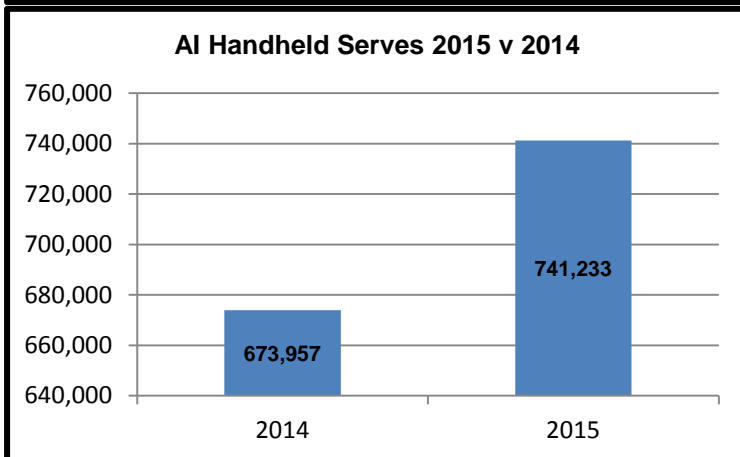
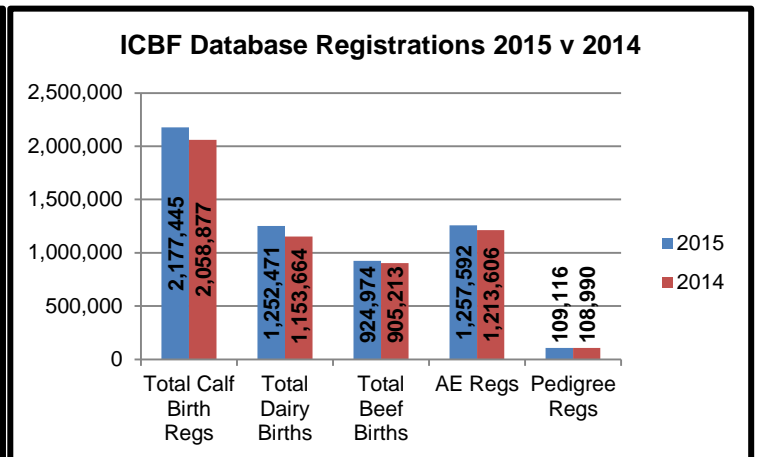
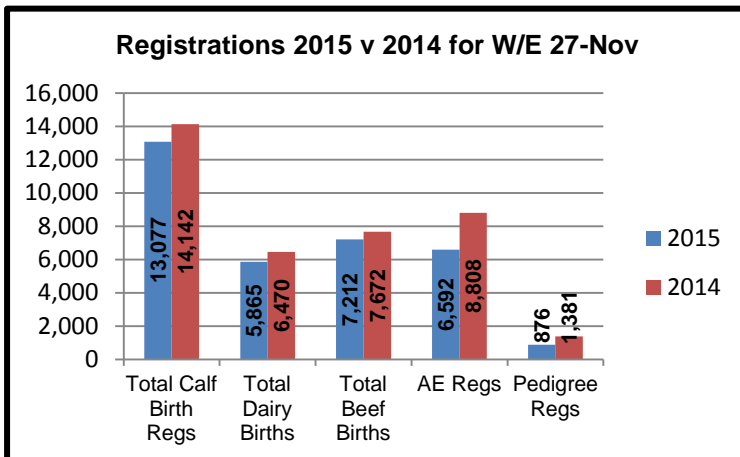


ICBF Weekly Update 27th November 2015

1 Important Dates

- ✚ **ICBF Beef Industry Consultation Meeting**– Wednesday 9th December 2015, Killeshin Hotel, Portlaoise, from 10.00am to 4.00pm.

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 2.31 million results received since January 1st, of which 14,800 have come in the last 7 days. Since the beginning of the voluntary phase in 2012, 7.25 million results have now been received.
- ✚ The chart shows Inseminations recorded on AI Handhelds in 2014 compared with 2015.

3 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 "Bull Management"

4 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

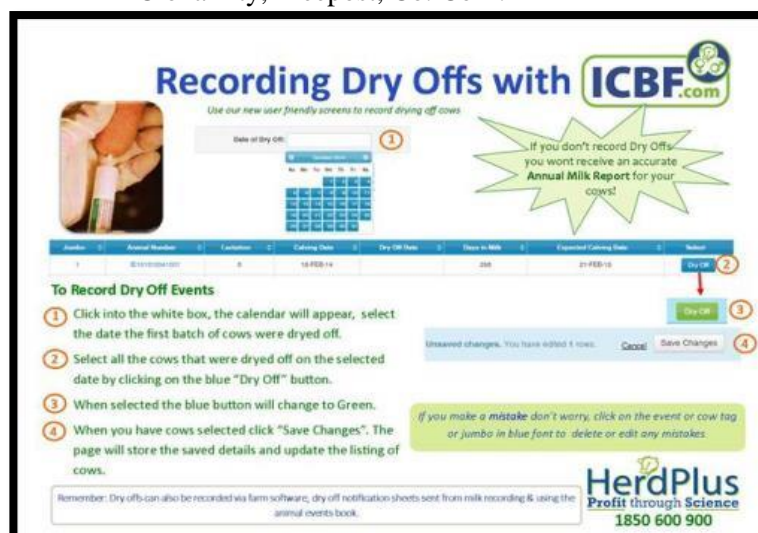
If you use a farm software provider (e.g. IFC or Kingswood), record your dry-offs and ensure you send the file to ICBF on completion of recording.

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.



Recording Dry Offs with ICBF.com

Use our new user friendly screens to record drying off cows

Date of Dry Off: [Calendar]

If you don't record Dry Offs you won't receive an accurate Annual Milk Report for your cows!

Animal	Animal Number	Lactation	Calving Date	Dry Off Date	Days in Milk	Expected Calving Date	Status
1	123456789012	1	14-FEB-14		256	21-FEB-15	Dry Off

To Record Dry Off Events

- Click into the white box, the calendar will appear, select the date the first batch of cows were dried off.
- Select all the cows that were dried off on the selected date by clicking on the blue "Dry Off" button.
- When selected the blue button will change to Green.
- When you have cows selected click "Save Changes". The page will store the saved details and update the listing of cows.

Remember: Dry-offs can also be recorded via farm software, dry off notification sheets sent from milk recording & using the animal events book.

HerdPlus
Profit through Science
1850 600 900

5 GENE IRELAND® Beef

Autumn 2015 Beef Programme

- ✚ Sign Ups are continuing for the Autumn 2015 Beef programme.
- ✚ 217 herds taking a total of 3875 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 in the table to the right.

Code	Name of Bull	Breed	Straws Ordered
AA2064	Carrigroe Kian	AA	350
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	Ballyaville Hamlet	HE	180
LM2156	Clonark Jumbo	LM	385
LM2151	Ballygarvan Stud Ike	LM	190
LM2116	Tomschoice Ironstone	LM	175
OEO	Ivoire	LM	80
ZKY	Kyle Herd Ivan	PT	335
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	485
ETP	Curaheen Evolution P	SI	255

6 Milk Recording

National Milk Recording Statistics - Herds, Cows & EDIY 27/11/15

Milk Recording Organisation	Total Herds Recorded YTD 27/11/15	No. EDIY Herds YTD 27/11/15	% Herds EDIY	Total No. Cows Recorded YTD 27/11/15	No. EDIY Cows YTD 27/11/15	% Cows EDIY
Munster	3,994	1,279	32%	368,872	126,902	34%
Progressive	2,514	1,081	43%	262,458	113,426	43%
Tipperary	127	54	43%	11,887	5,295	45%
Total	6,635	2,414	36%	643,217	245,623	38%

Recorded Cows by Milk Recording Organisation - Year on Year Comparison

Milk Recording Organisation	YTD 2014 Cows Recorded 01/01/14 - 27/11/14	YTD 2015 Cows Recorded 01/01/15 - 27/11/15	2015 vs 2014 Year on Year Difference (%)
Munster	336,547	368,872	9.6%
Progressive	245,707	262,458	6.8%
Tipperary	10,411	11,887	14.2%
Total	592,665	643,217	8.5%

7 Sheep Ireland

Breed Society Meeting – Tuesday 15th December 2015

- In September Sheep Ireland invited all breed society representatives to a meeting. We hope to hold these meetings at least twice each year and the next meeting will take place on Tuesday 15th December. Any LambPlus breeder that would like to raise any particular issue in this meeting should contact your Breed Society Chairman or Secretary, who has been invited to attend. The objective of these meetings is to increase the level of collaboration between Sheep Ireland and each Breed Society which will ultimately benefit all involved in the programme.

UK Sheep Breeders Roundtable Conference – Nottingham

- Last weekend Sheep Ireland were invited to present at the SBRT three day conference in Nottingham. This biennial event is a coming together of sheep industry representatives from Europe and further afield. The overriding theme of the conference is performance recording and exploring the potential to promote and develop sheep genetic improvement. Sheep Ireland presented an update on progress since 2009 and plans for the future. The very best expertise in sheep genetic improvement was available over the course of the weekend and this made for a hugely interesting conference.

The main areas of interest for Sheep Ireland included:

- Learning how other countries have approached data collection for their sheep evaluation systems. There are valuable lessons to be learned from all countries.
 - The challenges facing hill sheep recording – these challenges exist in all countries and are not unique to Ireland.
 - Across breed evaluations – the UK are trying to lay down the foundations for this to happen. Ireland have these foundations in place and we must now decide how and when we should publish this evaluation.
 - Sheep genomics and what it can potentially deliver sheep industries in Ireland and elsewhere.
- Outside of the formal conference proceedings we spoke with a huge number of people specialising in various aspects of genetic improvement. It was a fantastic opportunity to learn from the successes and mistakes of other programmes and this will hopefully help us to maximise our own progress. In summary this was a well-organised, hugely interesting conference to attend which had something for everyone in attendance, from top geneticists to commercial sheep farmers interested in sheep breeding. For a full summary of the conference events and access to each speaker's presentations click [here](#) or simply search for 'Sheep breeders roundtable' in your internet search engine.

Sheep Ireland Board Meeting 26th November

- The latest Sheep Ireland Board meeting took place yesterday (Thursday) in Portlaoise. A number of topics were discussed throughout the meeting, a summary of which included:
 - Discussion on the upcoming breed society meeting taking place on Tuesday 15th December in the Maldron Hotel, Portlaoise. A number of the issues raised by individuals from our previous breed society meeting in September were discussed. We have made significant progress on all of these issues and we will be summarising all of these at the December meeting.
 - Circulation of the weekly update and the fact that some breeders have not been receiving this each week. The weekly update is critical to educating breeders and keeping everyone informed about our activities. We have been made aware of a small number of breeders not receiving this weekly update. We will attempt to identify these breeders in the coming weeks. Unfortunately we are somewhat dependent on breeders themselves to inform us that they have an email address and/or email address changes. We have made a huge effort in recent years to get an email address for all LambPlus breeders.
 - Publishing raw data for CPT rams. This has been requested from a number of breeders that have submitted rams to the CPT over the years. It has also been requested from commercial sheep farmers. After a long discussion at board level, it was decided that for now we will not publish the raw performance data for all CPT rams. We will provide each individual ram breeder that submits a CPT

ram with a summary of the raw performance of their own ram, but we will not include the raw performance of other individual rams used in that year. An average of the performance of other rams of the same breed may be an option. There are a number of reasons why raw data on ram performance should not be published. There are too many farm specific effects that are not visible when viewing raw data – e.g. if one ram is used to mate younger sheep in a CPT flock – another ram happens to be used on more mature ewes - the performance of the lambs born from the mature ewes will always be better than the younger ewes. This is a ewe effect and not a ram effect. There are countless other farm effects that cannot be detected by looking at raw performance data. The genetic evaluation is the only place that such effects can be accounted for. This issue will be discussed at length at the next breed society meeting.

- Future sheep KT (Knowledge Transfer) programme – Sheep Ireland have made a strong proposal for the inclusion of a ‘recorded ram’ element in the next sheep discussion group programme (Sheep KT). This proposal has been followed up by numerous meetings involving members of the Sheep Ireland Board. The sheep KT programme will have a different structure to the very successful Sheep Technology Adoption Programme (STAP). The new KT programmes for dairy, beef and sheep are EU schemes and must adhere to different legislation. The sheep KT programme is likely to be finalised in the coming weeks and Sheep Ireland will be doing all in our power to include a genetic improvement element.
 - EU sheep reflection group – James Murphy is representing Sheep Ireland on this important European forum. He commented that the fact that Sheep Ireland were invited to contribute to this group is evidence of our progress to date. The objective of this group is to look at the various issues facing sheep farming in Europe and make a number of recommendations. These recommendations will then play an important role in forming future EU policy for sheep industries across Europe.
 - Sheep Ireland finances – Sean Coughlan provided a summary of the Sheep Ireland expenditure for 2015.
 - Future generation of commercial data – A good discussion was had on how Sheep Ireland plan to generate more commercial data. Significant investments have been made in developing the Sheep Ireland database and web screens. This was a critical piece of work that will free up more office resources and facilitate easier data recording for all farmers, ram breeders and commercial farmers alike. Teagasc are collecting large volumes of data from their research farms and from the Better Farm Programme run by Ciaran Lynch. These flocks are becoming a major source of commercial data for Sheep Ireland.
 - Sheep Ireland regional meetings – The board were given a summary of all regional meetings and the main issues raised during the meetings were discussed. The attendance at these meetings were down on previous years and the Board showed concern that breeders are not using these meetings to educate themselves on the programme. Potential changes to the meeting structure were discussed. Making meeting attendance a compulsory requirement of joining the programme was also discussed.
 - In September 2008 Abacus Bio (NZ) made 20 recommendation to the Sheep Ireland Board on how to progress with a sheep breed improvement programme. Sean Coughlan presented these 20 recommendations to the Board and summarised that almost all have been met successfully. One noticeable outstanding objective is greater collaboration with our lamb processors. The establishment of routine slaughter data transfer to Sheep Ireland is an area of focus in the coming months. The full Abacus Bio recommendation document is available to the public on www.sheep.ie under ‘Publications’ and ‘Reference documents’. You can also click [here](#) to find the document.
- ✚ Any member of LambPlus with specific queries about any of the above can contact Sheep Ireland or the board member representing your group/organisation. A full list of board members can be found [here](#).

Sean Coughlan Chief Executive, ICBF & Sheep Ireland, Highfield House, Shinagh, Bandon Co. Cork., Phone: +353 238 820 222, Email info@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, 18-NOV-2015 To 27-NOV-2015

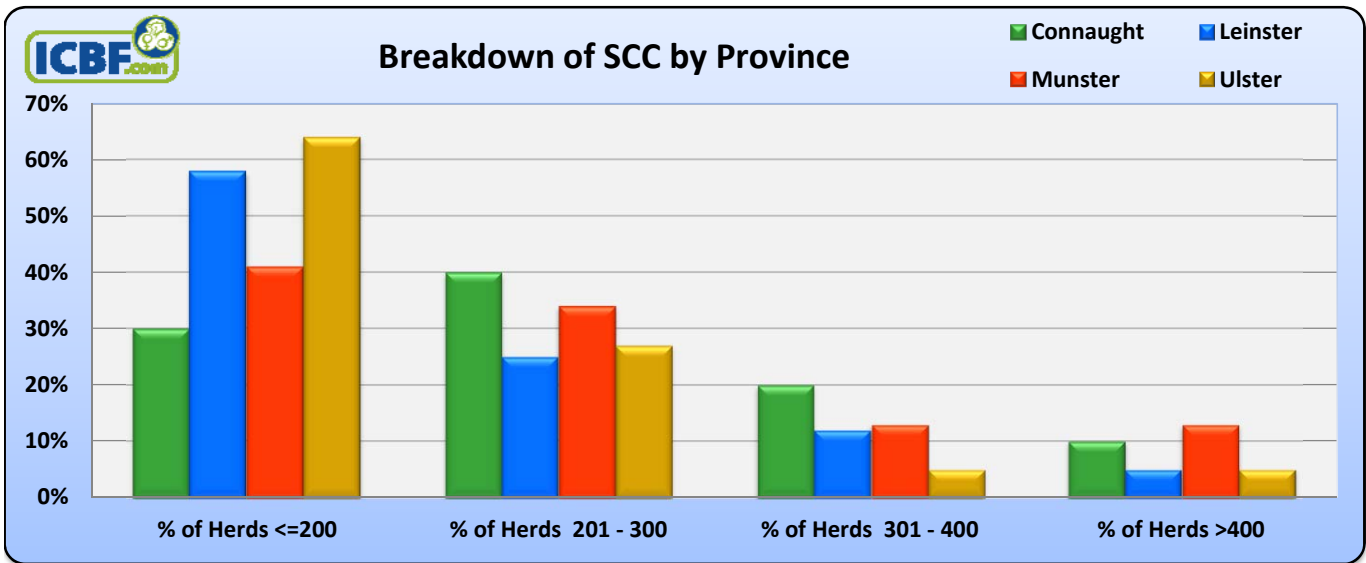
ICBF	No. Herds Recorded	No. Cows Recorded	Avg Herd Size	Avg Milk kg/Cow	Average Fat %	Average Protein %	Average F+P kg	Average SCC*
Connaught	10	646	65	17.8	4.39	3.60	1.43	275
Leinster	97	8,480	87	18.0	4.32	3.55	1.41	188
Munster	359	27,032	75	13.9	4.72	3.83	1.18	228
Ulster	22	1,205	55	17.1	4.33	3.61	1.34	154
National Statistics	488	37,363	77	15.0	4.61	3.76	1.24	216

* Geometric Mean Herd SCC

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

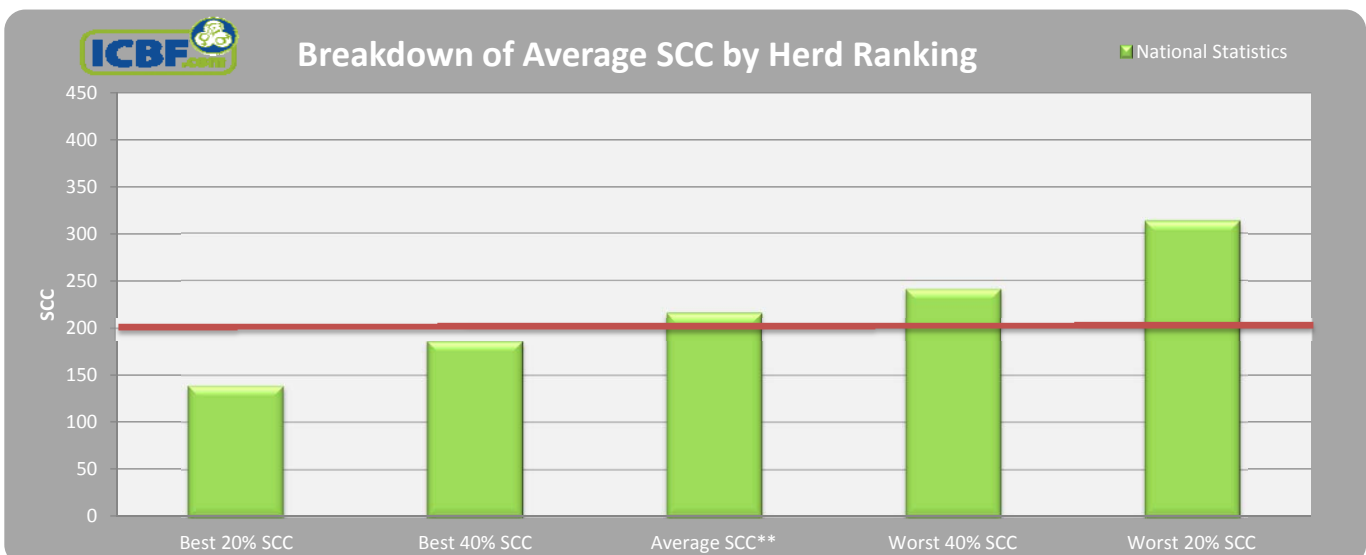
ICBF	No. Herds Recorded	No. Cows Recorded	Avg Herd Size	% of Herds <=200	% of Herds 201 - 300	% of Herds 301 - 400	% of Herds >400	Average SCC*
Connaught	10	646	65	30%	40%	20%	10%	275
Leinster	97	8,480	87	58%	25%	12%	5%	188
Munster	359	27,032	75	41%	34%	13%	13%	228
Ulster	22	1,205	55	64%	27%	5%	5%	154
National Statistics	488	37,363	77	45%	32%	13%	11%	216

* Geometric Mean Herd SCC



% Herd Breakdown for the 10 day period, 18-NOV-2015 To 27-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	10	646	65	183	228	236	246	330
Leinster	97	8,480	87	134	165	185	211	280
Munster	359	27,032	75	145	199	226	250	327
Ulster	22	1,205	55	89	135	157	177	259
National Statistics	488	37,363	77	139	186	216	241	313

** Percentile Herd SCC Rank (Median SCC)



Bull Management

The Euro-Star index gives an overview of the genetic potential of an animal for various key profit traits.

It is intended as an aid in the selection of breeding stock to give a farmer extra information around an animal's genetic makeup. While the genetic index is an important factor in bull selection, it is not the only one. A bull will still have to be visually assessed for vital physical traits such as docility, feet and legs and scrotal development. There is little point in selecting a bull with a high genetic merit if it has a docility issue or poor feet and legs.

Doreen Corridan is a vet with Munster Cattle Breeding Group specialising in the area of health and fertility. She has also been breeding pedigree cattle for over 20 years and has vast experience in the area of stock bull functionality. Here is her advice on how to manage a young bull.

Purchase your bull well in advance of you needing him. This allows you to:

1. Acclimatise him to your farm.

Bulls suffer stress of relocation far more than females. Often females are sold in groups and bulls are sold singly. When the bull arrives on your farm, pen him with a similar or smaller animal and allow him time to get to know you and the surroundings. If young bulls are going to be working together, then group them together.

2. Vaccinate your bull with whatever you are vaccinating the herd for.

Bulls need to receive a similar vaccination routine to that which you are doing on your farm. If you are vaccinating for Lepto and IBR on your farm, you need to vaccinate your bull for these as well. The bull will need the primary and booster vaccine and allow one month post vaccination prior to service.

3. Avoid any major nutritional setbacks.

Currently purchasers are looking for bulls to exhibit their genetic potential at the point of sale. This is then resulting in a situation whereby breeders are feeding bulls to a fat score of 4 to maximise sale value.

This is resulting in poor semen quality for a period of 6-12 weeks. Purchasers need to manage these bulls nutritionally post purchase and reduce down the feed slowly at a rate of 15% per week. This will result in maximum performance.

4. Ensure he is capable of serving prior to being let run with females.

To ensure this, the bull needs to be introduced to small/medium sized cows fully on heat for an hour, repeat this until the bull can serve competently.

5. Get your veterinarian to fertility test the bull.

A fertility test is a very worthwhile exercise. The bull will be checked for his general health, his internal glands, external glands and his semen quality.

6. Get the correct ratio of bulls to cows

A bull in his first year should be presented with a maximum of 15-18 females to serve.

A common occurrence is an inexperienced young bull being presented with too many females and as a result, losing in excess of 1Kg per day in body weight and going temporarily infertile.

Monitor the performance of the bull

Monitoring can be achieved by either fitting the bull with a chinball or using scratch cards on the females. An early scan of the females is always recommended.

7. Feed the Young Bull

Young bulls need to be fed in their first season as they are still growing and developing. Limit the bull's first breeding season to 60 days.

This allows the young bull to recover.



Two of John's pedigree Angus cattle. On the left, Carrigroe Fawn, has a Replacement Index of €258. Sired by Loughlynn Ace (YNN) she is 6 year old cow with an average calving interval of 343 days after 5 calvings. On the right, Rathosheen Hugo is John's main stock bull. He has a Replacement Index of €129. These two are the sire and dam of Carrigroe Kian AA2064 (inset) who is one of the highest Replacement Index bulls on the Autumn GENÉ IRELAND panel. Straws are available through ICBF at 1850 600 900.

Q&A

Q. Can the Euro-Star Index of my young bull change over time?

Yes it can. The lower the reliability on the bull at the time of purchase, then the higher the possibility of the bulls index fluctuating in the future. If a young bull has well proven AI sires in his ancestry then the chances of major changes are less.

A bull's index can be affected by his sire's performance, performance of relatives e.g. brothers and sisters and by the performance of his own progeny. Genomics will increase the reliability figures on young bulls before they are ever used for breeding and this will give farmers more certainty prior to buying a bull.

Q. Who should I talk to about getting my bull fertility tested?

Talk to your local vet about a fertility test and full physical examination prior to putting the bull to work. They generally cost in the region of €50-€100.

FARMER FOCUS: JOHN APPELBE

Milk and Fertility are key to output

Name: John Appelbe, Clonakilty, Co. Cork
Farming System: Pedigree Angus & Hereford Breeder. 4 and 5 Star Females:
Cows: 65 **Heifers:** 54
Stock Bull or AI: Stock Bull & some AI
Replacement Strategy: Breed my own.

Why did you join the BDGP?

The average Replacement Index of the herd is coming in at €130 which means the targets should be easily met in 2018 & 2020. We were genotypically testing bulls anyway for pedigree purposes and now they are being done automatically as part of the scheme. I feel it will also take breeding to the next level in terms of using more science.

Do you feel it will deliver for the national suckler herd?

Milk and fertility are two key traits in the index and if it will improve these nationally then it will be a success. Improving output and in turn profitability is the name of the game and milk and fertility are integral to this. The dairy example has shown us how the application of the EBI has improved the national herd in traits like fertility and milk solids.

What traits are of most importance to your herd?

Temperament is the most important. Regardless of the quality of cattle, if temperament is an issue then the animals are not worth having. Milk is second. When I buy a bull I buy him to breed females first and foremost. It is relatively easy to compliment your cows with a certain bull afterwards, but if your cows don't have the basic



John Appelbe and family

requirements of milk and fertility then it's very difficult to breed anything into them. Ease of calving is third. Calving problems are something that everybody wants to avoid. What I want are calves that are small at birth and have exceptional growth rates afterwards. I have some others such as breed character but these are more for pedigree purposes and are less important to the commercial man.

What are the main things that you look for when physically assessing a bull.

Legs and feet are vital. A bull has to be functionally correct, particularly if I want to sell on sons of a bull for pedigree breeding afterwards. The temperament of the bull himself is also critical. I would also look at calving ease figures and the back pedigree of the bull to see are there any difficult calving animals in the bloodline. One of the big things for me is to get a bull that will compliment my cows and improve them.

DATA RECORDING

- ➔ All calves born from January to June are now old enough (5 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 at www.agfood.ie, www.icbf.com, a farm software package or by postal forms.

PAYMENTS

The first round of payments is expected to commence in December 2015. To facilitate payments:

- ➔ Herdowners must return the complete number of genotype samples requested.
- ➔ Complete and return all survey forms for animals born up to 30 June 2015 before Tuesday 8 December.