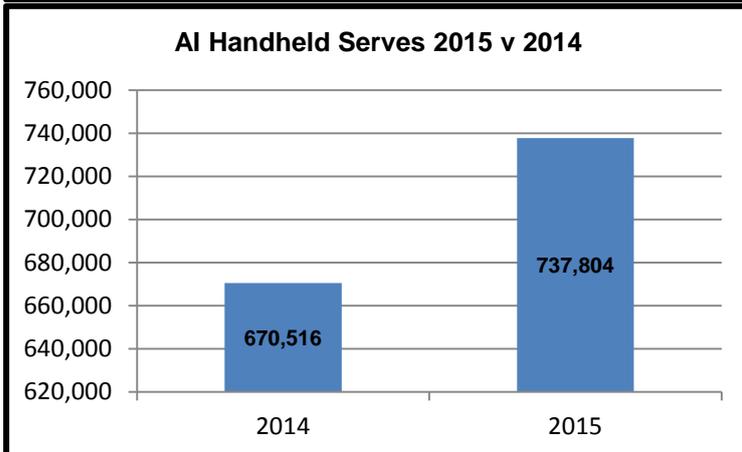
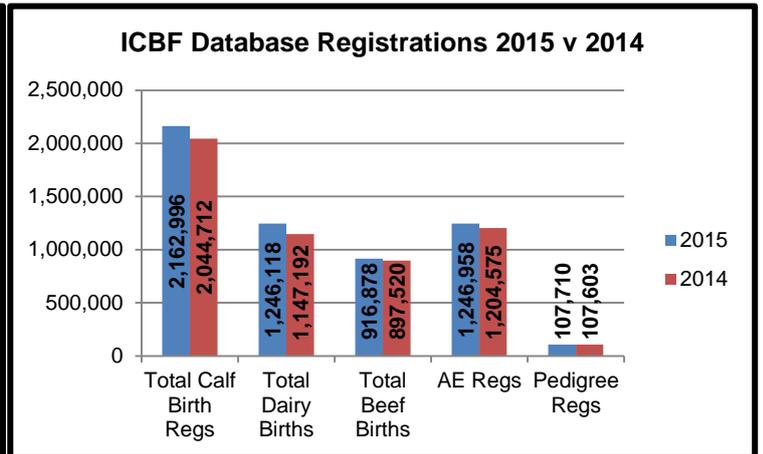
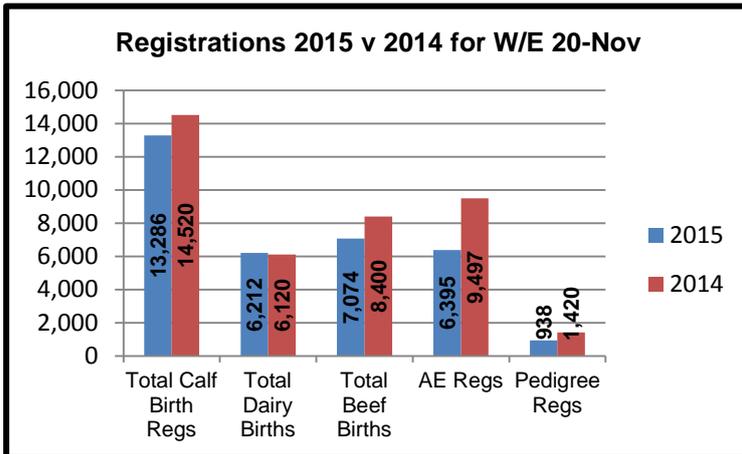


ICBF Weekly Update 20th November 2015

1 Important Dates

- ICBF Board Meeting** – Thursday 26th November 2015 at 10:30, Killeshin Hotel, Portlaoise.
- Sheep Board Meeting** – Thursday 26th November 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 2.30 million results received since January 1st, of which 15,981 have come in the last 7 days. Since the beginning of the voluntary phase in 2012, 7.24 million results have now been received.
- The chart shows Inseminations recorded on AI Handhelds in 2014 compared with 2015.

3 Herd Plus®

Co-op Herd Performance Reports

- Co-op Herd Performance Reports for Jan-Sept 2015 have been posted and are now available online.
- To view your report online: Log in to www.icbf.com. Go to "Reports", "Milk Management" and click on the dated report you wish to view.
- Suppliers to multiple co-ops will receive their report early next week.



Recording Dry Off Dates

Pouring Money Down the Drain?

- ✚ Farmers that don't record dry offs do not receive an accurate Annual Report for their herd or valid lactations for their animals that have paid for.
- ✚ The average herd owner pays €15 per cow per year for milk recording, in a 100 cow herd this equates to €1500! Why pay €1500 for a service without getting the full benefits? The service is paid for but the farmer misses out on the most valuable part of the service by not recording this simple date.

A Valid Lactation

- ✚ Dry offs must be recorded to ensure that a cow has a valid lactation. A valid lactation is one that is closed (has dry off date) with over 150 days in milk or is still in milk and had a test on or after 305 days in the given year.
- ✚ A Valid Lactation ensures that a cow's lactation details will be printed on pedigree certificates, sales catalogues and the Annual Report. Also, when a cow has a valid lactation her data is included in genetic evaluations, which increases the reliability of the cow and her relations. Valid lactations are currently used by the Department of Agriculture when calculating evaluations for Disease Eradication Schemes.

Ways to Record Dry Offs

ICBF Website

Dry-offs can be recorded for all herds at www.icbf.com, herdowners need a username & password to login which can be obtained by texting PASS to **089 4577663** or by contacting the HerdPlus office on **1850 600 900**.

Dry-Off Notification Sheets

You should receive these by post from your milk recording organisation. If you have not, you can request them by contacting your milk recording organisation.

Farm Software

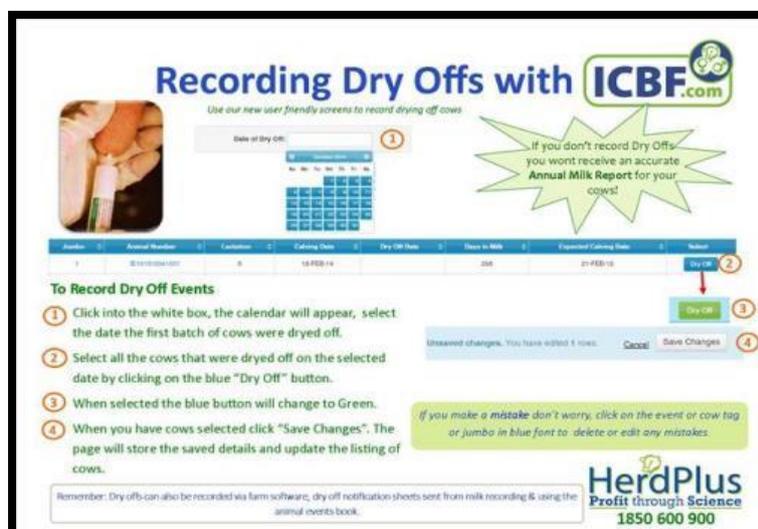
If you use a farm software provider (e.g. IFC or Kingswood), record your dry-offs and ensure you send the file to ICBF on completion of recording.

Mobile Phone Text

You can text your dry offs to the ICBF by sending them to the following: **089 4577663**. E.g. Dry 127, 256, 785, 1165, 1952, 2514 25/11/2014

Animal Events Recording Book

Dates can be recorded on the Animal Events Recording Book and sheets subsequently posted to Animal Events Agency, PO Box 72, Clonakilty, Freepost, Co. Cork.



4 Genetic Evaluations.

- Genetic evaluations are underway for the December 2015 full evaluation update for dairy and beef traits.
- Test evaluations are underway on beef genomic evaluations across the full range of traits in the beef indexes.
- Developments are also continuing on the dairy test day model and a new somatic cell count evaluation based on test day records.

5 Beef Data and Genomics Programme (BDGP)

- This week's Irish Farmers Journal page is at the end of this update. The title of this week's article is "Picking a bull for your system"

6 GENÉ IRELAND® Beef

Autumn 2015 Beef Programme

- Sign Ups are continuing for the Autumn 2015 Beef programme.
- 204 herds taking a total of 3,730 straws have joined so far.
- The average order is 18 straws per herd.
- The catalogue is available to view at the link below

http://issuu.com/herdplus/docs/gi_beef_autumn_2015_catalogue

- To learn more or to order straws please phone 1850 600 900.
- Approximate total straws ordered to date for the bulls are detailed below. List of Bulls Currently On-Test.
- Please see the list of Bulls Currently On-Test in the table to the right.

Code	Name of Bull	Breed	Straws Ordered
AA2064	Carrigroe Kian	AA	340
AA2163	Liss Brendan	AA	125
AU2155	Slaneymill Jack	AU	265
CH2159	Bondi Jacob	CH	140
PDR	Dereskit Improver	CH	325
CH2154	Polar Joe 2	CH	55
HE2148	Ballyville Hamlet	HE	180
LM2156	Clonark Jumbo	LM	360
LM2151	Ballygarvan Stud Ike	LM	190
LM2116	Tomschoice Ironstone	LM	170
OEO	Ivoire	LM	80
ZKY	Kyle Herd Ivan	PT	330
PI2157	Kilree Leo	PI	90
SA2153	Highfield Odran	SA	240
SH2181	Coolvin Dominator	SH	10
SI2152	Curaheen Earp	SI	400
SI2158	Seepa Fionn	SI	270
KJG	Knockane Dag	SI	480
ETP	Curaheen Evolution P	SI	255

7 Milk Recording

National Milk Recording Statistics - Herds, Cows & EDIY 20/11/15						
Milk Recording Organisation	Total Herds Recorded YTD 20/11/15	No. EDIY Herds YTD 20/11/15	% Herds EDIY	Total No. Cows Recorded YTD 20/11/15	No. EDIY Cows YTD 20/11/15	% Cows EDIY
Munster	3,993	1,278	32%	368,283	126,629	34%
Progressive	2,511	1,078	43%	261,582	113,052	43%
Tipperary	127	54	43%	11,880	5,290	45%
Total	6,631	2,410	36%	641,745	244,971	38%

Recorded Cows by Milk Recording Organisation - Year on Year Comparison

Milk Recording Organisation	YTD 2014 Cows Recorded 01/01/14 - 20/11/14	YTD 2015 Cows Recorded 01/01/15 - 20/11/15	2015 vs 2014 Year on Year Difference (%)
Munster	336,182	368,283	9.5%
Progressive	245,065	261,582	6.7%
Tipperary	10,393	11,880	14.3%
Total	591,640	641,745	8.5%

8 Sheep Ireland

2015 LambPlus Regional Meetings

- On Wednesday evening in Tuam we concluded our latest round of LambPlus regional meetings. The Tuam meeting was very well attended by both existing and new breeders interested in signing up for the first time. The level of discussion was very good with some very valid points being raised around the DQI (data quality index) and a similar issue to last year was raised again, about “Why is muscle and fat scanning not compulsory for all LambPlus breeders?”. Some breeders see this as unfair in light of the fact that this service comes at a cost, which needs to be carried by each individual breeder.
- One of the extra incentives we have added this year is giving each individual LambPlus flock a score based on the quality, quantity and the timeliness of their data recorded. A part of this score is compiled from scanning information, and flocks that scan their lambs will be rewarded with a higher flock DQI.
- The one common thread through all the meetings, was the new genomics project with many breeders interested in what it has to offer them and how genomics will be carried forward for animals born in 2016.
- We will be meeting with all the relevant breed societies on December 15th to discuss how each society would like to proceed. The cost of genotyping is not feasible for an individual breeder to carry yet across entire flocks, so a co-funded approach between the societies and the Ovigen project will be the most likely option.

LambPlus Sign up Deadline

- We once again remind all pedigree ram breeders that the deadline for signing up to LambPlus for the 2016 season is Tuesday **December 1st**. Reminder texts will be circulated to all breeders that recorded data with Sheep Ireland last year. To successfully sign-up to LambPlus for 2016, breeders must do two things;
 - Complete and return the LambPlus sign-up form
 - Each existing Sheep Ireland member breeder must update their own online flock inventory which includes adding the NSIS (department tag number) for each and every sheep within their LambPlus inventory. For breeders that are new to the Sheep Ireland database they must also return a list of all the sheep ID's (NSIS), to Sheep Ireland so that the flock can be created on the database.

Sheep Breeders Round Table

- Sheep Ireland will be attending a 3 day breed biennial conference which brings together breeding programmes from all over the world to present on their own breeding programmes. This is a great event as it allows for the sharing of ideas and to learn from the positives and negatives found in each breeding programme. Sheep Ireland's Eamon Wall will also be presenting at the event. If you are interested in following the event online then search #SBRT2015 on twitter.

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, 11-NOV-2015 To 20-NOV-2015

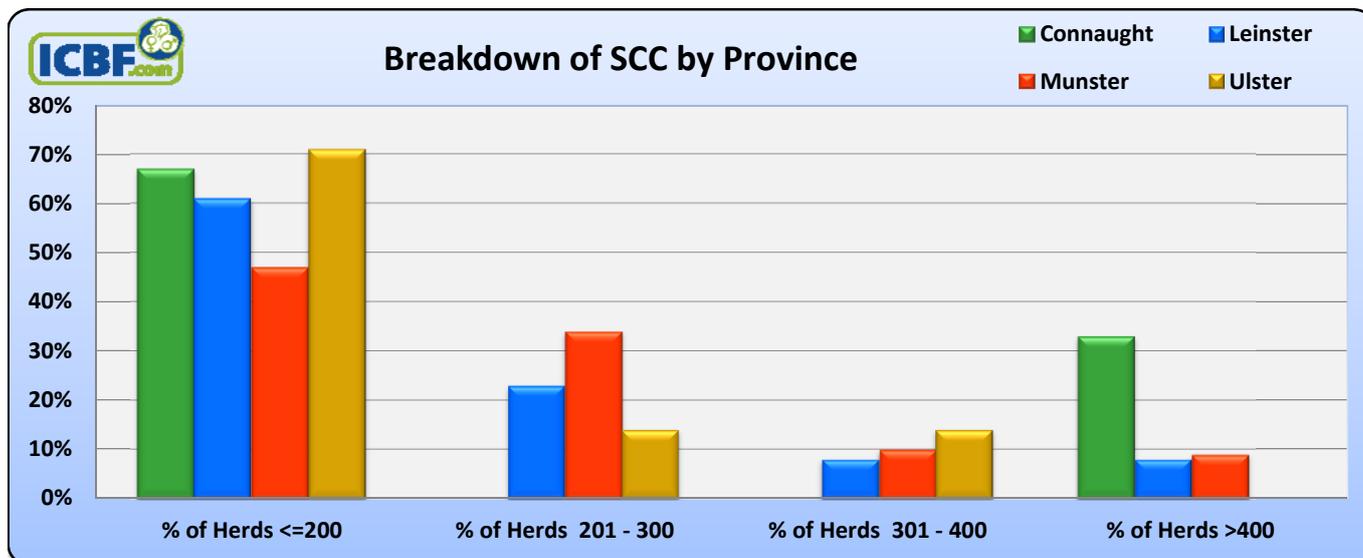
ICBF	No. Herds Recorded	No. Cows Recorded	Avg Herd Size	Avg Milk kg/Cow	Average Fat %	Average Protein %	Average F+P kg	Average SCC*
Connaught	6	262	44	18.1	4.38	3.62	1.43	276
Leinster	106	9,368	88	17.0	4.54	3.66	1.37	178
Munster	391	30,086	77	14.0	4.74	3.84	1.19	217
Ulster	21	1,376	66	16.6	4.26	3.52	1.27	160
National Statistics	524	41,092	78	14.8	4.68	3.79	1.23	207

* Geometric Mean Herd SCC

SCC Distribution for the 10 day period, 11-NOV-2015 To 20-NOV-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	6	262	44	67%	0%	0%	33%	276
Leinster	106	9,368	88	61%	23%	8%	8%	178
Munster	391	30,086	77	47%	34%	10%	9%	217
Ulster	21	1,376	66	71%	14%	14%	0%	160
National Statistics	524	41,092	78	51%	30%	10%	9%	207

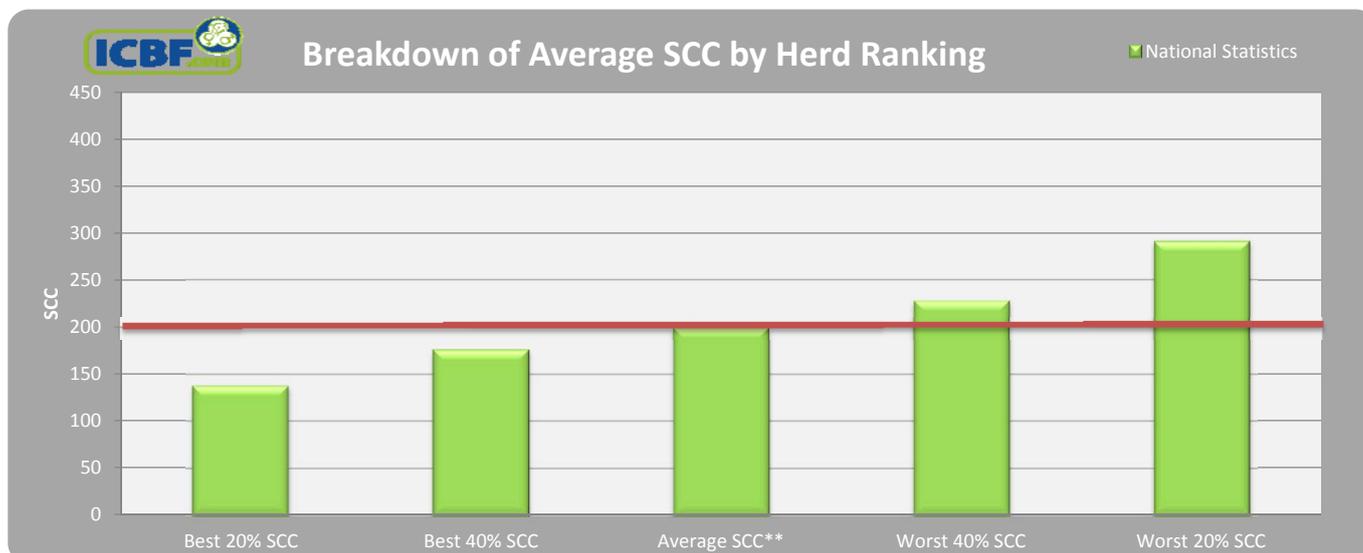
* Geometric Mean Herd SCC



% Herd Breakdown for the 10 day period, 11-NOV-2015 To 20-NOV-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	6	262	44	141	193	197	200	458
Leinster	106	9,368	88	118	157	178	200	272
Munster	391	30,086	77	142	189	207	237	295
Ulster	21	1,376	66	117	141	142	172	248
National Statistics	524	41,092	78	138	176	200	228	291

** Percentile Herd SCC Rank (Median SCC)



Picking a bull for your system

Last week, we spoke about the importance of knowing what type of stock you want to produce in your herd before purchasing a stock bull or using an AI bull. There are many different production systems on Irish suckler farms, requiring a number of different types of stock.

The “silver bullet” bull, a bull that satisfies every system’s requirements, can be very difficult to find. This is principally down to the fact that certain traits have negative relationships. As you improve in one, you tend to decrease in the other. The following are examples of the most common production systems on Irish suckler farms and what to look for in a bull’s Euro-Star index to suit each system.

I breed all of my own replacements and aim to have surplus to sell.

In this system, a farmer will be breeding most, if not all, of his cows to a maternal bull. A suitable bull here should have a high Replacement Index (>€98 is 5 stars – top 20% across breed). The across-breed stars will tell you where the bull ranks against all other bulls. If you are looking to specifically improve on a certain trait, eg milk, then you will have to look at that trait figure and its star rating. Again, the across-breed stars will tell you where the bull ranks on each trait.

I take all of my animals to slaughter and purchase in all replacements.

In this system, a high Terminal Index bull is most suitable (>€121 is 5 stars – top 20% across breed). Just like the last example, you may be looking

to improve on a specific trait such as carcase weight. It is important to look at the traits that are most important to your system.

I am producing weanlings for the export market and purchase in all replacements.

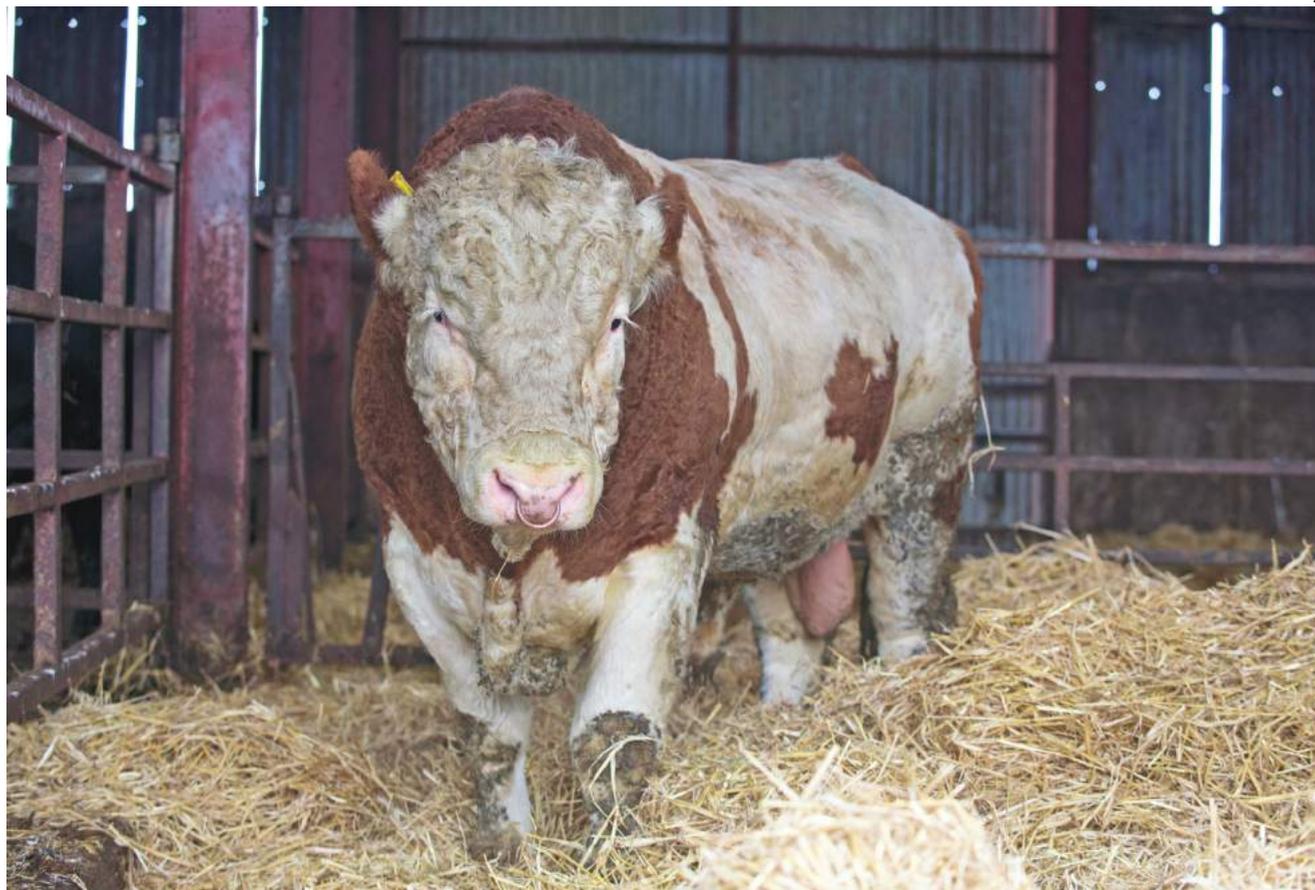
Like the last system, a high Terminal Index bull is what is required. As the export weanling market generally requires heavily muscled animals, particular emphasis should be placed on the carcase conformation trait. It is important to keep a close eye on the calving difficulty figures of these bulls as some can be quite high.

I need an easy-calving bull for maiden heifers to calve at 24 months.

Calving ease is the priority here. Using proven easy-calving AI bulls (less than 5% calving difficulty at over 90% reliability) is ideal, as these bulls have a high number of calving records from many different herds. Where this is not possible, a proven easy-calving stock bull is best. Using test AI bulls or young unproven stock bulls on maiden heifers is not advised.

Important traits regardless of the production system.

There are certain traits which are important to every production system. Regardless of the type of stock a farmer is looking to produce, they will always aim for as little calving difficulty as possible and docile stock. These two traits should be taken into account when assessing the Euro-Star indexes of all bulls. You must also look at the reliability figures to see how well proven a bull is on a given index or trait.



Andrew’s Simmental stock bull Celtic Celt. He has a Replacement Index of €128 (5 stars within and across breed). He is also 5 stars within and across breed for both daughter milk and daughter calving interval (fertility). Andrew intends to keep daughters of this bull as replacement heifers.

Q&A

Q. Will a bull with a high Replacement Index be strong on milk?

While most high Replacement Index bulls have a good milk figure, this may not always be the case. The overall index is made up of the combined economic values of a number of traits. A bull could have a high Replacement Index on the back of being easy calving, having good fertility and good carcase traits, but may be only average for milk. This is why it is important to look at the sub-traits in a bull’s index to see where the overall index figure is coming from. This is especially true where you are looking to improve a specific trait, such as milk. You need to look at that trait in its own right.

Q. Is it possible to find a bull with a high Replacement and Terminal Index?

A. Yes, it is possible but they can be hard to find. This is because some traits have a negative relationship. An example of this is muscle and fertility. As you increase genetic merit for muscle development, you tend to decrease genetic merit for fertility. Also, a lot of pedigree breeders will tend to focus on one of either the Replacement or Terminal index when breeding bulls.

FARMER FOCUS: ANDREW MOLONEY

If a bull’s genetics aren’t good enough, then I won’t buy him

Name: Andrew Moloney, Edenderry, Co. Offaly
Farming System: Suckler to beef.
4 and 5 Star Females: Cows: 56; Heifers: 86.
Stock Bull or AI: Stock Bull
Replacement Strategy: Breed my own and buy in.

Why did you join the BDGP?

The programme will help me to improve the breeding in my herd and this will hopefully increase my output and in turn improve profitability. The fact that I am receiving financial support to do this makes it a “win win” situation.

What is your replacement strategy?

I use a combination of breeding my own and buying in some crosses from the dairy herd. I’ve been buying in Limousin heifers from dairy herds and crossing these with a high Replacement Index bull to breed my own replacements. I haven’t been indiscriminately buying heifers. They have to be functional, docile and have good Replacement Indexes. I try to get them from more traditional British Friesian herds if possible. It’s a system that has been working well for me.

When purchasing a new bull what criteria do you apply?

Firstly, I decide what type of stock I want the bull to produce. I then either work off of the Replacement or Terminal index depending on my requirements. I look at the Euro-Star figures first and if I am happy with these I will do a visual assessment on the bull to ensure that he is docile and functionally correct. A bull could look the part, but if his genetics aren’t good enough then I



Andrew Moloney

don’t see the point in buying him.

Tell me a bit about your own stock bulls.

I have two stock bulls. I have a few pedigree Limousins and I bred my Limousin stock bull myself. Arrow Improver is sired by Fieldson Alfie (S511) and is a very strong terminal sire with an index of €140 (5 stars within and across). His carcase traits are exceptional, being 5 stars, both within and across breed on carcase weight and carcase conformation. I also have a Simmental bull which I bought from Ger and Angela Brickley. Celtic Celt is sired by Celtic Rock (RKZ) and has a Replacement Index of €128 (5 stars within and across breed). He is 5 stars within and across breed for both daughter milk, with a figure of +14 kg, and for daughter calving interval (fertility) with a figure of -2.37 days. I specifically bought this bull to breed replacement heifers.

DATA RECORDING

- ➔ All calves born from January to May are now old enough (five months) to record calf quality and docility.
- ➔ Cows can be scored for milk and docility as soon as they calve.
- ➔ This information can be recorded online through www.icbf.com, www.agfood.ie, a farm software package or by postal forms.
- ➔ New updated animal events pocket notebooks will be posted to all BDGP herds in the coming months.

DATES FOR THE DIARY

Thursday 19 November: Dingle Mart Suckler/BDGP Information Event, Benner’s Hotel, Dingle at 8pm.