

ICBF Weekly Update 27th March 2015

1 Important Dates

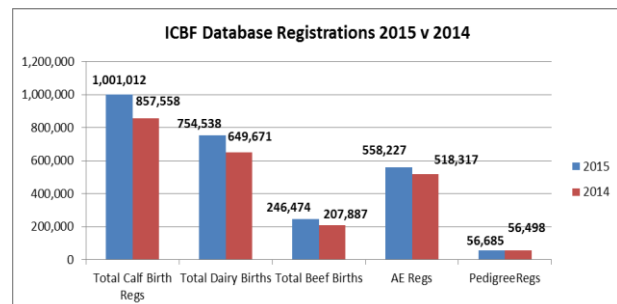
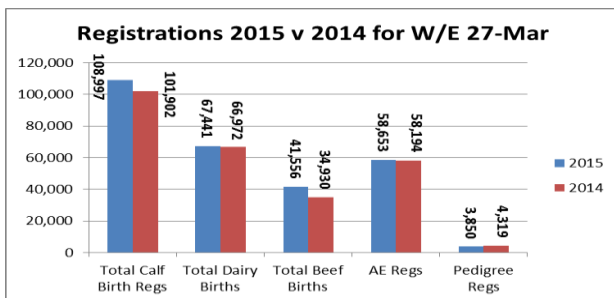
- + **ICBF Board Meeting** – Thursday 7th May 2015, 10:30 to 12:30, Killeshin Hotel, Portlaoise.
- + **ICBF AGM** – Thursday 7th May 2015, 12:30 to 13:30, Killeshin Hotel, Portlaoise.
- + **Sheep Ireland Board Meeting** – Thursday 7th May 2015, 14:00 to 16:30, Killeshin Hotel, Portlaoise.

2 ICBF Board Meeting

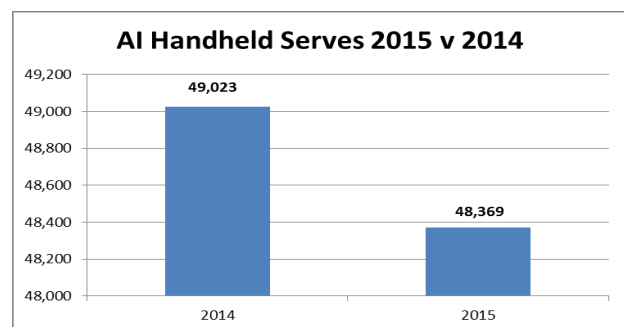
Topics covered at the ICBF Board meeting on Thursday this week included:

- + The adoption by the board of the 2014 Audited Accounts.
- + A discussion around the new Beef Genomics and Data Programme, details of which are currently being worked on by the Department of Agriculture.
- + Progress on Milk Recording Quality Control, including the use of farm bulk tank data to help ensure that meters on farm are providing accurate indications of milk/solids production.
- + An update on the EuroStar implementation review group. The group is made up of farmers, Teagasc, DAFM, AI, and Herdbook representatives. Consultation will now be expanded to a wider group over the coming weeks, in order to discuss some of the issues being raised, and with a view to developing some proposals.

3 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 1 million results received since January 1st, of which 128,000 have come in the last 7 days. Since the beginning of the voluntary phase in 2012, 5.95 million results have now been received.
- + As was emphasised again at the most recent BVD Implementation Group meeting, the removal of PI animals is critical to the success of the BVD Eradication Scheme. The Minister for Agriculture recently announced further supports to aid with this for 2015. It is a requirement that all PI animals born in 2012, 2013 and 2014 are disposed of prior to **1 March 2015** in order to avail of any 2015 supports. The removal of PI animals will also be a stipulation of the proposed Beef Data Genomics Programme and successor programmes.
- + The graph shows Inseminations recorded on AI Handhelds in 2014 compared with 2015.



4 GENE IRELAND® Beef

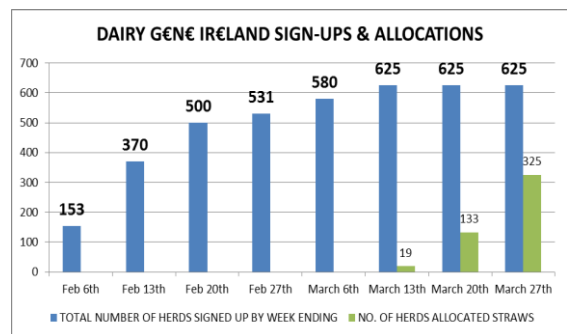
- ✚ Sign-ups are continuing for the Spring 2015 Beef programme.
- ✚ 282 herds taking a total of 4500 straws have joined so far.
- ✚ The average order is 16 straws per herd.
- ✚ The catalogue is available to view on the ICBF website or by clicking [here](#).
- ✚ To learn more or to order straws please phone **1850 600 900**.
- ✚ Approximate total straws ordered to date for the remaining bulls are in **Table 1**.

Table 1. List of Bulls currently on-test

Code	Name of Bull	Breed	Straws Ordered
JJC	Cairnmor John	AA	215
JBS	Steil Jacob	AA	290
VEZ	Balinclea Iveco	AU	450
SGA	Scaughmolin G Mail	BA	370
LJE	Lislea Hermes	BA	110
OZR	Rosemount Gar	BB	130
CH2000	Coom Indurain	CH	255
PDR	Dereskit Improver	CH	125
HHJ	Heracles	CH	200
DBF	Dereskit Invincible	CH	190
YKM	Moyclare Lucky	HE	330
KAC	Keltic Isaac	LM	340
LM2014	Ewdenvale Ivor	LM	150
LM2010	Raffertys Immanuel	LM	300
ZYH	Alamira Harry	PT	405
ZKY	Kyle Herd Ivan	PT	145
ZBZ	Breffni Muzz	SA	185
EMS	Doon Erasmus	SH	245
PPA	Polar Edinson	SI	280
KJG	Knoackane Dag	SI	250
ETP	Curaheen Evolution P	SI	160
AHC	Auroch Deuter PP	SI	215

5 GENE IRELAND® Dairy

- ✚ Orders are now complete for the Holstein Friesian and Friesian packs.
- ✚ Orders can be taken for the Crossbred/Jersey pack.
- ✚ Allocations have commenced and bull details and inbreeding reports are currently being sent to these farmers.
- ✚ These allocations are being done according to AI start date, should a farmer wish to know which straws he will be getting in advance of running the Sire Advice please contact **1850 600 900**.



6 Herd Plus®

- ✚ HerdPlus last week passed 18,000 herds for the first time. This number breaks down into 10,752 beef herds and 7,358 dairy herds. We would like to thank all of our customers for helping us to reach this milestone. Hopefully 20,000 will be reached in the near future. We are always here to assist farmers and feedback on how to improve our service is always appreciated.
- ✚ The deadline for dairy HerdPlus farmers to run Sire advice for the 2015 breeding season is Friday 3rd April. Breeding charts will be printed and posted in the following weeks. It is important to ensure that the red button is clicked to save the selected bulls to technician handhelds and breeding charts. Postal dairy customers received bull selection forms a number of weeks back along with an active bull list with the top 75 bulls currently available and an explanation document. See explanation document [here](#).

- ✚ As peak Spring calving has now passed on many dairy and beef farms around the country, it is important that farmers do not lose sight of the importance of recording important breeding data. ICBF acknowledges that Spring can be a busy and stressful time for farmers with an endless list of tasks to be done. However, ensuring that data (namely sires and calving ease) is recorded comprehensively and accurately is vital, not only to the work that ICBF does, but also to the development of our Agri-food industry going forward.
- ✚ Better data recording leads to more accurate genetic indexes. This will in turn lead to more informed breeding decisions which will leave more profitable stock on farms and increase output at both farm and processor levels. For this reason, people across the industry that find themselves in regular contact with farmers e.g. agri advisors, breed society representatives, AI company reps & technicians etc. need to constantly stress the importance of recording basic breeding information when registering calves. Click [here](#) for a link to an article on best practice on farm data recording.
- ✚ Any farmers that still register calves on the white cards which come with the tags, should be encouraged to switch to an animal events book or, where possible, to register calves online through www.agfood.ie or through a farm software package. The animal events book and online methods allow for much more comprehensive data recording at calf registration. Animal events books can be ordered by calling **1850 625 626**. Online registration can be set up by going to the Department of Agriculture & Food website (agfood) or contacting your farm software provider.
- ✚ A series of 4 BETTER Farm Spring walks commenced in the past week with Paddy Drohan, Kilmacthomas, Co. Waterford hosting the first event. The programme is run by Teagasc and the Irish Farmers Journal with the support of sponsors. The event on Paddy's farm focused on a number of areas including breeding and better use of Euro-Star indexes to help farmers breed better stock and in turn make more profit. Chris Daly was in attendance for ICBF and with the help of Peter Lawrence, Teagasc, they went through the important points when picking replacement stock. Paddy had excellent Euro-Star figures for his herd and had two excellent quality stock bulls; a [Simmental](#) and a [Limousin](#) (click on the breed name to see each bull's Euro-Star index). 3 more spring walks will take place. Details are as follows:

- ✚ Thursday 2nd April, Donal Scully's, Croom, Co. Limerick.
- ✚ Tuesday 7th April, Frank Beirne's, Longford, Co. Longford.
- ✚ Thursday 9th April, Willie Treacy's, Dundlax, Co. Louth.

✚ There will be 2 walks on each farm and they will commence at 1pm and 4pm.



Some of Paddy's January born calves at grass with their mothers.



Paddy's two stock bulls.

7 Genetic Evaluations

- Most focus this week is on the genetic evaluations for the April run. At this stage many evaluations are complete and processing of the proofs has commenced. Once all routine evaluations are complete, genomic evaluations for dairy animals will start.

8 Milk Recording

National Milk Recording Statistics - Herds, Cows & EDIY 27/03/15						
Milk Recording Organisation	Total Herds Recorded YTD 27/03/15	No. EDIY Herds YTD 27/03/15	% Herds EDIY	Total No. Cows Recorded YTD 27/03/15	No. EDIY Cows YTD 27/03/15	% Cows EDIY
Munster	1,831	292	16%	117,266	23,013	20%
Progressive	1,291	310	24%	92,145	22,266	24%
Tipperary	30	8	27%	1,685	456	27%
Total	3,152	610	19%	211,096	45,735	22%

Recorded Cows by Milk Recording Organisation - Year on Year Comparison			
Milk Recording Organisation	YTD 2014 Cows Recorded 01/01/14 - 27/03/14	YTD 2015 Cows Recorded 01/01/15 - 27/03/15	2015 vs. 2014 Year on Year Difference (%)
Munster	106,427	117,266	9.2%
Progressive	99,601	92,145	-8.1%
Tipperary	1,888	1,685	-12.0%
Total	207,916	211,096	1.5%

9 Sheep Ireland

Ovigen DNA collection update

- Our campaign to collect DNA from all Irish performance recorded ewes and rams has begun. A number of flocks have been visited this week and all breeders will be contacted in the near future. As we are collecting quite an amount of data from each flock, the process is labour intensive but the data being collected will be invaluable.
- There are a number of different objectives within the overall Ovigen project, one of which will be the mapping of the relationship between the breeds in use across the Irish industry. In January we set out to make contact with the representatives of all our various sheep breeds to help us collect DNA samples for this breed mapping project. Our aim was to collect to 40 DNA samples from within each breed – taking care to avoid directly related sheep. The response from all breeds was excellent with many going to great lengths to provide these samples and the breeders involved in this should be commended for their dedication to their breed. The samples are now assembled and have been sent to the laboratory (Weatherbys) for DNA extraction.

Breeds that collected DNA for this project:

- Belclare
- Beltex

- Blackface Mountain – Kerry, Mayo-Connemara, Waterford
- Bluefaced Leicester
- Charollais
- Cheviot
- Lleyn
- Rouge
- Suffolk
- Texel
- Vendeen
- Zwartble

Steps involved in genotyping

- ✚ The sampling method which we have employed is ear tissue sampling (similar to the BVD sampling). We decided on this method as it is a superior sample type when compared to saliva swabs which are not as reliable. This tissue sample contains the DNA of the animal, but before the animals DNA can be genotyped, the DNA must be extracted from the ear tissue. This is the next stage for our breed mapping samples. Once extracted, the DNA is ready to go through the genotyping process.

Batch Weight Recording

- ✚ A new screen has just been launched that now allows breeders to record multiple weights that were recorded on the same date in one go. This should greatly speed up the rate of data entry for our LambPlus breeders.
- ✚ Below Table 1 is designed to aid breeders select the best time to weigh their LambPlus performance recording lambs. As part of the LambPlus programme breeders are asked to record at least 3 weights for their lambs after lambing, however breeders are free to record as many weights as they wish). Each of these weights will then work towards improving the flocks/ breeds accuracy percentage (Acc %) and therefore making the evaluations reflect the performance of animals on the ground more accurately.
- ✚ All lambs **DO NOT** need to be weighed when they are exactly 40 days, 100 days or 150 days of age. If lambs are weighed between the parameters outlined below in Table 1, the Sheep Ireland database will be able to predict the weight of the animal at age.

Table: 1

Weighing	Recommended Age Range
40 Day Weight	30 – 60 days of age
Weaning Weight	60 – 120 days of age
Scanning Weight	120 – 180 days of age

- ✚ All LambPlus breeders will have received pocket Lambing Notebooks. On page 58 you will see there is a section to record lamb weights as they are recorded. All breeders can then record all these weights on-line and only breeders that selected paper recording can send their weights to Sheep Ireland to have the weights entered by Sheep Ireland staff.

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National Milk Recording Results for the 10 day period, 18-MAR-2015 To 27-MAR-2015

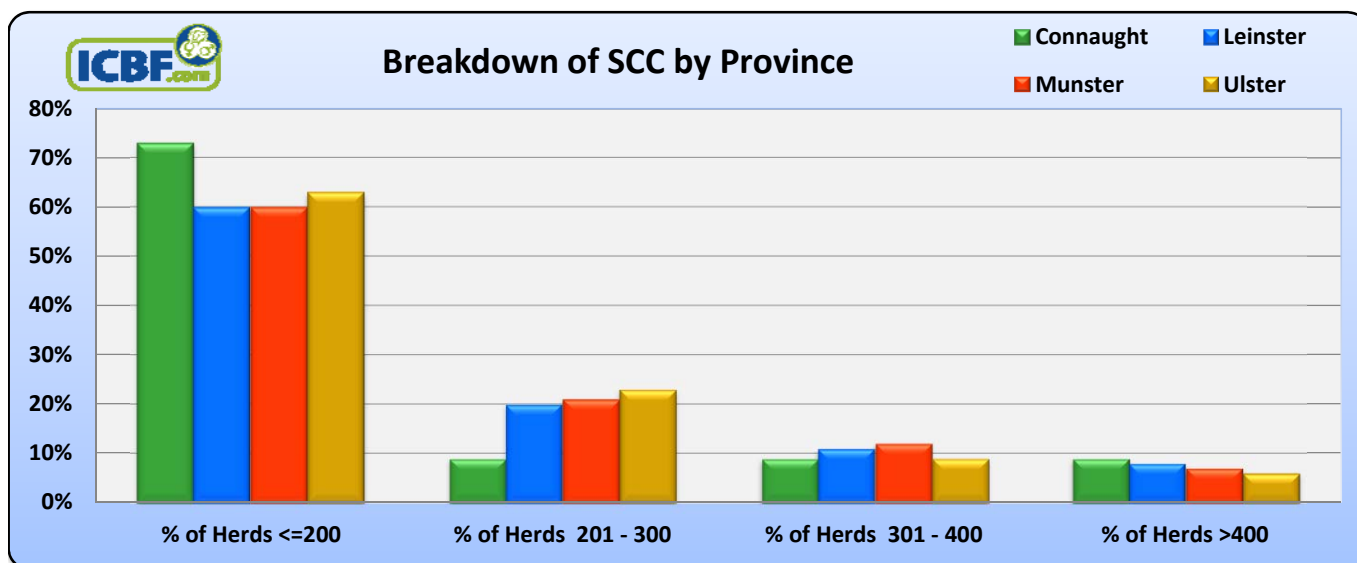
No. Herds Recorded	No. Cows Recorded	Avg Herd Size	Avg Milk kg/Cow	Average Fat %	Average Protein %	Average F+P kg	Average SCC*
Connaught	11	572	52	23.4	4.06	3.17	189
Leinster	144	11,473	80	24.7	3.97	3.29	172
Munster	364	26,049	72	26.2	4.03	3.29	173
Ulster	35	1,589	45	26.4	3.94	3.21	149
National Statistics	554	39,683	72	25.8	4.01	3.28	171

* Geometric Mean Herd SCC

SCC Distribution for the 10 day period, 18-MAR-2015 To 27-MAR-2015

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	11	572	52	73%	9%	9%	9%	189
Leinster	144	11,473	80	60%	20%	11%	8%	172
Munster	364	26,049	72	60%	21%	12%	7%	173
Ulster	35	1,589	45	63%	23%	9%	6%	149
National Statistics	554	39,683	72	61%	21%	11%	7%	171

* Geometric Mean Herd SCC



% Herd Breakdown for the 10 day period, 18-MAR-2015 To 27-MAR-2015								
No. Herds Recorded	No. Cows Recorded	Avg Herd Size	Best 20% SCC	Best 40% SCC	Average SCC**	Worst 40% SCC	Worst 20% SCC	
Connaught	11	572	52	132	176	181	192	242
Leinster	144	11,473	80	100	148	176	198	298
Munster	364	26,049	72	105	156	177	200	292
Ulster	35	1,589	45	78	126	142	160	274
National Statistics	554	39,683	72	101	152	176	198	291

** Percentile Herd SCC Rank (Median SCC)

