

ICBF Weekly Update 25th January 2013

1 Important Dates

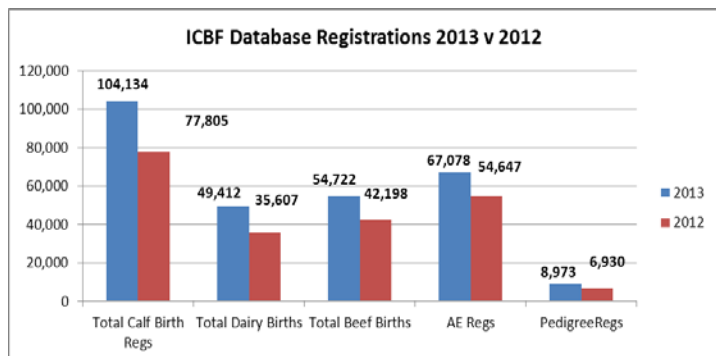
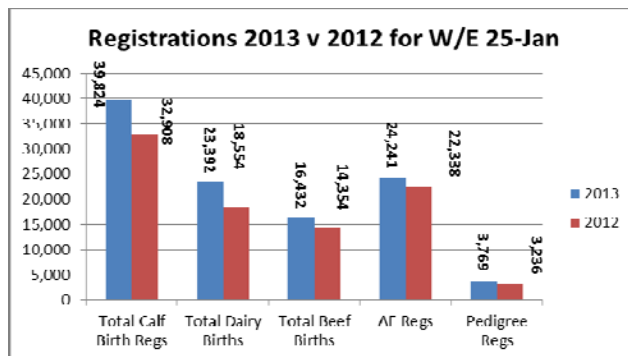
- ✚ **ICBF Audit & Finance Sub Committee meeting** – Thursday 14th March, 10:00 to 14:00, Horse & Jockey.
- ✚ **ICBF Board Meeting** – Thursday 28th March, 10:30 to 14:00, Maldron Hotel, Portlaoise.
- ✚ **Sheep Ireland Board Meeting** – Thursday 28th March, at 14:00, Maldron Hotel, Portlaoise.

2 ICBF Board Meeting 25th January

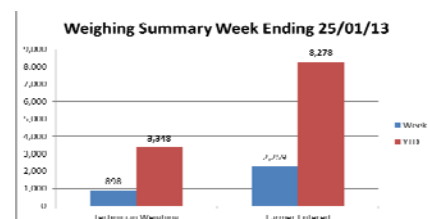
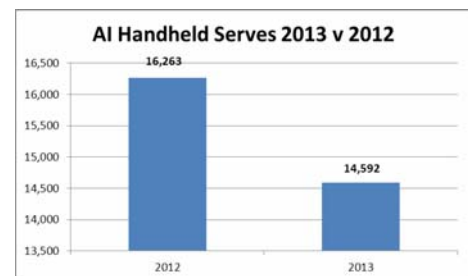
Some of the key items from this week's board meeting included:

- ✚ Presentation by Andrew Cromie on the results from the EBI survey (please see attached).
- ✚ Agreement in principle to pursue a research project in relation to functional traits in dairy cows.
- ✚ An update on the recruitment process to bolster the geneticist resources.
- ✚ Feedback from the British Cattle Breeding Conference at which ICBF and the Irish Beef Herdbooks were in attendance.
- ✚ An update on the very positive work that the Beef Herdbooks are engaging in in relation to trying to get genotyping moving within the pedigree population.
- ✚ A status update on the proposed 'Sexed Semen Project'.

3 Database



- ✚ The stats above are compiled with the assistance of DAFM AIM systems.
- ✚ In the Suckler scheme, the number of 2012 born calves with meal introduced is 570,101 with the number of animals weaned at 487,574.
- ✚ BVD test results continue to be received at ICBF and are being processed accordingly. The compulsory phase began on 1st January 2013 and 68,000 samples have been received since then compared with 5700 in the same period last year.
- ✚ Good progress continues around the design of the Beef HerdPlus outputs to incorporate the new Euro-Star indexes, and the development work on these is continuing.
- ✚ The graph shows Inseminations recorded on AI Handhelds in 2013 compared with 2012.
- ✚ This week there were 898 weights received through the technician service and 2,259 weights recorded by farmers.
- ✚ The graph shows the week and year to date totals.



4 British Cattle Breeding Conference 21st - 23rd January - Stephen Conroy

- ✚ The British Cattle Breeders Club (BCBC) held their annual conference at the Telford Golf and Spa Hotel in Stropshire this week (21st - 23rd January). Representatives from ICBF (Andrew Cromie, Thierry Pabiou and Stephen Conroy) and the Irish Beef Herdbooks (Padraig Gallagher & Peadar Glennon (Irish Simmental Society), Nuala Hourihane (Irish Charolais Society), Paul Sykes (Irish Limousin Society) and Mary Duggan (Irish Belgian Blue Society) were in attendance. As part of the first day, the British and Irish Herdbook met to discuss opportunities for closer collaboration in relation to genetic evaluations and genomics. The meeting was very positive and it was agreed that a technical group would be established that would help progress the transfer of data that would be of mutual benefit to all involved.
- ✚ On day two of the conference the focus was on Beef. Andrew Cromie (ICBF) gave a very informative paper outlining the structures and systems that support cattle breeding in Ireland. It was very well received with many of the audience and speakers saying that the UK industry should look to follow the success of the Irish model.
- ✚ There was a range of talks which covered all aspects of the food chain in beef. Speakers at the event included commercial and pedigree farmers, scientists, processors and consumers. Profitability was the central theme of the conference. The chairman of the conference Philip Halhead outlined that “profit can only be achieved when we join together science, technology and practical examples of how farmers can improve performance at farm level”.

Please see summary of main talks attached.

5 Sheep Ireland

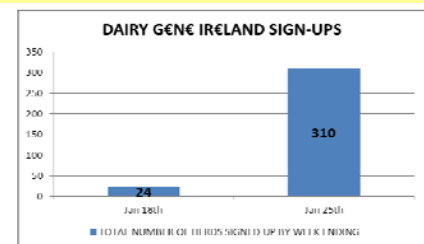
- ✚ This is one of the busiest times of the year for Sheep Ireland. Renewal forms and lambing notebooks need to be sent to all LambPlus breeders and along with this there is also a strong influx of new breeders into LambPlus which is fantastic.
- ✚ Setting a new breeder up on the Sheep Ireland system can be a laborious task. For some sheep breeds we have access to the society’s full ancestry data, which makes the process of setting up new breeders effortless. However, for the majority of breeds we do not have this luxury and entering a breeder’s flock details in our system is hugely time consuming, the reason being is, it is necessary to manually type the ancestry information of all sheep within someone’s flock.
- ✚ A number of meetings took place this week - On Tuesday we met with Teagasc to discuss improvement to our genetic evaluation and this was hugely positive and helpful. We came away with some fresh angles on the direction that we should be taking in both the short term and indeed the long term.
- ✚ On Wednesday night we met with the Waterford Blackface breeders who are anxious to establish some parentage recording and in doing so a flockbook. A similar project in Mayo/Connemara is now established and has gathered a lot of momentum. The Mayo/Connemara Blackface Group has assembled 65 breeders to form the foundation of a flockbook structure. Each breeder has assembled 20 ewes which have been inspected by other members of the group to verify quality. Each ewe considered 'true' to the breeds’ desired characteristics has received a unique ear tag which will help the breeder identify these ewes in future. DNA will be used to verify parentage of a percentage of lambs born annually. We hope to apply a similar model to other Blackface groups, where the appetite for building a record of ancestry is growing.
- ✚ Finally Sheep Ireland held the first permanent board meeting on 24th January, since its beginning in 2008. Up to now the Sheep Ireland board was an Interim board, but now we have a permanent structure with a wide representation across industry stakeholders. This can only be good for our breed improvement programme going forward.
- ✚ The first business of the board was to thank those that were involved in the interim board for the past number of years namely those that represented breeders - Larry Barrett, Richard Moore and Anne Murphy. while Anne

will continue to participate in the new permanent board representing LambPlus breeders, the contribution of Larry and Richard was strongly praised and we have no doubt both will continue to contribute to our progress as they always have.

- ✚ A brief summary of the meeting's content is as follows: James Murphy, IFA National Sheep Chairman was elected as Chairman of the board. All members of the board were in attendance which was a great start and illustrates the genuine commitment of everyone to the breed improvement programme. All new board members were introduced and were briefed on a number of crucial issues for the coming year including:
 1. The budget for 2013 - A breakdown of all expected income and expenditure for 2013 was presented to the board.
 2. Sheep Ireland team structure - An update was given on staffing arrangements for 2013 which sees the welcome arrival of Michael McHugh to a part-time advisory role and another full-time person to help in the day to day running of the breeding programme from our Bandon office.
 3. Plans for the 2013 season - The Sheep Ireland strategy is still broadly working off a strategic review prepared in October 2010 (available on www.sheep.ie under 'reference documents' and titled 'A review of Sheep Ireland strategy'), With the help of Teagasc and Abacus Bio (New Zealand), this document will be reviewed and updated in 2013.
 4. The Sheep Technology Adoption Programme (STAP) - All present were in strong agreement that STAP will be a hugely positive development for Sheep breed improvement in Ireland - It was acknowledged however that Sheep Ireland has a lot of work to do to ensure adequate facilities are made available to participants to help source recorded rams and to ensure participation in Task 2 of the scheme is user friendly.
 5. 2013 LambPlus sale - it was agreed that continued use of a LambPlus sale event to promote recorded rams would be very important. The board decided to wait until more information on the level of STAP uptake is known before decisions on the potential design of this kind of event are made.

6 GENÉIRELAND® - Dairy

- ✚ There are 310 herds signed up to the programme so far taking a total of 10,935 straws.
- ✚ Calls to 2012 participants are continuing and postal applications are being received daily.
- ✚ The average EBI of the Holstein-Friesian panel is €75.



7 Genetic Evaluations - Beef

- ✚ An update to the beef performance evaluations is underway. This is being carried out to strengthen the relationship between the foreign ebvs for weaning weight, muscle and skeletal with Irish carcass merit which fell in the most recent evaluation due to the introduction of new genetic parameters. It is anticipated the results of this run will be uploaded to the database on Wednesday of next week. This run will also include an update for animals linear scored up to the 15th January.

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.

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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.




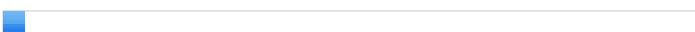


Survey: EBI Satisfaction Survey

Report: Default Report

| Survey Status | | Respondent Statistics | | Points Summary |
|---------------|------------|-----------------------|-----|--|
| Status: | Live | Total Responses: | 631 | No Points Questions used in this survey. |
| Deploy Date: | 01/07/2013 | Completes: | 606 | |
| Closed Date: | | Partials: | 25 | |







1.

The EBI is a tool that I use to select the bulls that I use to breed replacements?

| | Responses | Percent |
|--|-----------|----------|
| Strongly Agree:  | 313 | 49.6% |
| Agree:  | 238 | 37.72% |
| Neutral:  | 40 | 6.34% |
| Disagree:  | 22 | 3.49% |
| Strongly Disagree:  | 17 | 2.69% |
| Prefer Not To Answer:  | 1 | 0.16% |
| Total Responded to this question: | | 631 100% |
| Total who skipped this question: | | 0 0% |
| Total: | | 631 100% |








2.

I use the sub-indexes (e.g. Milk, Fertility) when selecting bulls which I am going to use to breed replacements

| | Responses | Percent |
|--|-----------|---------|
| Strongly Agree:  | 374 | 59.27% |
| Agree:  | 214 | 33.91% |
| Neutral:  | 18 | 2.85% |
| Disagree:  | 12 | 1.9% |
| Strongly Disagree:  | 9 | 1.43% |
| Prefer Not To Answer:  | 4 | 0.63% |
| Total Responded to this question: | 631 | 100% |
| Total who skipped this question: | 0 | 0% |
| Total: | 631 | 100% |


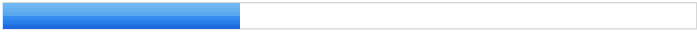




3.

Please rank the Sub-Indexes in order of importance to you

| | Ranking Average |
|--|-----------------|
| Milk:  | 2.1 |
| Fertility:  | 1.8 |
| Calving:  | 3.67 |
| Beef:  | 6.24 |
| Maintenance:  | 5.04 |
| Management (Milking Time, Milking Temperament):  | 4.75 |
| Health:  | 4.4 |
| Total: | 28 |
| Total Responded to this question: | 631 |
| Total who skipped this question: | 0 |
| Total: | 631 |







4.

I use the individual breeding values (e.g. Milk Kgs, Fat Kgs/%, Protein Kgs/%, Calving Interval, Calving Ease) when selecting bulls which I am going to use to breed replacements?

| | Responses | Percent |
|--|-----------|---------|
| Strongly Agree:  | 382 | 60.54% |
| Agree:  | 214 | 33.91% |
| Neutral:  | 23 | 3.65% |
| Disagree:  | 8 | 1.27% |
| Strongly Disagree:  | 2 | 0.32% |
| Prefer Not To Answer:  | 2 | 0.32% |
| Total Responded to this question: | 631 | 100% |
| Total who skipped this question: | 0 | 0% |
| Total: | 631 | 100% |







5.

I use the 'Reliability' figures on bulls figures when making my bull selection decisions.

| | Responses | Percent |
|--|-----------|----------|
| Strongly Agree:  | 175 | 27.73% |
| Agree:  | 313 | 49.6% |
| Neutral:  | 123 | 19.49% |
| Disagree:  | 15 | 2.38% |
| Strongly Disagree:  | 3 | 0.48% |
| Prefer Not To Answer:  | 2 | 0.32% |
| Total Responded to this question: | | 631 100% |
| Total who skipped this question: | | 0 0% |
| Total: | | 631 100% |


6.

I have a concern that the EBI is not breeding cows that are functionally sound (e.g good feet and legs, good udders)

| | Responses | Percent |
|--|-----------|---------|
| Strongly Agree:  | 85 | 13.47% |
| Agree:  | 113 | 17.91% |
| Neutral:  | 233 | 36.93% |
| Disagree:  | 153 | 24.25% |
| Strongly Disagree:  | 42 | 6.66% |
| Prefer Not To Answer:  | 5 | 0.79% |
| Total Responded to this question: | 631 | 100% |
| Total who skipped this question: | 0 | 0% |
| Total: | 631 | 100% |







7.

If you have answered 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' to the previous question, please enter the functional traits that are concerned about.

| | Responses | Percent |
|---|-----------|---------|
| Responses:  | 182 | 100% |
| Total Responded to this question: | 182 | 28.84% |
| Total who skipped this question: | 449 | 71.16% |
| Total: | 631 | 100% |


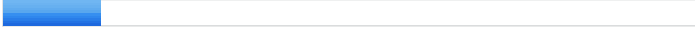



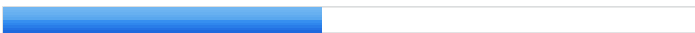


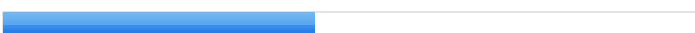

8.

The EBI is breeding the right kind of cow (profitable for my business over the cows lifetime)

| | Responses | Percent |
|--|-----------|------------|
| Strongly Agree:  | 146 | 23.17% |
| Agree:  | 312 | 49.52% |
| Neutral:  | 118 | 18.73% |
| Disagree:  | 32 | 5.08% |
| Strongly Disagree:  | 21 | 3.33% |
| Prefer Not To Answer:  | 1 | 0.16% |
| Total Responded to this question: | | 630 99.84% |
| Total who skipped this question: | | 1 0.16% |
| Total: | | 631 100% |







9.

The following is where I get help from when choosing my bulls? (Click all that apply)

| | Responses | Percent |
|---|-----------|---------|
| AI Company Catalogue:  | 434 | 68.89% |
| Farming Press:  | 87 | 13.81% |
| Active Bull List:  | 418 | 66.35% |
| Farm Advisor:  | 158 | 25.08% |
| ICBF Web Site:  | 312 | 49.52% |
| HerdPlus Sire Advice Tool:  | 291 | 46.19% |
| AI Salesman:  | 187 | 29.68% |
| AI Technician:  | 117 | 18.57% |
| Discussion Group:  | 282 | 44.76% |
| Other:  | 38 | 6.03% |
| Total Responded to this question: | 630 | 99.84% |
| Total who skipped this question: | 1 | 0.16% |
| Total: | 631 | 100% |






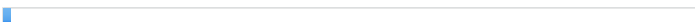
10.

I believe that the bulls on the Active Bull List are causing national milk output (volume) to decrease on a per cow basis?

| | Responses | Percent |
|--|-----------|---------|
| Strongly Agree:  | 88 | 13.95% |
| Agree:  | 128 | 20.29% |
| Neutral:  | 214 | 33.91% |
| Disagree:  | 157 | 24.88% |
| Strongly Disagree:  | 38 | 6.02% |
| Prefer Not To Answer:  | 6 | 0.95% |
| Total Responded to this question: | 631 | 100% |
| Total who skipped this question: | 0 | 0% |
| Total: | 631 | 100% |







11.

I believe that the bulls on the Active Bull List are causing national milk solids (Fat & Prot Kgs) output to decrease on a per cow basis?

| | Responses | Percent |
|--|-----------|---------|
| Strongly Agree:  | 40 | 6.34% |
| Agree:  | 54 | 8.56% |
| Neutral:  | 144 | 22.82% |
| Disagree:  | 261 | 41.36% |
| Strongly Disagree:  | 126 | 19.97% |
| Prefer Not To Answer:  | 6 | 0.95% |
| Total Responded to this question: | 631 | 100% |
| Total who skipped this question: | 0 | 0% |
| Total: | 631 | 100% |

12.

I feel I have the knowledge I need to make effective use of the EBI and the figures presented in relation to bulls.

| | Responses | Percent |
|--|-----------|---------|
| Strongly Agree:  | 198 | 32.14% |
| Agree:  | 311 | 50.49% |
| Neutral:  | 70 | 11.36% |
| Disagree:  | 28 | 4.55% |
| Strongly Disagree:  | 2 | 0.32% |
| Prefer Not To Answer:  | 7 | 1.14% |
| Total Responded to this question: | 616 | 97.62% |
| Total who skipped this question: | 15 | 2.38% |
| Total: | 631 | 100% |


13.

The 'Base Cow' used in the EBI was born in 1995. While the base will not change the ranking of bulls/cows, the importance to me of updating the base is:

| | Responses | Percent |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Extremely Important: | 125 | 20.33% |
| Very Important: | 245 | 39.84% |
| Neutral: | 170 | 27.64% |
| Not Important: | 48 | 7.8% |
| Not at All Important: | 12 | 1.95% |
| No Opinion: | 15 | 2.44% |
| Total Responded to this question: | 615 | 97.46% |
| Total who skipped this question: | 16 | 2.54% |
| Total: | 631 | 100% |

14.

Is there anything else you would like to comment on in relation to the EBI (including the addition of any other traits that you feel should be included)?

| | Responses | Percent |
|---|-----------|---------|
| Responses:  | 218 | 100% |
| Total Responded to this question: | 218 | 34.55% |
| Total who skipped this question: | 413 | 65.45% |
| Total: | 631 | 100% |

British Cattle Breeding Conference 21st - 23rd January.

A summary of the main talks are outlined below:

Improving maternal genetics in the herds

Samuel Boon (EBLEX Breeding Specialist) gave a talk on how producers can enhance maternal performance through selective breeding (applicable to all performance recording systems). Then a number of selected members of the audience gave prepared presentations on what their ideal maternal bull would be made up of. Although there was a wide range of opinions all participants agreed that milk and fertility were the most important traits.

65 years of the club and the lessons learned

Long-standing club member David Fattorini questioned the validation of progeny testing data and the need for more supervision and validation of farmer recorded data.

Going primal – what the latest UK diet craze means for British Beef

Ms. Julia Glotz, Fresh Foods Editor of the “The Grocer” magazine outlined how a new generation of "primal" diets focused on unprocessed foods which is mainly made up of beef have been sweeping the US recently, propelled by the Crossfit fitness movement. This presentation also outlined the opportunities of such diets for British beef producers given the fact that consumers using the diet are willing to pay a premium for high-quality beef even in a recession.

The future of the UK Suckler herd: Morrison’s perspective

Mr. Andrew Loftus, Farm Operations Manager of Wm. Morrison Supermarkets PLC outlined the need for farmers and supermarkets to work together to supply the product that is being demanded by the consumer, which in turn will be of benefit to all in terms of profitability.

Our beef enterprise and the wider beef industry. Fit for purpose?

Mr. Mike Powley is a beef farmer whose focus is on breeding the ideal suckler cow that meets his farm needs. Once he has bred the ideal suckler cow which is mainly made up of South Devon genetics, he then mates all the heifers to maternal Angus bull while the older females are bred to terminal Belgian Blue sires. He outlined that genetic improvement on his farm has played an important role in making the farm profitable. He also outlined that good grassland management and meeting the factories specifications for carcasses (in order to get bonuses) are important to the farms profitability. Of particular interest is the fact that red clover is the main component in his silage.

Adapting to change

Mr. Steve Radakovich, Co-Owner & Co-Manager of Radakovich Cattle Company, Earlham, Iowa, USA gave an interesting paper outlining how the world population, now over 7 billion is projected to reach 9 billion by 2045. He stated that “sustainability of the beef industry depends on cattle performing with fewer resources, not the reverse”. He also outlined the need for cattle to adapt to more marginal land in the future due to the need to sow more crops in lowland areas to sustain the needs of a growing population.

Breeding for profit

Mr. Adrian Ivory, manager at Strathisla Farms, Moolies, Meigle, Perthshire, Scotland looked at how breeds (both as commercial and pedigree herds), play an important role in profitability. He also outlined the importance of good data recording to highlight areas on the farm that still can be improved.

Selection opportunities for using abattoir carcass data

Miss Tracey Pritchard (researcher) outlined how response to selection can increase when better data is available to calculate EBVs. This paper looked at the benefits of combining BCMS data i.e. department data, with abattoir and breed society data to create better EBVs of higher accuracy which can improve farmer profitability, increase information flow up and down the food chain and ensure breeding bulls create carcasses that better meet the abattoir and retailer requirements.