush used on the day was kindly provided by O'Donovan Engineering. The weigh platform is a unique design in that it can be split into two 4 feet panels making it easier for transport.



Present on the ICBF Stand to answer queries and promote the service were (L-R): Liam O'Driscoll, Chris Daly, Darragh Parlon, Stephen Conroy, Pat Donnellan, and Brendan O'Shea.

5 Sheep Ireland

- ✚ On Saturday 25th August in Tullamore Mart, Co. Offaly Sheep Ireland will hold our second Euro-Star ram sale. This sale follows on from the success of the sale held last year in Cillin Hill, Co. Kilkenny. The entry criteria for this sale is limited to the very best performance recorded rams currently available to the industry, with a view to providing access to all flock owners, to the very best ram genetics upon which a more profitable flock can be developed.
- ✚ The sale is a hugely important event for the breed improvement programme as it will help identify just how informed the wider commercial industry currently is about the benefits of using high genetic merit rams. From the pedigree breeders point of view, it is very important that a market for their recorded rams is beginning to be established. Performance recording necessitates time and effort and additional costs are incurred annually by the participating breeder. Without adoption of the technology by commercial ram buyers, expanding pedigree breeder participation is limited.
- ✚ The minister's announcement this week on the future funding of Sheep Ireland (available on the DAFF website) is hugely positive and recognises the potential gains that a strong genetic improvement program can offer the industry. The rate of this gain will be dictated by the level of support and industry adoption that is achieved. Our Euro-Star sale on the 25th August provides the perfect opportunity to show this support. A full sale catalogue is now available on www.sheep.ie. Any queries about the sale can be directed to the Sheep Ireland office on 023 882 0454 or email: ewall@icbf.com.



6 GROW[®]

- ✚ 924 Pedigree animals were weighed and scored in July (up by 35 from July 2011).
- ✚ 167 Commercial animals were weighed and scored in July (down by 328 from July 2011).
- ✚ Updated lists of GENÉIRÉLAND sired commercials due to be scored have been sent to the scorers.

7 Genetic Evaluations

- ✚ Due to the large extent of changes being made to the beef indexes, the official publication date for proofs has been moved from Monday 20th to Wednesday 22nd August. We expect to be in a position to provide a file of AI dairy bulls to the industry on Monday with all functionality available for beef and dairy bulls on Wednesday evening.

8 Milk Recording

National Milk Recording Statistics - Herds, Cows & EDIY 17/08/12						
Milk Recording Organisation	Total Herds Recorded YTD 17/08/12	No. EDIY Herds YTD 17/08/12	% Herds EDIY	Total No. Cows Recorded YTD 17/08/12	No. EDIY Cows YTD 17/08/12	% Cows EDIY
Munster	3,733	1,086	29%	302,879	94,439	31%
Progressive	2,447	990	40%	219,220	90,686	41%

Tipperary	119	92	77%	9,904	3,256	33%
Total	6,299	2,168	34%	532,003	188,381	35%

Recorded Cows by Milk Recording Organisation - Year on Year Comparison			
Milk Recording Organisation	YTD 2011 Cows Recorded 01/01/11 - 17/08/11	YTD 2012 Cows Recorded 01/01/12 - 17/08/12	2012 vs. 2011 Year on Year Difference (%)
Munster	299,453	302,879	1.1%
Progressive	210,944	219,220	3.8%
Tipperary	13,035	9,904	-31.6%
Total	523,432	532,003	1.6%

National Milk Recording Averages by Province - 10 day Period 07/08/12 to 17/08/12								
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	826	67,813	82	20.7	3.97	3.43	1.53	241
Leinster	329	25,368	77	21.6	3.85	3.43	1.57	277
Connacht	68	3,863	57	22.9	3.71	3.34	1.61	260
Ulster	77	4,962	64	21.3	3.81	3.37	1.53	278

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