

ICBF Weekly Update 18th May 2012

1 Important Dates

- ✚ **Sheep Farm Walk** – Tuesday 22nd May Gordon Johnson’s Farm, Tyrellspass, Co. Westmeath.
- ✚ **ICAR 2012 Conference** - www.icar2012.ie – Monday 28th May to Friday 1st June, Cork.
- ✚ **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

This week we launched the ICAR 2012 promotion with the objective of encouraging Irish farmers to attend the industry days. The press release for the launch was as follows.

ICAR 2012 Press Release

Records on farm animals are a key element in the breeding of improved animals for the future. Ireland is hosting the biannual world conference of ICAR, the International Committee for Animal Recording, in the Rochestown Park Hotel in Cork at the end of May from Monday 28th to Friday 1st June. 450 delegates from 50 countries will be attending this major event which will showcase Irish developments in data recording and genetic evaluations.

Chairman of the Organising Committee is John O’Sullivan, a dairy farmer and pedigree Holstein breeder from Whitechurch, Co. Cork. According to John “*this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the Irish recording and breeding industry to display our world-class breeding infrastructure to interested breeding organizations from over 50 countries around the world*”. The last of these conferences was in Riga, Latvia in 2010 and the next one will be in Germany in 2014. To make the most of the many international specialists who will be in Ireland for this conference two one-day industry events are being held. One day, Monday 28th, for dairy and the second on Tuesday 29th for Beef & Sheep.

The dairy industry day on **Monday 28th May** will feature speakers from around the world addressing the theme “**Information for Profitable Dairy Farming**”. Brian Wickham, the Chief Executive of ICBF and responsible for coordinating the overall program describes the line-up of speakers as “*a special treat for Irish dairy farmers and breeders who are interested in the latest developments in cattle breeding and recording. The speakers are coming from Germany, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Israel, The Netherlands and Denmark. They will address key questions such as how well does genomic selection work and what does the future hold for this technology.*” Delegates will hear Stefan Rensing of Germany address the question, “*two years of experience with genomics – how well does it work?*” Stephen Butler who works for Teagasc has joined up with Dr Vishwanath of Sexing Technology to talk about semen sexing and the importance of recording. *Cows can’t talk but we can listen*



Launch in Ireland of ICAR 2012 showing some of the recording equipment that is used in Ireland and which benefits from the activities of ICAR.

(to their rumination) is the title of the presentation by Doran Bar from Israel. Presenters from Ireland include Donagh Berry of Teagasc, Kevin Downing of ICBF and Joe O'Flaherty of Animal Health Ireland.

The **Beef and Sheep** industry day is on Tuesday 29th May. The line-up of speakers includes Dr Arthur Rickards the recently retired Chief Executive of the Australian organisation responsible for BreedPlan, the genetic evaluation system used by many beef breeds around the world. Michael Doran, the Vice-Chairman of the Board of ICBF and a member of organising committee for ICAR 2012 says *“Irish beef and sheep breeders should come and hear for themselves what is happening in the rest of the world and compare this with the services available to them in Ireland”*. Alison Van Eenenaam, USA will discuss *how might DNA-based information generate value in the beef cattle sector*. Richard Wakelin, from New Zealand and Laurent Griffon from France will describe the strategy in each of their countries for improving farm profitability. Irish speakers include Dave Behan from DAFM plus Eamon Wall, Patrick Donnellan, Ross Evans and Thierry Pabiou all from ICBF.

Farmers wishing to attend these events should text “ICARD” or “ICARB” to 089 457 7663 for the Dairy and Beef & Sheep days respectively. There will be no charge for Irish farmers to attend.

The main business of the ICAR conference is the exchange of information between scientists and technical experts employed in animal recording around the world. Outputs from the meeting will include updates to animal recording guidelines which are developed by the Technical Bodies; Sub-Committees, Working Groups and Task Forces that conduct the core of ICAR's work. On Thursday 31st May the conference delegates will visit Irish farms to see first-hand the way that records are collected and the resulting information is used by Irish farmers in their breeding and management decisions.

The important role played by ICAR is illustrated by the activities of two of its subsidiary groups – Interbull and Interbeef who respectively facilitate the comparison of dairy and beef cattle world-wide. The recording guidelines developed through the activities of ICAR and used in some 50 countries around the world give rise to data and information used by farmers in many different countries to make more accurate bull selection decisions.

ICBF plays a leading role in ICAR with Martin Burke the Chairman of its Recording Devices Sub-Committee, Brian Wickham the Chairman of the Interbeef Working Group and Andrew Cromie a member of the Interbull Sub-Committee. The activities of ICAR have a daily impact on Irish farms through the equipment used for animal recording, standards for identification tags and the availability of genetic evaluations for the many foreign bulls available in Ireland through artificial insemination.

Irish organisations providing greatly valued sponsorship for this major event include Mullinahone Co-op, Munster Cattle Breeding, Progressive Genetics, NCBC, DairyMaster, FBD Trust, Irish Farmers Journal, DAFM, and ICBF.

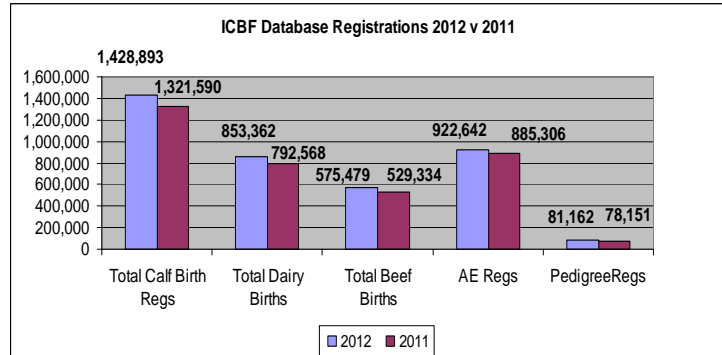
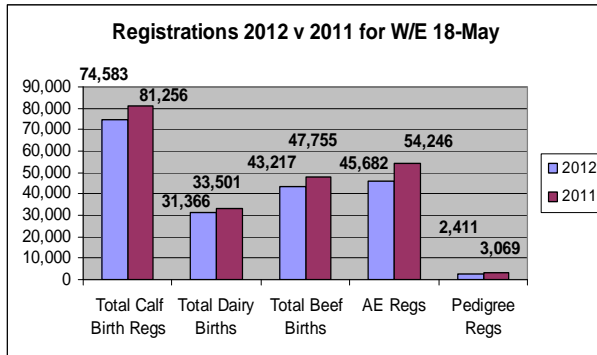
More Information

Please go to the ICAR 2012 website – www.icar2012.ie.

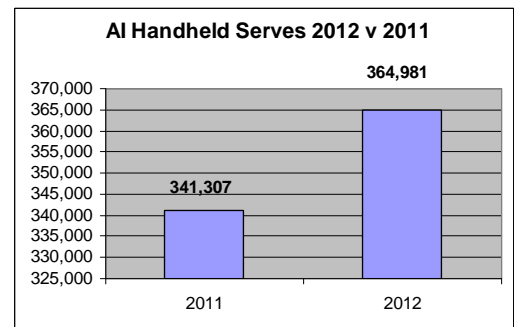


The Organising Committee for ICAR 2012 at the launch this week: Left to right: Andrew Cromie, Sean Coughlan, Pat Mulvehill, Martin Burke, John O'Sullivan, Mary Madden, John Carty, Marianna Kowalczyk, Michael Doran, and Brian Wickham. Absent: Derek Deane.

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 614,531 with the number of animals weaned at 543,563.
- BVD test results continue to be received at ICBF and are being processed accordingly. Around 560,000 tissue tags for BVD testing have been purchased at this stage. Around 368,000 samples have been returned at this stage, with a 0.60% BVD Virus Positive rate.
- The current trial weight recording cell operating out of Tully is now running the latest version of the new weight recording infrastructure, including the 'forward predicting' of weights. A newly designed 'split platform' is working well. Reports will be issued next week to a pilot group of farmers in Monaghan.
- The on-going developments to further enhance the loading of genotype information to the database are 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.
- Significant progress has been made in relation to the system design of the OPTIMIR spectral data project, and good progress is being made with the milk testing laboratories in relation to the extracts of the spectral data on an on-going basis.
- The graph shows Inseminations recorded on AI Handhelds in 2012 compared with 2011.



4 GENEIRELAND[®] Dairy

- The Spring 2012 dispatches are completed.
- Thanks to all the participants and AI Organisations.
- Herd-owners please ensure to record inseminations on the ICBF database.

5 Sheep Ireland

- The next few weeks will be very busy ones for Sheep Ireland. The Irish Grasslands Association will hold their Sheep conference and Farm walk on the farm of one of our LambPlus recording breeders. Gordon & Yvonne Johnston have been performance recording their Pedigree Vendeen sheep for many years now and this event

will be a fantastic opportunity for them to showcase both the Pedigree flock and their very productive commercial flock. Sheep Ireland will be in attendance on the day to get the Euro-Star message out to all those present.

- ICAR 2012 takes place at the end of the month and from a sheep point of view will be focused on the visits to John Large (CPT flock) and John Renehan (MALP & Pedigree flock). We intend on highlighting all that is good about the Sheep Ireland programme to those that travel to this event. We hope to meet some very interesting people over the course of the ICAR event involved in similar programs worldwide. We have no doubt that we will pick up some interesting ideas.



- Our Ultrasound scanning training has concluded and there have been some early lambing flocks scanned at this stage. It will be full steam ahead for the next number of weeks to get scanning completed and get evaluations out to our breeders.

6 Genetic Evaluations

- Data has been extracted for the beef genetic evaluation mini run.
- Work continues in all areas of genetic evaluations towards presentations for ICAR 2012 in Cork starting 28th May.

7 Milk Recording

National Milk Recording Statistics - Herds, Cows & EDIY 18/05/12						
Milk Recording Organisation	Total Herds Recorded YTD 18/05/12	No. EDIY Herds YTD 18/05/12	% Herds EDIY	Total No. Cows Recorded YTD 18/05/12	No. EDIY Cows YTD 18/05/12	% Cows EDIY
Munster	3,552	1,000	28%	254,036	76,003	30%
Progressive	2,290	877	38%	182,395	69,633	38%
Tipperary	110	37	34%	8,309	2,656	32%
Total	5,952	1,914	32%	444,740	148,292	33%

Recorded Cows by Milk Recording Organisation - Year on Year Comparison			
Milk Recording Organisation	YTD 2011 Cows Recorded 01/01/11 - 18/05/11	YTD 2012 Cows Recorded 01/01/12 - 18/05/12	2012 vs. 2011 Year on Year Difference (%)
Munster	249,229	254,036	1.9%
Progressive	173,003	182,395	5.1%
Tipperary	10,073	8,309	-21.2%
Total	432,305	444,740	2.8%



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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.