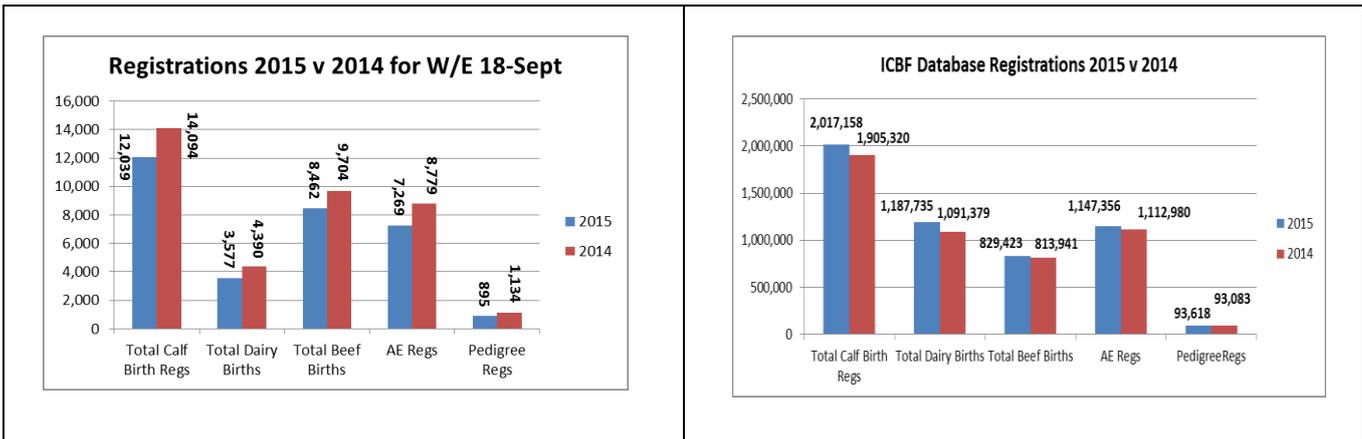


ICBF Weekly Update 18th September 2015

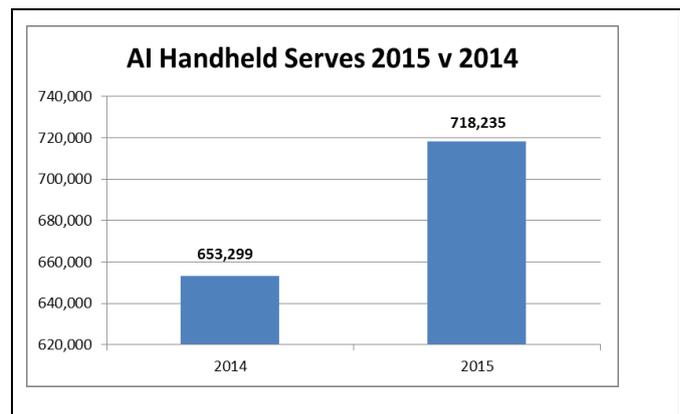
1 Important Dates

- ✚ **ICBF Board Meeting** – Thursday 15th October 2015 at 10:30, Killeshin Hotel, Portlaoise.
- ✚ **Sheep Board Meeting** – Thursday 15th October 2015 at 14:00, Killeshin Hotel, Portlaoise.

2 Database



- ✚ The stats above are compiled with the assistance of DAFM AIM systems.
- ✚ BVD test results continue to be received at ICBF and are being processed accordingly. There have been 2.14 million results received since January 1st, of which 29,489 have come in the last 7 days. Since the beginning of the voluntary phase in 2012, 7.08 million results have now been received.
- ✚ The graph shows Inseminations recorded on AI Handhelds in 2014 compared with 2015.



3 Herd Plus®

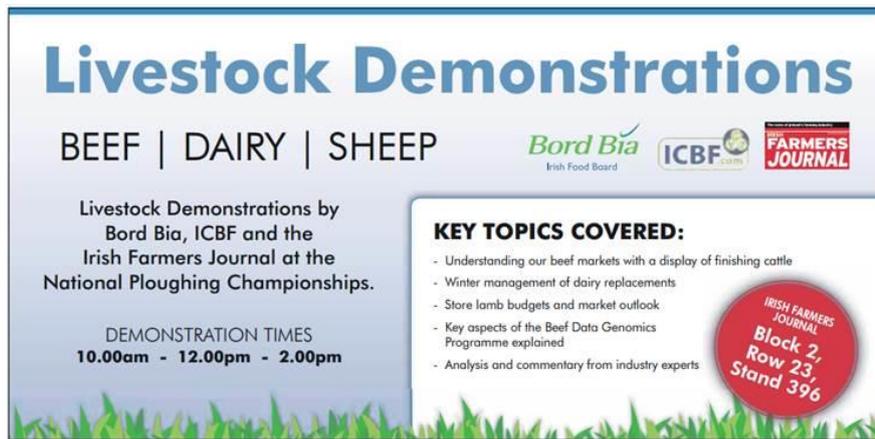
Continued Improvement in Dairy Cow Fertility

- ✚ The HerdPlus® Dairy Calving reports were released last week and are available to all Herdplus Dairy members.
- ✚ The most visible change that can be seen following the publishing of these reports is that there has been an improvement in the fertility of the national herd.
- ✚ The average calving interval improved by 4 days from 396 days in 2014, to 392 days in 2015. This has improved from a figure of 403 5 years ago (See graph). For more please visit <http://www.icbf.com/?p=3916>.



4 Beef Data and Genomics Programme (BDGP)

- This week's Irish Farmers Journal page is at the end of this update. This week's article is Survey Data recording.
- We will be at the National Ploughing Championships next week to answer all your queries. Find us at the Livestock Demonstrations at the Irish Farmers Journal Stand and also at the DAFM stand.



Livestock Demonstrations
BEEF | DAIRY | SHEEP

Livestock Demonstrations by Bord Bia, ICBF and the Irish Farmers Journal at the National Ploughing Championships.

DEMONSTRATION TIMES
10.00am - 12.00pm - 2.00pm

KEY TOPICS COVERED:

- Understanding our beef markets with a display of finishing cattle
- Winter management of dairy replacements
- Store lamb budgets and market outlook
- Key aspects of the Beef Data Genomics Programme explained
- Analysis and commentary from industry experts

IRISH FARMERS JOURNAL
Block 2, Row 23, Stand 396

5 GROW[®]

- 1211 Pedigree animals were scored in August. This figure is up by 72 animals from August 2014
- 1730 Pedigrees were weighed in August. This figure is down by 135 animals from August 2014.
- These totals do not include animals scored as part of the Gene Ireland Maternal Bull Breeding visit.

6 Genetic Evaluations

- Results from the monthly beef performance evaluation were uploaded to the database on Monday for animals linear scored in July and August.
- Thierry Pabiou from ICBF accompanied Teagasc on an information trip to France to better understand the French maternal program. The trip involved visits to prominent Limousine and Charolais herds as well as the maternal stations.
- Research work continues on various projects including Beef Genomics, Interbeef, Health and Disease, Test day model for milk production dairy fertility evaluations.

7 Milk Recording

National Milk Recording Statistics - Herds, Cows & EDIY 18/09/15						
Milk Recording Organisation	Total Herds Recorded YTD 18/09/15	No. EDIY Herds YTD 18/09/15	% Herds EDIY	Total No. Cows Recorded YTD 18/09/15	No. EDIY Cows YTD 18/09/15	% Cows EDIY
Munster	3,980	1,273	32%	363,578	125,279	34%
Progressive	2,493	1,065	43%	254,062	110,237	43%
Tipperary	125	53	42%	11,764	5,257	45%
Total	6,598	2,391	36%	629,404	240,773	38%

Recorded Cows by Milk Recording Organisation - Year on Year Comparison			
Milk Recording Organisation	YTD 2014 Cows Recorded 01/01/14 - 18/09/14	YTD 2015 Cows Recorded 01/01/15 - 18/09/15	2015 vs 2014 Year on Year Difference (%)
Munster	329,051	363,578	10.5%
Progressive	239,604	254,062	6.0%
Tipperary	9,980	11,764	17.9%
Total	578,635	629,404	8.8%

8 Sheep Ireland

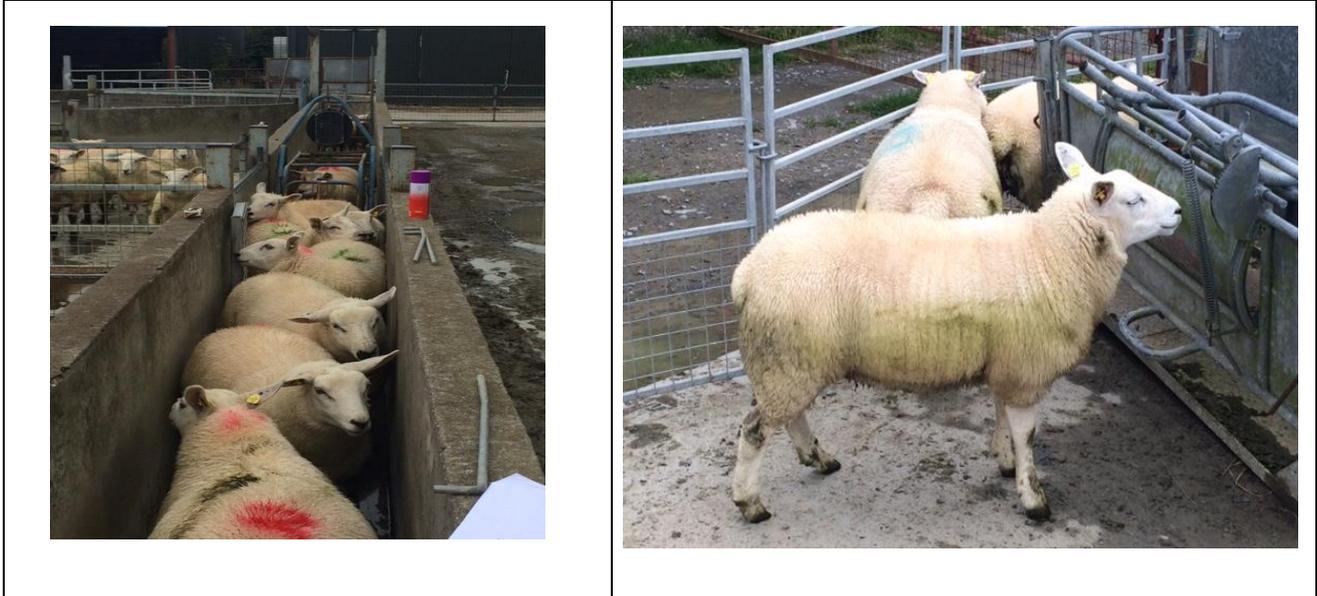
Meeting with breed society representatives

- ✚ This week Sheep Ireland held their regular board meeting. In advance of this board meeting, we invited the representatives of all sheep breed societies to come together. This meeting was very well attended with most sheep breeds represented. The purpose of this breed society meeting was to facilitate greater interaction between those involved in the running of Sheep Ireland (board and employees) and the breed societies involved in LambPlus. Sheep Ireland presented updates on a number of important matters including OVIGEN, LambPlus recording, the Data Quality Index, linkage and plans for the CPT for 2015.
- ✚ Donagh Berry delivered some important messages on OVIGEN and the major potential advantages that genomics can offer sheep breed societies into the future. The key message was that the OVIGEN project has a set amount of funding available for genotyping Irish pedigree sheep. OVIGEN will enable some breed societies to implement genomics without incurring excessive costs. By genotyping adult animals, OVIGEN will lay the foundations for LambPlus pedigree breeders to carry on genotyping pedigree lambs. Apart from the benefits to the Euro-Star evaluations, breed societies will benefit from accurate parentage identification which will benefit everyone involved in sheep breeding.
- ✚ The recently launched online Data Quality Index for every LambPlus flock was also detailed to those present and discussed in association with the subject of genetic linkage across the breed improvement programme. CPT ram selection was another subject which Sheep Ireland sought some assistance and involvement from each breed. At present Sheep Ireland are assembling a possible ram list for the 2015 CPT AI. 2,200 ewes will be AI'd from October 12th to October 20th this year. The CPT currently has a number of key objectives including, increasing genetic linkage and helping to 'prove' high starred rams across the breeds involved. Sheep Ireland are cognisant that these objectives need to be achieved using rams that are physically correct in every way and the greater involvement by breed societies in CPT ram selection was invited.
- ✚ Among some of the issues raised by breed societies in the meeting included inadequate reporting of CPT ram performance and inadequate reporting of the issues being discussed at Board level. Sheep Ireland committed to addressing these issues as soon as possible.
- ✚ We would like to thank all those who attended this very productive meeting. A number of actions have been noted by Sheep Ireland and these will be acted upon. It was agreed by all in attendance that these meetings should now become a more regular occurrence, taking place at least every six months, with the option to organise more regular meetings going forward if deemed necessary. The next meeting is set for December and will include a greater focus on the genetic evaluations and how they work.

National Ploughing Championships 2015

- ✚ Sheep Ireland will be in attendance at the ploughing championships again this year. We will be found at the Irish Farmers Journal stand partaking in the livestock demonstration stand in association with ICBF and Bord Bia. This is a great event which attracts major crowds daily. We will have some 2015 born CPT lambs from the farm of John Large, Gortnahoe, Co. Tipperary on display at the stand and as the theme of the livestock demo is finishing, we will be concentrating on the benefits of using the Days to Slaughter index when selecting breeding rams.

- See below some of the lambs that will be present at the ploughing. These are the progeny from sires with high and low Days to Slaughter Indices. The two sires are Texel and the average weight difference between both sets of progeny at weaning was 3kgs live-weight.



Sean Coughlan Chief Executive, ICBF & Sheep Ireland, Highfield House, Shinagh, Bandon Co. Cork., Phone: +353 238 820 222, Mobile: +353 872903121, Email scoughlan@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. **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.

National Milk Recording Results for the 10 day period, 09-SEP-2015 To 18-SEP-2015

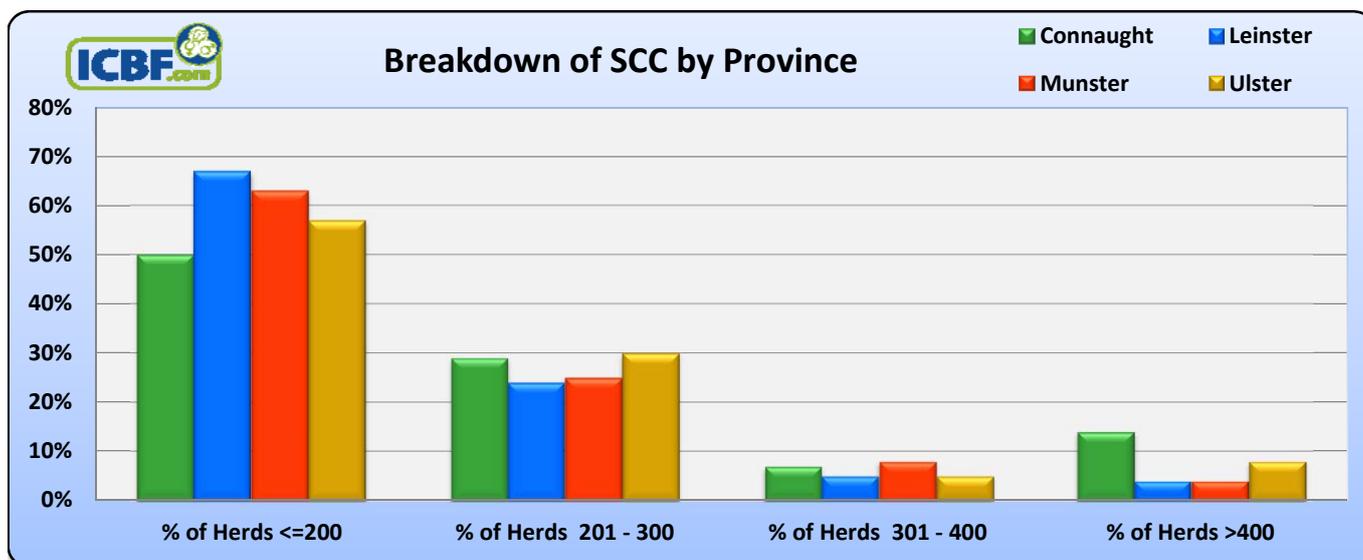
ICBF	No. Herds Recorded	No. Cows Recorded	Avg Herd Size	Avg Milk kg/Cow	Average Fat %	Average Protein %	Average F+P kg	Average SCC*
Connaught	28	1,996	71	21.3	4.23	3.70	1.68	212
Leinster	144	13,894	96	20.3	4.15	3.75	1.59	159
Munster	611	51,144	84	19.5	4.22	3.77	1.55	176
Ulster	37	2,562	69	21.1	3.84	3.63	1.57	176
National Statistics	820	69,596	85	19.8	4.19	3.76	1.57	174

* Geometric Mean Herd SCC

SCC Distribution for the 10 day period, 09-SEP-2015 To 18-SEP-2015

ICBF	No. Herds Recorded	No. Cows Recorded	Avg Herd Size	% of Herds <=200	% of Herds 201 - 300	% of Herds 301 - 400	% of Herds >400	Average SCC*
Connaught	28	1,996	71	50%	29%	7%	14%	212
Leinster	144	13,894	96	67%	24%	5%	4%	159
Munster	611	51,144	84	63%	25%	8%	4%	176
Ulster	37	2,562	69	57%	30%	5%	8%	176
National Statistics	820	69,596	85	63%	25%	7%	5%	174

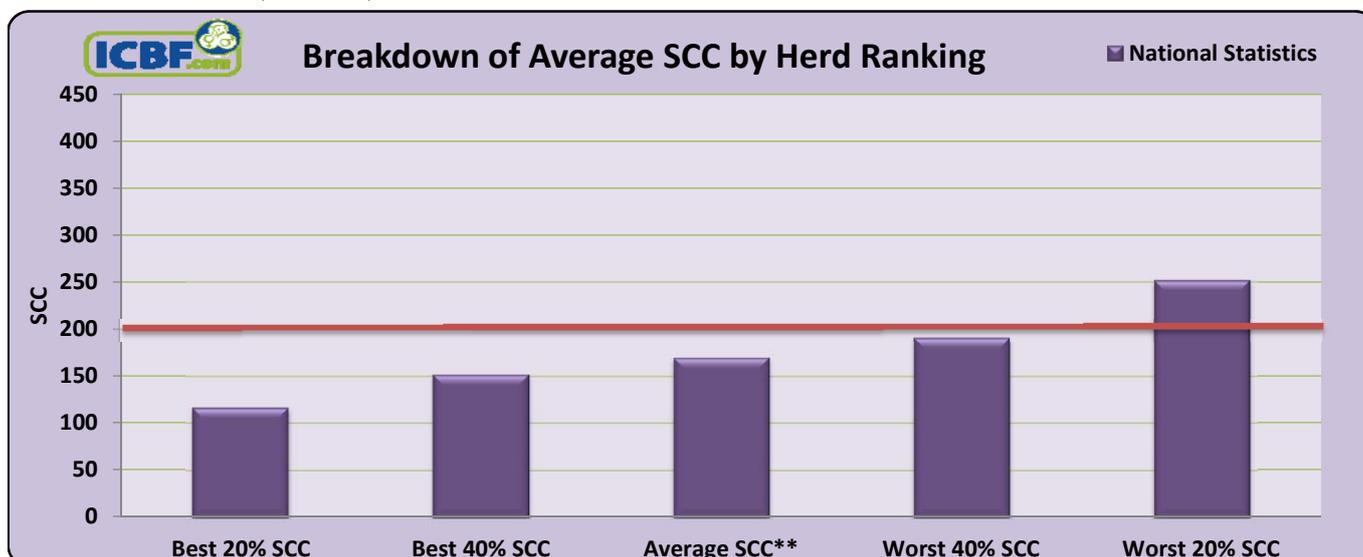
* Geometric Mean Herd SCC



% Herd Breakdown for the 10 day period, 09-SEP-2015 To 18-SEP-2015

ICBF	No. Herds Recorded	No. Cows Recorded	Avg Herd Size	Best 20% SCC	Best 40% SCC	Average SCC**	Worst 40% SCC	Worst 20% SCC
Connaught	28	1,996	71	129	174	198	225	310
Leinster	144	13,894	96	100	137	158	185	244
Munster	611	51,144	84	120	153	170	191	248
Ulster	37	2,562	69	120	161	181	213	245
National Statistics	820	69,596	85	117	152	170	191	252

** Percentile Herd SCC Rank (Median SCC)



Data recording forms arriving on BDGP farms

Data recording forms have started arriving on Beef Data and Genomic Programme (BDGP) farms this week. The forms are designed to facilitate the collection of valuable cattle breeding data. Having this data allows ICBF provide scheme participants with more accurate genetic evaluations (ie, Euro-Star index) for animals on their farms.

The following is a list of data that must be recorded as part of the BDGP.

- Calf docility and quality.
- Dam docility and milk ability.
- Stock bull docility and bull functionality.

These are the same traits, that were recorded as part of the previous beef data programme, so herd-owners should have little problem completing the required data.

How to record? The approach to recording each trait is quite simple, with each farmer asked to assess animals on a one-to-five scale, with one indicating the animal is very poor for the trait in question and five indicating that the animal is very good for the trait in question. A score of three indicates the animal is about average.

Which animals? The report lists all calves born from 1 January 2015 and that were on participants farms at five months of age (regardless of whether they have since been sold or not). In addition, all dams of these calves and any stock bulls that produced these calves are listed. Participants must record relevant data

on all such listed animals. In scenarios where animals have since been sold (eg a cull cow or stock bull), herd-owners should return a score based on their experience of the animal. Where weanlings are about to be sold and you have not yet received your form, then simply record the relevant data (calf quality and docility) on a notepad and then transfer to the forms once you receive them.

Missing sires and calving surveys? In addition to the traits above, some herd-owners will also receive a "missing sire and calving ease" recording form (a yellow form), requesting any data that was not recorded at the time of calf registration. It is critical that this data is also returned as these traits are also part of the BDGP. Herd-owners will be expected to record this data at the time of calf registration either through Agfood.ie, Animal Events or via an approved farm software package.

How to return the data? Herd-owners can return data in two ways, either using the FREEPOST envelopes provided or electronically via the ICBF or DAFM websites. At this stage, an increasing number of farmers are opting to record the data electronically as the option provides herd-owners with an excellent overview of the level of valid data recorded for their herd for each of the traits in question. We will be devoting a full article to this option in next week's BDGP page. Herd-owners are encouraged to return all data within 28 days of receiving their forms.



BDGP surveys can be recorded online at www.icbf.com or via the forms received in the post.



Sample page for recording BDGP survey data online at www.icbf.com



One of Tom Gannon's freshly calved heifers with a Replacement Index of €150 (5 Stars). She was sired by IS4 (SEPA TEE JAY) with a Replacement Index of €146.

Q&A

Q. How do I register births online? Calf births can be registered online at www.agfood.ie. Herds that have not used the service before must first register their details online. A letter will then be sent to you with your login details, which will allow you to access all relevant online services. Births can also be registered via farm software providers.

Q. How do I record survey data on www.icbf.com? BDGP survey data can be recorded by logging on to "Online Services" at www.icbf.com. From the menu options select "Services" and then "Beef Data Genomics Programme". Herds that have not used the service before can text the word "PASS" to 089 4577663 to receive their password. Where the mobile number is not on the ICBF database, herds should contact ICBF on 1850 625 626 to receive their login details. Data can also be recorded via farm software providers.

FARMER FOCUS: TOM GANNON

'AI suits my farming system'

Name: Tom Gannon, Charlestown, Co Sligo.
Farming System: Suckler to beef.
BDGP cow reference No: 48
4 or 5 Star Females: 23 Cows; 12 Heifers.
Stock Bull or AI: 100% AI
Replacement Strategy: Breeding all my own replacements.

Why did you join the BDGP? It's hard to make money in suckling; hopefully there will be long-term gains from participating in the programme.

What replacement strategy do you plan to implement in light of the scheme? I weigh all my calves twice a year. Based on weaning weights, I identify my milkiest cows. When I am selecting heifers to keep as replacements, I pick heifers from my highest Index, milkiest (cows with calves with the best weaning weights) and my quietest cows. The scheme isn't going to change how I pick heifers; I am meeting the scheme requirements with this plan already.

What criteria do you use when selecting AI bulls? I am an AI man for Progressive Genetics and do all my own AI. The farm is very fragmented but I calve the cows from September which allows me to AI most of the cows indoors. When I am selecting bulls to use, number one for me is high Replacement Index bulls with very good milk and docility. I am not picky about breed. Where I can, I try to use high-reliability bulls. I try my best to select bulls to suit each cow. AI suits my system and fits in well with the scheme.

How do you currently record animal data? Currently, I register all my calves online at www.agfood.ie.



Tom Gannon with his son Hugh.

www.agfood.ie. For last year's scheme I recorded all other required scheme data on www.icbf.com. I find it much quicker and handier compared with filling and posting back the paper forms. I wouldn't be the best at computers, but I find the websites are easy to operate and straightforward. I will continue recording online.

DATES FOR THE DIARY

September: Genotyping tags, paper survey forms and any remaining BDGP Euro-Star reports arriving on farms.

Sat 19 September: Shorthorn high replacement index open day on the farm of Peter Luttrell, Athy, Co Kildare. For more info, phone 086 0461442.

22-24 September: National Ploughing Championships, Ratheniska, Co Laois. Livestock demonstrations at the *Irish Farmers Journal* stand. Your BDGP questions answered at the Department of Agriculture stand.