Integrated Dairy Beef Program

Eoin Frawley
17th January 2020
Integrated Dairy Beef Program

Facilitated by the DAFM and coordinated on the ground by ICBF and ICOS marts.

Key Objectives

- To develop a National framework/infra-structure => greater integration in the supply of beef from the dairy herd into the broader beef industry.

- To improve the quality of beef coming from the dairy herd => improved genetics, calf rearing and management practices.

- To compliment the existing supply of high-quality beef coming from the suckler beef herd.
Dairy Animal Numbers Increasing

- 1.5m dairy cows => 1.4m calves.
  - 800k dairy * dairy calves.
  - 600k beef sired calves.

- 1.0m “non-core” dairy bred calves
  - 350k stay on farm.
  - 100k dead/disposed (50k dead birth, 20k dead subsequently & 30k slaughtered)
  - 200k exported
  - 350k moved to rearers - Can this be increased?

Need to reduce?
The challenge – finding more rearers

- Finding more calf rearer’s. Trust will be Key.
- Provide confidence to the rearer’s.
- DNA calf registration – foundation to develop trust.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rearing Herds</td>
<td>9,831</td>
<td>10,455</td>
<td>10,469</td>
<td>9,825</td>
<td>9,798</td>
<td>10,076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calves Purchased</td>
<td>332,427</td>
<td>381,148</td>
<td>391,091</td>
<td>378,303</td>
<td>375,733</td>
<td>371,740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Av no. of calves purchased</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% rearing herds retained</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Overview of Rearing herds purchasing Dairy & Dairy Beef calves 2015-2019

2015 rearers => only 39% reared calves right through to 2019.
Integrated Dairy Beef Program

A new approach to moving calves => providing rearers with more information => more informed decisions => Create greater trust.

- Calves from DNA reg herds – full parentage verified, top data recording herds, Ai usage.
- B.O.W – New Index, values animal for beef production.
- Strong, healthy calves – minimum 18 days old at sale.

Advantages for rearing herds

- Calves weighed & conformation graded.
- Calves independently valued – B.O.W, av. weekly price, weight, grade – more reflective value of calf.
- Delivery to farm – part time farmers – time/labour saving
Key elements of the Program

- ICBF responsible for herd procurement, data collection, genotyping, indexes etc.
- ICOS marts responsible for collection of calves, transported to mart (on a non-sale day), independent pricing model, movements, administration of payments etc.
- Calves weighed, conformation graded & priced at time of sale. Delivered to rearing herds.
The Spring 2019 Pilot Program

Pilot project in Spring 2019 with Cork Marts:

- 10 birth (DNA reg herds) & 8 rearing herds (439 calves).
- Range of breeds, calves & calf quality.
- Payments to rearer’s for participation & follow on weighing's (€50/calf + €150 for low value calves).
- Rearers also suckler herds, 372 calves – weighed.
- All calves to be kept through to slaughter – comparative data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sire Breed</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Av. Weight Kg</th>
<th>Av. Price</th>
<th>Av. Grade</th>
<th>Age (days)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AA Male</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>€154</td>
<td>5.05</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AA Female</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>€106</td>
<td>4.54</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FR Male</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>€61</td>
<td>5.62</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HE Male</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>€183</td>
<td>6.06</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HE Female</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>€141</td>
<td>5.34</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JE Male</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>€4</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LM Male</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>€93</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LM Female</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>€151</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BB Female</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>€153</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>439</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>€116</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Positives & Challenges

**Positives**

- **Birth herds:**
  - “Collection service” at busiest time
  - Guaranteed market outlet
  - Genotyping of animals (errors corrected).

- **Rearing herds:**
  - “Delivery service”
  - Well reared calves (i.e. select herds, older/stronger).
  - Fair pricing model – more reflective value

- **Cork marts:**
  - New customers.
  - New & complimentary business model, albeit at higher cost for service.

- **ICBF:**
  - Key elements on infra-structure in place (birth => mart => rearer).
  - Harnessing the power genetics/genomics to deliver change – new approach.

**Challenges**


- Overall process – a lot of manual elements – small scale manageable. Scaling up – technology?

• 90 dairy herds - sell surplus calves
  - Expect supply of ~6k calves
  - Minimum supply of 30 calves/herd to the Program.

• 250 rearing herds - purchase these surplus calves.
  - Oversubscribed – demand for ~10k calves.
  - Herds must purchase a minimum of 20 calves.
  - 50% of order must be HO/FR males.

• 10-12 marts centres country wide – operating on “non-sale days”.
  - standard buyer/seller commission fees apply.

Significant jump in scale - Key Consideration – providing a quality calf
Providing a Quality Calf

Key Consideration => minimum genetic merit/quality calf for the rearer.

• Based on data from;
  − Herds involved in project (2019 calves).
  − Last years project (calf price).

• Suggests a “tipping point” of -10kg PD Cwt, below which calf price drops & likelihood of calf being slaughtered increases.

• Selection based on science – breed is good indicator but genetic merit more accurate. 4% of male calves with no JE genes are <10 kg Cwt.

• Calves <10kg Cwt – Contract rearing – valuable data
Making the process more efficient

- New web app feature allowing herds to enter calves for sale. Entry criteria:
  - Age
  - BVD negative
  - Genotyped
  - Carcass Weight > 10kg

- Once herd is happy with selection – upload to Marts tracking screen
Making the process more efficient

- Message detailing calves entered, collection date etc.
- Removing a lot of the manual elements – time saving – farmer & project coordinators.
- On course for mid February start date.
Summary

• Increasing number of calves => slaughter/exports?

• More rearing herds required => challenging => Need to build trust.

• Integrated Dairy Beef Program => new approach to moving calves => providing a calf of sufficient quality.

• Dairy Beef Index & Beef’s Own Worth crucial to achieving this objective.

• Harnessing the power of genetics/genomics to give the buyer more confidence, create trust => increase rearer numbers.