Welcome

This Welcome Pack is aimed at helping you make full use of your HerdPlus membership. The HerdPlus service will provide you with essential breeding and management tools to maximise profitability within your farming enterprise.

For more information on the HerdPlus services, please follow the headings below:

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To familiarise yourself with the various indexes and genomics, read the first four sections of this brochure.

Sean Larkin, Co. Galway

“For myself the HerdPlus service is so convenient. Of course, I would recommend it without a doubt! It shows me where the herd is currently at and paves a path to aim for going forward. I like using the HerdPlus service as all the information is at your fingertips. The live profiles are very convenient as the information is always up to date when you need it. In my opinion, every farmer should be in HerdPlus and I would recommend it to farmers to put it at the forefront of their breeding decisions.”
What are €uro-stars?

The €uro-star index is designed to aid in the selection of more profitable breeding animals for the suckler herd. This gives farmers more information to select better males and females to breed for either Replacement or Terminal traits.

The €uro-star Index is made up of two sub-indexes; Replacement and Terminal Index.

Replacement Index

The Replacement Index looks at the maternal traits such as milk and fertility, whilst maintaining the traits needed to produce weanlings. Suckler farmers aiming to breed replacement heifers should focus on the Replacement Index.

Terminal Index

The Terminal Index looks at the beef traits of an animal such as carcass weight and conformation. Farmers wanting to breed animals for slaughter or sale as weanlings should focus on the Terminal Index.

The €uro-star rating system was designed to make it easier for farmers to understand with 1 star animals being in the bottom 20% and 5 star animals being in the top 20%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Across Breed</th>
<th>Eurostar Rankings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>★★★★★</td>
<td>Index Value is in top 20% of all animals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>★★★</td>
<td>Index Value is in top 40% of all animals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>★★★</td>
<td>Average Index Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>★★</td>
<td>Index Value is in bottom 40% of all animals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>★</td>
<td>Index Value is in bottom 20% of all animals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Top Tip! Improve the accuracy of your cows Replacement Index by recording cow liveweights and calf weaning weights.
Farmers should look at the within breed stars and across breed stars combined with the individual traits of importance displayed as a Predicted Transmitting Ability (PTA) figure. Within breed stars rank an animal against other animals of its own breed, while across breed stars rank an animal against all animals across all breeds. It is important to look further into an animal’s index or trait PTA, such as carcass weight or daughter calving interval. For example, two animals could be both 5 star, but their trait PTA’s within the index could be completely different. Therefore, it is important to breed for particular traits of importance within the index and not just the index as a whole.

Reliability

This is used to measure the accuracy of an index or trait PTA based on the amount of data that is recorded on an animal. The number of progeny records required to meet certain reliability figures varies from trait to trait as some traits are more heritable than others.

Why does my animal not have a €uro-star rating?

The most common reason for a €uro-star rating not to be displayed on an animal is generally because the sire may not be recorded. You can record this through Record Events > Missing Sire

Why do €uro-stars change?

This is due to the amount of new information that is being received on old and new animals. Therefore, stars are moving with the improvement of animals.
Genomics is breeding using DNA (Genotype) combined with performance data on an animal and its relatives to help better predict how well an animal will perform in the future. DNA is passed from parents to offspring and is therefore central to breeding. It can be extracted from tissue, hair follicles, blood or semen samples. DNA is the building block of life and in combination with management such as feeding, can determine the performance of an animal such as how much milk it will yield, its susceptibility to disease and its fertility performance.

What are the Benefits of Genomics?

Genotyping an animal and having access to its genomic results has huge benefits for the herdowner.

- **Higher €uro-star index reliability** – Greatly increases index reliability before the animal has any of its own progeny.
- **Parentage verification** – Genotyping can confirm the sire & dam of an animal.
- **Major genes** – Animals can be identified as carriers of major genes (i.e. Myostatin, polledness, etc.) and genetic diseases.
- **Full traceability** – Ensures traceability of every meat sample back to the animal it originated from.

Genotypes can be ordered online by logging into HerdPlus through the Genomic Services portal or by calling 023 8820452.

Hair cards will be sent to farm via post with instructions and a return envelope enclosed.

Top Tip! Download our Free HerdPlus App to view your live profiles on the go.
What is CBV?

The Commercial Beef Value (CBV) is a tool for non-breeding beef farmers designed to give an insight into an animal’s genetic merit for beef traits. Like the Replacement and Terminal Indexes, the CBV is expressed as a € value. The beef genetic merit of an animal with a higher CBV € value will be superior.

The animals that will receive CBVs are sucklers, dairy x beef and dairy x dairy. Calved females, dairy females and pedigree beef males & females will not receive a CBV.

CBV is comprised of five traits from the Terminal Index that are important to non-breeding beef enterprises:

- Carcass weight
- Carcass conformation
- Carcass fat
- Docility
- Feed intake

Calving traits are not included in the CBV as they are not applicable to farmers purchasing these animals.

CBV in action

When trading beef animals, farmers are generally reliant on a liveweight and their own visual assessment of an animal to make a decision on its value. These can be good indicators of an animal’s genetic potential, but may not give the complete picture. As the example below demonstrates, there can often be instances of animals with similar liveweights and visual appearances but with significant differences in their genetic merit. Table 1 contains details of two young bulls on Tullamore Farm that are similar in appearance and liveweight but with very different CBVs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tag</th>
<th>Breed</th>
<th>CBV</th>
<th>Age Slaughter</th>
<th>Carcass Weight</th>
<th>Conf</th>
<th>Fat</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>455</td>
<td>CH x LM</td>
<td>€310</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>444</td>
<td>U=</td>
<td>2=</td>
<td>€2,398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>433</td>
<td>CH x HE</td>
<td>€240</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>R=</td>
<td>3=</td>
<td>€2,204</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Details of two young bulls (below) on Tullamore Farm.

In this instance, animal number 455 has a much higher CBV due to its superior genetics. This resulted in a better kill out and overall price, but also a potential saving on feed costs as feed intake is a trait that is factored into the CBV.

Summary

Whether it be dairy male calves at 3 weeks old, or continental suckler steers at 18 months old, having genetic information to hand when making sale or purchasing decisions is vital for farmers. The analysis has shown that the CBV is predicting animals that ultimately have higher carcass performance. This allows farmers to incorporate the CBV into their sale or purchasing decisions with confidence.
Understanding the Dairy Beef Index

The DBI index is a tool to produce quality beef cattle from the dairy herd that hold both desirable calving attributes for dairy animals (i.e. easy calving) and valuable carcass attributes for beef finishing. It does this by ranking beef cattle for use in the dairy herd based on their genetic merit for several traits of importance to dairy-beef production systems.

What does the DBI select for?

- Easy calving, short gestation and lower calf mortality.
- Better conformation and lower fat score carcasses.
- Polledness, carbon efficiency and lower feed intake values.

Advice for beef breeders

Use the DBI to identity breeding males and females to produce beef bulls for the dairy herd. The DBI of each animal in your herd can be viewed under the €uro-star profile or on the ICBF Animal Search.

Logging In

Follow the steps below to access your HerdPlus account:

1. Go to [www.icbf.com](http://www.icbf.com)
2. Click Log In
3. Enter your herd number and password in the fields provided
4. Click Log In
5. Click here to retrieve your password OR Text the word PASS to 0894577663 from the mobile registered to your herd to receive a temporary password.

Top Tip! Improve the accuracy of your cows Replacement Index by recording cow liveweights and calf weaning weights.
**View Profiles**

**Beef €uro-star Profile**

View the current €uro-star ratings for each of your animals on the live €uro-star profile.

Compare your herds average Replacement Index against the National Average.

Download and print this profile in Excel or PDF format.

Filter your list to fit your search criteria (i.e. age).

Click on a column heading to sort your list.

Click on the full tag number to view more information including Fertility, Progeny and Genomic Evaluation.

**CBV Profile**

View the CBV € value for each of your eligible animals.

Compare your animals on the star ranking across breed or within breed type.

A figure in black is more desirable for a particular trait. This may be a positive or negative figure depending on the specific trait.

Animals with good carcass traits, docility and feed intake values will have the highest CBVs. These traits can be assessed in the €uro-star Terminal Index of your breeding animals. Higher € values for these traits in the €uro-star indexes will result in higher progeny CBVs.
View Profiles

**Beef Finishing Profile (New)**

View the finishing performance at both herd level and on an individual animal basis.

Download and print this profile in Excel or PDF format.

Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) can also be monitored through this profile.

This interactive profile enables you to filter by:

- Finishing period.
- Animal Type – Heifers, steers, bulls, etc.
- Breed Type – Suckler, Dairy x Dairy or Dairy x Beef.
- Origin – Homebred or purchased.

**Expected Calving Profile**

See the expected calving dates for your herd based on insemination data recorded and the predicted €uro-star value of the calf in both the Replacement and Terminal Indexes.
**Genomics Profile**

View the genomic status of the herd to date.
Identify the genotype status of an animal in the herd.
Monitor the status of the animals genotyped (i.e. “sent to farmer”, “genomic evaluation”, etc.)

This information may be of use to pedigree breeders.

![Genomics Profile Table](image)

**Stock Reports**

View reports based on the stock numbers in your herd.
Download and print these reports in Excel or PDF format.

- **Stock Nitrates Report** – Calculates kgs of Nitorgen (N) and Phosphorus (P) produced based on the number of animals in the herd.
- **Stock Report** – Calculates the number of animals in the herd on the last day of each month broken down by animal category.
- **Stock Reconciliation Report** – Calculates the number of animals Born, Bought, Sold, Died and livestock totals for each month.

Stock reports are beneficial for accounting purposes.
Data Recording

Recording data on your animals is vitally important to ensure the most accurate Euro-star figures are available for your herd. Dissecting this information from reports and profiles helps to make more informed breeding decisions for your farming enterprise.

Record Heat & AI/Serve

Here you can record heat and serve events for the animals in your herd. This is a great way to keep track of fertility records for your herd and individual animals. These will impact important KPI's such as calving interval, etc.

Enter the date of service here

Enter the tag number or AI code of the sire used

Record Calving Ease

Recording accurate calving surveys for the animals in your herd is valuable as it is reflected in the calving difficulty figure of sires and increases their reliability for calving difficulty. Calving ease and other information can be recorded in the Record Birth Events screen.

Top Tip! Improve the accuracy of your cows Replacement Index by recording cow liveweights and calf weaning weights.
Record Live Weight

Recording live weights of animals in your herd will help you to identify the best performing animals. Weaning weights at 150-250 days play a crucial part in the daughter milk trait within the €uro-star Replacement Index.

Record Missing Sire

Recording the sire of a calf is optional at birth. However, without a sire or a genotype on the database, ICBF cannot generate a €uro-star index for that animal. All animals in the herd with no sire recorded will appear on this screen.
Record Pregnancy Diagnosis

By recording scanning results, expected calving dates will be generated for your herd. In the case that there are no serves recorded, farmers can record estimated number of days in calf as communicated by the scanning technician.

Enter the date of scanning here
Select one of the following options: EMPTY, IN CALF or TWINS

Suckler Carbon Efficiency Programme (SCEP)

For SCEP participants, survey data recording for both calves and dams can be recorded by logging into ICBF. This can be accessed by going to Services > SCEP. Weighing and genotype information in relation to the scheme can also be accessed through this screen.

Top Tip! Download our Free HerdPlus App to view your live profiles on the go.
Beef €uro-star Report

The Beef €uro-star Report details the breeding potential of your stock with the aim to breed from the most profitable animals in your herd.

See full breakdown of your herds €uro-star indexes.

How does your herd compare with the National Average & National Top 10%?

Weaning Performance Report

This report will allow you to analyse the performance of suckler calves born in your herd, as well as the performance of your suckler cows. Easily identify your most efficient cows.

How do your animals compare to industry targets?
The Suckler Cow Report enables farmers to critically analyse the performance of every suckler cow in their herd.

Clearly identify every aspect of your cows’ performance by looking at:

1. Ancestry
2. Fertility
3. €uro-star index

Click “Download Report” to receive the most up to date report on your suckler cows.

Assess the productivity of your beef herd in terms of Kgs of liveweight produced with the Beef Output Report.

A useful benchmark for both dry stock and breeding herds.

To assess the output per hectare of your herd, please record “Total Hectares” for your farm as accurately as possible.

See a detailed breakdown of your sales and purchases for the year.
Beef Calving Report

The Beef Calving Report allows you to assess the calving performance of your herd.

Benchmark your herd for KPI’s such as calving interval and number of calves per cow per year.

Compare your herds performance with the National Average.

Quickly identify cows that may have potential fertility issues by looking at your “Action List”.

Applications

Stock Bull Finder

This allows a farmer to search for beef bulls for sale in Ireland from performance recorded pedigree herds.

You can filter for what traits you are looking for in the bull

The Bull Finder allows you to search for bulls in Replacement, Terminal or Dairy Beef Index

(An animal may be unavailable if it has moved between herds within the last day)
Applications

Animal Search

Search an animal’s tag number or name to retrieve €uro-star index information. This can be accessed by downloading the ICBF Animal Search App or on your PC.

ICBF ANIMAL SEARCH

- You can search an animal here
- This is the information you can see on the animal searched

Inbreeding Checker

The inbreeding checker allows a farmer to check for possible inbreeding if their females are mated with a particular AI sire or stockbull prior to mating.

- Bull tag can be added here
- You can select eligible or All Females
- You can select breed by All, Beef or Dairy
- Once you have the bull(s) added click Submit

The Inbreeding Checker cannot be run on animals that have no sire recorded. An inbreeding level of 6.25 and under is deemed acceptable.

Inbreeding Results

- This is a chart of the levels of inbreeding

View Results: Basic Detailed

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Applications

Sales Catalogue

A farmer can create a sales catalogue through their HerdPlus account. This can be found through Applications > Catalogue.

You can select the animals you wish to include in your Catalogue

Once the animals have been selected click continue

Here you can select a catalogue type and click “Generate Catalogue”. You can then download the PDF.

This is an example of a Beef Commercial Catalogue.
Farmer Testimonial

James Lacey, Co. Tipperary

“I have a Pedigree herd, using the HerdPlus service it provides all the ancestry details for my animals in the one place. It has helped me place a greater emphasis on better genetics when purchasing animals as I can target high Replacement Index animals for breeding in my own herd. If I want to purchase an animal, I can get access to it’s information on the Animal Search if the seller is in HerdPlus. Being able to combine the genetic information of an animal with its own appearance is a game changer. Genotyping my animals provides a lot of benefits and gives confidence to potential buyers that my stock have their parentage confirmed and have been included in an genomic evaluation. The Beef Calving Report is important for my herd to identify the cows that are doing the business for me.”

Wesley Browne, Co. Monaghan

“I find the information HerdPlus supplies about breeding animals to be very useful in the day to day running of my farm. It helps me hugely in making breeding decisions in terms of the indexes and to follow the direction in which the herd is going. You can see how many calves a cow produces, their weight performance and the star ratings of all the animals. I find the bottom 10% of animals in my herd to be quite accurate and it helps with culling decisions. The Suckler Cow Report is very useful as it has all the information on the cow and how she is performing. All of the useful information any suckler farmer needs is always available which makes it a great tool to use. I would definitely recommend HerdPlus to other farmers who want to make genetic gains and improvements in their herd.”

Top Tip! Improve the accuracy of your cows Replacement Index by recording cow liveweights and calf weaning weights.
Recording events and viewing animal profiles has never been so easy!

Instant access to a wide range of HerdPlus services
- Your latest HerdPlus Reports e.g. suckler cow and beef output reports.
- Record essential data anytime, anywhere e.g. liveweights, serves, scanning data.
- View Profiles for live, up to date information e.g. Euro-Star and fertility profiles.

www.icbf.com
Ph: 023-8820452

Useful Contact Information

DAFM
Main Switchboard: 057 8674400
Agfood: 049 4368288
Suckler Carbon Efficiency Programme: 057 8674454 or scep@agriculture.gov.ie

National Calf Registration & Movements
CMMS (Movements): 023 8832890
Calf Reg: 023 8832890
Permits: 023 8832891 or agripermits@capita.com

Other
BVD Helpline: 091 507 648
Animal Health Ireland: 071 9671928
Weatherbys: 045 875521
Bord Bia: 01 6685155
Cattle Weighing Scales Rental Service: https://www.icbf.com/the-weighing-scheme/