

## 1. Important Dates

- ✚ **Tullamore Show - Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> August.** ICBF and Sheep Ireland will have stands featuring recent developments in cattle and sheep breeding.
- ✚ **Interbull Meetings – Sat. and Sun. 22<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> August.** In Barcelona before EAAP meeting.

## 1 DAFF Grant

DAFF provide grant funding to ICBF and Sheep Ireland which is reviewed every five years and is currently being reviewed. We have made a submission to DAFF seeking a continuing of funding for the next five years. The submission was considered by the two Boards at their recent meetings. This week John O'Sullivan (Chairman of ICBF), Ignatius Byrne (Chairman of Sheep Ireland) & Brian Wickham met firstly with IFA and then with Mr Brendan Smith the Minister of Agriculture to discuss our submission. The summary of our submission (a full copy is in the publications section of our websites – [www.icbf.com](http://www.icbf.com) & [www.sheep.ie](http://www.sheep.ie)) is that grant support is justified on the following grounds:

- **An excellent track record.** ICBF has established a world-class cattle breeding infrastructure in Ireland.
- **Realistic plans** to achieve a major improvement in the profitability of cattle and sheep farming in Ireland.
- **Delivery of benefits to the wider community** from the activities of ICBF and Sheep Ireland.
- **A net contribution to the state revenues.** For cattle ICBF is contributing a net €1.4 million per year.
- **Replacing DAFF activities with** savings to DAFF of €1.35 million per year.
- **Maintaining a very effective partnership** between DAFF and the agriculture industry.
- **An excellent return on investment.**

## 2 Generating Value

This week we have been involved in discussions focused on extracting additional value for farmers and the wider community from the ICBF database. Three of the opportunities that have been identified are:

1. Facilitating the trade of high genetic merit animals.
2. Providing useful statistics.
3. Facilitating the efforts of AHI (Animal Health Ireland).

Each of these opportunities is a result of the comprehensive collection of data that is contained in the ICBF database. In seeking ways to realise the extra value that can be generated by these opportunities our focus is on improving the profitability of farming in Ireland. We are working with partners who share this goal and can complement the capabilities of ICBF.

## 3 Electronic Tags

The development of electronic tags is presenting the sheep and cattle breeding industries with opportunities to reduce the cost and improve the accuracy of data collection on individual animals. The EU has also legislated the use of electronic ID in the sheep industry. This week we have been asked to comment on DAFF proposals relating the adoption of electronic tags as a central element of the official identification system for sheep and, potentially, cattle.

Our submission can be summarised as follows:

- **Current system works well.** The current official cattle ID system works very well and has become an integral part day-to-day farm management. For example, 90% of milk recorded herds use the last 3 (or 4) digits in the official tag as a short within herd number - the Jumbo.

- **Capturing the benefits of electronic tags does not require a new identification system.** The benefits of electronic tags can readily be captured in those flocks and herds able to use the technology without the need to replace the official identification system for cattle or sheep.
- **Visually readable ear tags will be important for many years.** Over the next ten to fifteen years electronic tagging is likely become a routine part of animal identification and data collection. In the meantime, visual identification by ear tag will continue to be an essential element of best practise in identification, breeding and traceability.
- **EID technology is limited.** The current electronic identification systems are limited in the animal identifications they can store and “display”. Current tags are limited to 64 binary bits – 0’s or 1’s. In time this will increase as the technology improves.
- **Electronic tagging is a complement not a replacement.** Electronic tagging should be facilitated as a complement to, not a replacement of, the current official visual tag numbering systems for sheep and cattle. This can be readily achieved by allowing official tags to include an electronic component and storing both the electronic and visual identifications allocated to individual animals in the relevant database(s).

#### 4 LambPlus

✚ Euro-Star evaluations have now been distributed for all breeds:

1. Texel
2. Belclare
3. Ile de France
4. Vendéen
5. Suffolk
6. Charollais



- ✚ Meetings are being held with Pedigree & Commercial Flock Owners to discuss & explain the evaluations.
- ✚ Good feedback is being received. The new evaluations are generating plenty of discussion, as is to be expected with the first launch of this initiative.
- ✚ Flock Books are in the process of including the new Euro-Star evaluations in their catalogues.
- ✚ Web Screen & Report design improvements are being scheduled for development.
- ✚ An article describing the new indexes together with the full list of Lambplus participants was published in the Farmers Journal this week.

#### 5 Tully

✚ The second live-weight on all bulls was obtained on Monday, 20<sup>th</sup> of July (Table 1).

*Table 1. Performance data of bulls averaged by breed*

Breed	AA (n = 14)	BB (n = 3)	CH (n = 8)	LM (n = 7)	PT (n = 1)	SA (n = 1)	SI (n = 5)	SH (n = 1)	HE (n = 2)
Average Live-weight (Kg)	466	430	514	483	397	368	526	466	458
Average Daily Gain (Kg)	2.31	2.05	2.51	2.35	1.86	2.00	2.30	2.14	2.40

- ✚ Pictured (see picture) along with performance figures (Table 2), is a Limousin bull purchased by Dovea AI from the last intake at Tully. The bull was bred by William Smith, Oldcastle, Co. Meath. This bull



which has strong maternal indexes (four star for M&F) has now met the criteria to be selected for the GEN€ IR€LAND program and will most likely enter the program in Autumn 2009.

**Table 2. Performance, indexes and parentage of Tully tested Limousin bull**

Breed	Sire Name	Average daily gain (KG)	Feed Conversion Efficiency (DMI/ADG)	Scanned Eye Muscle Depth (mm)	SBV(€)	M & F Stars*
LM	Wilodge Vantastic	2.2	4.8	88.5	206	****

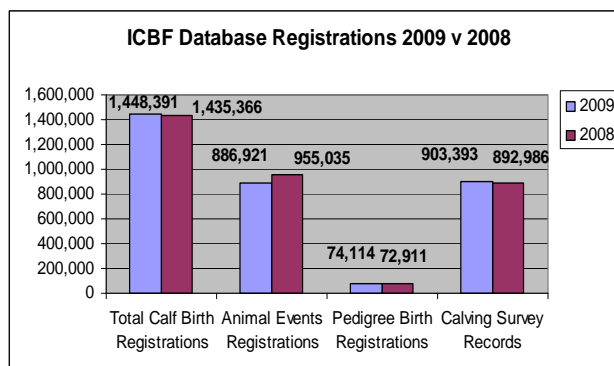
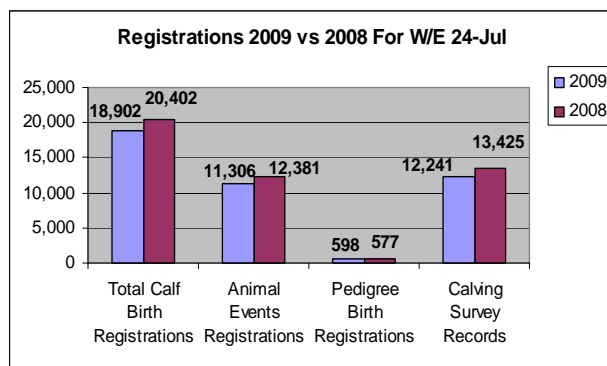
\* Within breed star rating for Milk & Fertility.

- ✚ Bull owners and Breed societies have received letters and e-mails, respectively, updating them on the performance of bulls to date.
- ✚ All bulls are being washed at present with a product called Botanica, which helps maintain and promote hair growth.
- ✚ All feed intake data along with recent live-weight figures have being inputted into the ICBF database.

## 6 Genetic Dairy & Beef Evaluations

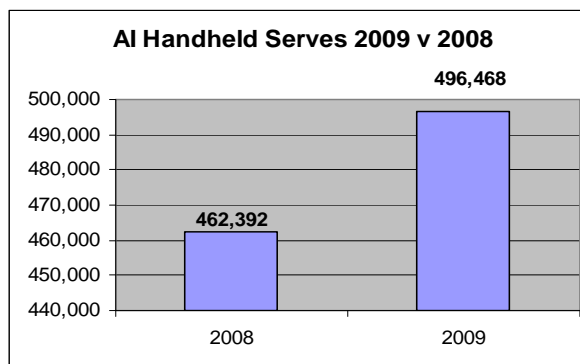
- ✚ Evaluations for the next routine run are commencing as the extracts become available.
- ✚ Work on the development of an across breed linear type evaluation for beef cattle continued this week. The focus at the moment is on the estimation of genetic parameters between 13 linear type traits which will form the basis of the across breed muscle, skeletal and functional composites.

## 7 Database



- ✚ The revised 2009 suckler forms (pre and post weaning) continue to go out to farmers. In relation to 2008 born calves, the number of calves with a meal feeding introduction has increased to 851,000, with just over 723,000 of these having been weaned.
- ✚ The revamp of the Milk Recording system continues. Progress has continued this week, with the development of a number of screens and the changing of some of the infrastructure to support the reports that the milk recording organisations need.
- ✚ In conjunction with the finalisation of the milk recording solution, a number of other developments are taking place that will allow the migration of all users to a completely web-based front end, and the removal of the need for the Wide Area Network.
- ✚ Work on a new mechanism of sending and receiving Suckler scheme data to DAFF is now in the final stages of testing.

- ✚ The revisions to the final fertility report are on-going and will be completed in the next couple of weeks.
- ✚ Design of a new on-line application for AI companies to manage their interaction with ICBF on bull codes is underway.
- ✚ The graph shows Inseminations recoded on AI Handhelds in 2009 compared with 2008. There are more technicians using the handhelds in 2009 than there were in 2008, so even though the number of inseminations recorded is up, it looks like the overall inseminations for the season will be down.



## 8 Milk Recording

### National Milk Recording Results by County - 10 day Period 14/07/09 to 24/07/09

	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	15	939	63	21.8	3.78	3.31	1.55	313
CAVAN	29	1,747	60	21.8	3.89	3.30	1.57	546
CLARE	32	1,743	54	21.4	3.66	3.26	1.48	346
CORK STH	306	20,907	68	20.8	3.92	3.41	1.52	288
CORK NTH	271	19,374	71	21.9	3.92	3.42	1.61	300
DONEGAL								
DUBLIN	7	419	60	23.9	3.41	3.45	1.64	348
GALWAY	16	1,063	66	22.4	3.84	3.30	1.60	391
KERRY	118	7,568	64	23.0	3.67	3.25	1.59	380
KILDARE	22	1,326	60	21.7	3.81	3.41	1.57	344
KILKENNY	52	3,834	74	20.4	3.91	3.41	1.49	312
LAOIS	36	2,572	71	21.4	3.93	3.38	1.56	402
LEITRIM	5	205	41	25.0	3.87	3.10	1.74	257
LIMERICK	103	7,737	75	21.8	3.70	3.29	1.52	380
LONGFORD	9	641	71	20.5	3.76	3.24	1.44	307
LOUTH	21	1,820	87	28.2	3.65	3.31	1.96	361
MAYO	13	738	57	25.0	3.27	3.28	1.64	510
MEATH	47	3,875	82	20.5	3.79	3.35	1.46	406
MONAGHAN	22	1,192	54	22.8	3.67	3.21	1.57	385
OFFALY	18	1,632	91	20.8	3.97	3.31	1.51	508
ROSCOMMON	7	383	55	24.9	3.62	3.25	1.71	457
SLIGO	8	328	41	23.5	3.55	3.32	1.61	260
TIPPERARY NTH	35	2,744	78	20.8	3.81	3.37	1.49	277
TIPPERARY STH	51	3,548	70	19.1	3.93	3.40	1.40	296
WATERFORD	52	4,956	95	19.3	3.97	3.42	1.43	294
WESTMEATH	19	1,513	80	22.1	3.75	3.30	1.56	465
WEXFORD	70	5,198	74	20.4	3.82	3.40	1.47	327
WICKLOW E	18	1,037	58	19.6	3.43	3.36	1.33	420
WICKLOW W	13	1,054	81	19.7	4.13	3.42	1.49	506

	No. Herds Recorded	No. Cows Recorded	Average Herd Size	Average 24hr Milk kg/Cow	Average Fat %	Average Protein %	Average F + P kg	Average SCC
National	1,415	100,093	68	21.9	3.77	3.33	1.56	371

National Milk Recording Averages by Province - 10 day Period 14/07/09 to 24/07/09

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	968	68,577	71	21.0	3.84	3.35	1.51	320
Leinster	347	25,860	75	21.6	3.74	3.36	1.53	386
Connacht	49	2,717	55	24.2	3.69	3.25	1.68	375
Ulster	51	2,939	58	22.3	3.78	3.26	1.57	466

National Milk Recording Statistics - Herds, Cows & EDIY 24/07/09

Milk Recording Organisation	Total Herds Recorded YTD 24/07/09	No. EDIY Herds YTD 24/07/09	% Herds EDIY	Total No. Cows Recorded YTD 24/07/09	No. EDIY Cows YTD 24/07/09	% Cows EDIY
Progressive	2,049	829	40%	170,778	68,654	40%
Dairygold	1,498	558	37%	114,268	44,698	39%
Kerry	887	66	7%	61,224	4,117	7%
SWS	855	113	13%	60,433	8,609	14%
Tipperary	134	55	41%	10,778	4,771	44%
Arrabawn	139	114	82%	11,348	9,577	84%
Connacht	133	44	33%	8,767	2,915	33%
Donegal	32	32	100%	3,556	3,556	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,727</b>	<b>1,811</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>441,152</b>	<b>146,897</b>	<b>33%</b>

Recorded Cows by Milk Recording Organisation - Year on Year Comparison

Milk Recording Organisation	YTD 2008 Cows Recorded 01/01/08 - 24/07/08	YTD 2009 Cows Recorded 01/01/09 - 24/07/09	2009 vs 2008 Year on Year Difference (%)
Progressive	174,686	170,778	-2.3%
Dairygold	118,638	114,268	-3.8%
Kerry	77,562	61,224	-26.7%
SWS	60,164	60,433	0.4%

<b>Tipperary</b>	12,769	10,778	-18.5%
<b>Arrabawn</b>	12,522	11,348	-10.3%
<b>Connacht</b>	9,166	8,767	-4.6%
<b>Donegal</b>	4,399	3,556	-23.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>469,906</b>	<b>441,152</b>	<b>-6.5%</b>

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