



DELIVERING BETTER CATTLE THROUGH RESEARCH, GENETICS AND INNOVATION

TULLY OPEN DAY 2026

8TH SEPTEMBER 2026

ICBF BEEF AND DAIRY RESEARCH CENTRE, TULLY, CO. KILDARE

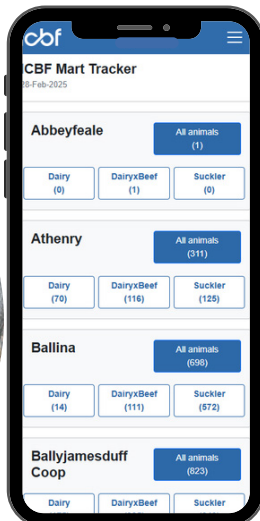
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KEY FEATURES:

- ✓ View **lot numbers, breed, age and sex**
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Delivering Better Cattle Through Research, Genetics and Innovation
Tully Open Day 2026

ICBF Beef and Dairy Research Centre,
Tully, Co. Kildare

www.icbf.com

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Welcome to Tully

On behalf of the Irish Cattle Breeding Federation (ICBF), it is my pleasure to welcome you to the ICBF Beef and Dairy Research Centre at Tully.

Today provides an opportunity to see first-hand how research, innovation, genetics and technology are helping to shape the future of Irish beef and dairy farming. This Open Day brings together farmers, students, advisors, researchers, industry representatives and policymakers to explore the latest developments in cattle breeding, animal performance, sustainability and farm profitability.

For more than 25 years, ICBF has worked in partnership with farmers and industry to develop one of the world's leading cattle breeding and performance recording systems. Founded on Brian Wickham's vision of providing "one version of the truth" for Irish agriculture, ICBF continues to support informed decision-making through the use of data, genetics and scientific research.

The work carried out here at Tully plays a vital role in advancing our understanding of traits that are difficult to measure on commercial farms. Through large-scale research programmes and industry collaboration, the centre is generating valuable information that helps improve animal efficiency, environmental sustainability, animal welfare and overall farm profitability.

Throughout the day, you will have the opportunity to view ongoing research projects, hear from leading experts, and learn how the latest genetic and technological advances are being translated into practical tools and solutions for farmers. The research and innovation on display today highlight the strong collaboration that exists between farmers, industry partners, researchers and Government in driving continuous improvement within Irish agriculture.

We hope your visit provides valuable insights, practical learning opportunities and an appreciation of the work being undertaken at Tully. Thank you for joining us, and we wish you an enjoyable and informative day.

Sean Coughlan

Chief Executive Officer

Irish Cattle Breeding Federation (ICBF)

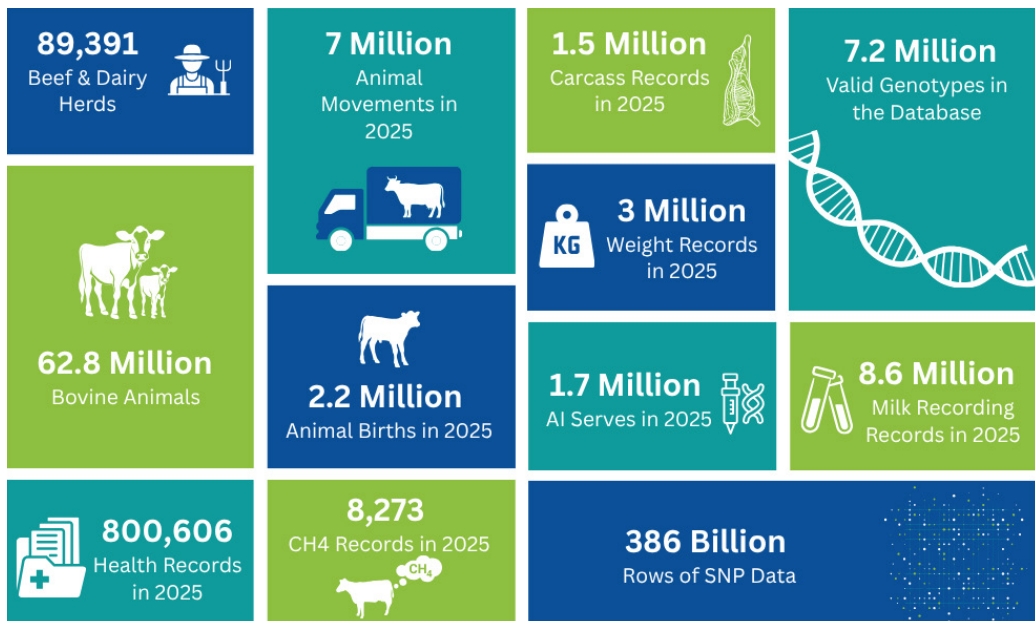


ICBF: Driving Genetic Progress for Sustainable Food Production in Ireland

ICBF is a not-for-profit, farmer-owned organisation, established in 2000 through collaboration between the Irish Government and industry to lead and coordinate cattle breeding in Ireland.

At the centre of ICBF's work is one of the world's most comprehensive cattle breeding databases. This national resource brings together performance, genetic and management information from across Ireland's beef and dairy herds, providing a robust foundation for informed decision-making at farm, industry and policy level.

ICBF Database 2025 Figures



By making this information accessible, ICBF enables farmers, processors, researchers, advisors and policy makers to improve animal performance, strengthen farm performance and support more sustainable food production systems.

Operating at the intersection of science, technology and practical farming, ICBF combines advanced genetic evaluations with real-time insights and precision AgTech tools. This supports continuous genetic improvement across the national herd, delivering gains that build over time and across generations.

At its core, ICBF is driven by its people. The organisation is made up of a dedicated team working closely with farmers and industry partners, with a clear focus on delivering real, measurable improvements on farm. Everything ICBF does is grounded in supporting farmers by helping to improve the efficiency and resilience of their systems, while strengthening the wider agri-food sector.

Working in close partnership with farmers, industry stakeholders, research organisations, advisory services and international bodies, ICBF ensures that innovation is both scientifically robust and relevant in practice, while maintaining strong alignment with global developments in cattle breeding.

Since its establishment in 2000, ICBF has played a central role in transforming cattle breeding in Ireland. It has helped develop an integrated national breeding infrastructure that connects farmers, industry stakeholders and researchers through a shared system of information and evaluation.

This long-term investment in genetics and data has enabled a more coordinated, evidence-based approach to breeding. By translating large-scale information into practical decision-support tools, ICBF helps farmers identify animals with superior genetics for productivity, efficiency and sustainability.

Strong partnerships across industry, research and advisory services ensure that innovation remains grounded in practical farming. ICBF has also developed significant international linkages, contributing to and learning from global advances in cattle breeding and genetic evaluation while maintaining a system tailored to Irish needs.

Looking ahead, ICBF continues to build on this foundation by using genetics, technology and collaboration to drive further gains in efficiency, sustainability and food production, while supporting resilient and economically viable farming systems.

Key Points

- Not-for-profit, farmer-owned organisation established by Government and industry
- National database underpinning cattle breeding in Ireland
- Built on the principle of **“one version of the truth”**
- Dedicated team focused on improving efficiency, resilience and sustainability on farms
- Strong collaboration across industry, research and international partners
- Over 25 years of impact in livestock breeding and food production



"We exist to benefit our farmers, our agri-food industry & our wider communities through genetic gain.

We do this by developing & applying science & technology to ensure that our farmers & industry make the most profitable & sustainable decisions."





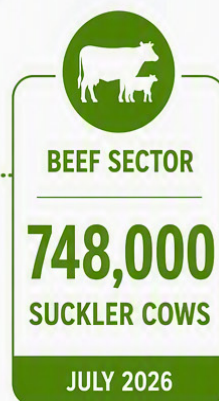
Ireland's Grass-Based Cattle Industry

Ireland's temperate climate, abundant rainfall and extensive grassland resources have shaped a livestock sector centred on beef and dairy production. Bovine farming plays a vital role in Ireland's economy, rural communities and food supply chain. Supported by national systems for animal identification, research, data collection and genetic improvement, Irish agriculture combines science, technology and practical farming to produce high-quality food while continuously improving efficiency and sustainability.

6.9 MILLION CATTLE

JULY 2026

i Figures relate to the Republic of Ireland only and exclude Northern Ireland.



FROM GRASS TO GLOBAL MARKETS



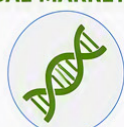
GRASS-BASED FARMING

- Temperate climate
- Extensive grassland



DAIRY & BEEF PRODUCTION

- High quality livestock systems



GENETICS & DATA

- National cattle database
- Performance recording



GLOBAL MARKETS

- Supplying domestic and export markets

KEY ENABLERS OF IRISH CATTLE PRODUCTION



NATIONAL DATA SYSTEMS

ICBF national database and animal records



GENETICS & GENOMICS

Breeding for improved profitability and sustainability



RESEARCH & INNOVATION

Industry-led science and technology



ADVISORY & EDUCATION

Knowledge transfer and farmer training



INDUSTRY COLLABORATION

Farmers, processors, research and government working together

Breeding for Lower Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Reducing greenhouse gas emissions from cattle is one of the major challenges facing Irish agriculture. Ruminant livestock are central to Ireland's food production system, but they also produce enteric methane as part of their normal digestion. Methane is important because it is a potent greenhouse gas and, in cattle, it also represents an energy loss from the animal. Methane production from digestion can represent a loss of approximately 4% to 10% of gross energy intake. Therefore, reducing methane is not only an environmental objective; it is also linked to improving the biological efficiency of cattle production.

Ireland has committed to reducing national greenhouse gas emissions by 30% by 2030, with agriculture expected to contribute to this target while maintaining a productive and competitive livestock sector. Genetic improvement is an attractive mitigation tool as, unlike short-term management changes, breeding decisions accumulate over generations. Once lower-emitting animals are identified and selected as parents, their favourable genetics can be passed on to the next generation. Nonetheless, methane production must be measured on individual animals to identify cattle that are genetically more methane efficient.

Measuring Methane at Scale

The foundation of any breeding programme is reliable data. In Ireland, large scale methane recording for genetic selection is coordinated through the ICBF Beef and Dairy Research Centre, in Tully, where cattle can be measured under controlled conditions while also recording key performance traits. GreenFeed emission monitoring systems measure methane emissions from individual cattle during feeding visits. It is a voluntary system in which animals are attracted to the machine using a concentrate bait feed. When they visit the unit, the machine drops a small amount of bait feed every couple of seconds to keep the animal at the unit, while the GreenFeed analyses several samples of the animal's breath to give the grams per day of methane produced at that point in time. Cattle are encouraged to visit the unit multiple times per day. All methane records are linked to the animal's electronic ear tag and combined with other performance data captured in the ICBF database.



Farmers, processors and policy makers require cattle that have lower emissions but also continue to perform for output (e.g. milk, carcass) to ensure overall system profitability. In general, cattle with bigger liveweights and carcass weights eat more feed per day, and they emit more methane per day than smaller cattle. However, there is natural genetic variability in these traits which farmers and geneticists can exploit for producing the next generation of cattle.

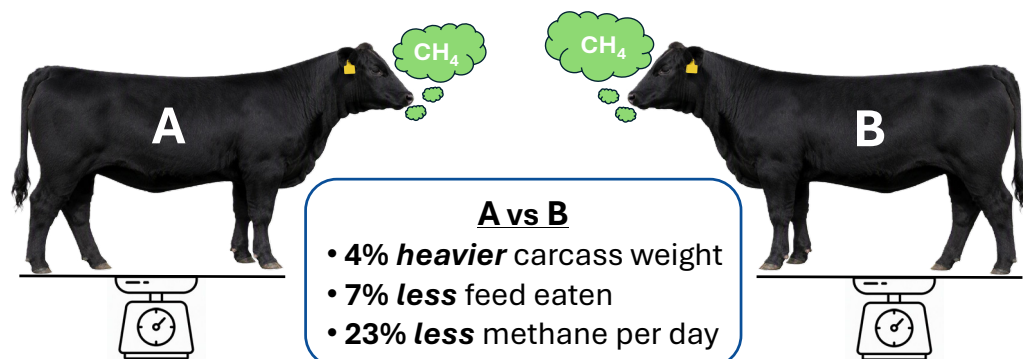
The example below compares two cattle that were finished in Tully. Both animals were Angus × Friesian heifers, finished at a similar age and with the same growth rate and liveweight. However, the first heifer had a heavier carcass while also exhibiting lower daily feed intake and lower methane production than the second heifer. Both animals were finished under similar controlled conditions, so much of the difference between them is due to their genetic background. This message is central to the Irish approach: the aim is not simply to breed smaller or less productive animals, but to identify animals that are more efficient in terms of maintaining beef output with lower daily emissions.



Trait	Heifer A	Heifer B	% Difference
Growth Rate (kg/d)	1.73	1.73	0%
Average Liveweight (kg)	518	517	0%
Feed Intake (kg/d)	12.0	12.9	-7%
Methane Production (g/d)	228	297	-23%
Carcass Weight (kg)	285	273	4%

Breeding for Lower Greenhouse Gas emissions

Lower emissions with minimal effect on beef production



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Using Genetics to Reduce Emissions

In 2023, ICBF published the world's first across-breed genomic evaluations for enteric methane emissions in beef cattle. The current evaluation is backed by methane records captured on 3,300 growing beef cattle representing 19 breeds. Research from this data indicates that meaningful differences exist between animals fed the same diet and that a proportion of these differences is due to genetics.

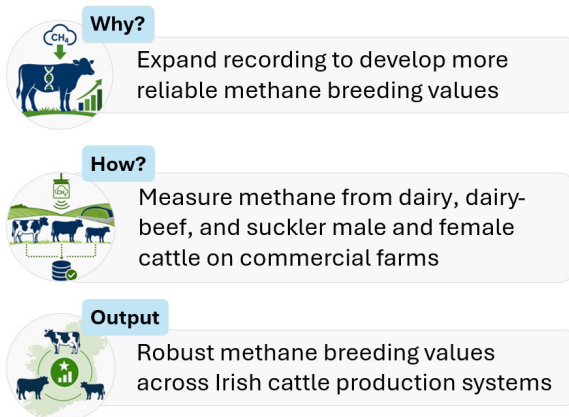
The publication of across breed methane evaluations for artificial insemination (AI) sires is a significant step for Ireland. AI bulls can have a large influence because their genetics are used widely across the cattle population. This is particularly powerful when combined with widespread genotyping. Genomic

information allows animals to be connected through DNA relationships, so records from intensively measured test-centre cattle can inform breeding values for relatives across the national population in commercial herds. Currently, methane genetic merit is available for AI sires that have at least one progeny with a methane record, and it is not yet integrated into our profit selection indexes.

A large component of the methane phenotyping programme is deploying GreenFeed methane measuring machines into participating commercial herds so that methane production in pasture-based systems can be captured. This is particularly important to enhance the current genetic evaluation for enteric methane, which is primarily based on methane measurements collected in indoor systems, by incorporating data from related animals in grazing systems. This is carried out to provide stakeholders and producers with greater confidence in the effectiveness of these genetic merit estimates to identify genetically more methane-efficient cattle. The route to full deployment of these methane genetic merit estimates is integration into our breeding goals, where research in this area is ongoing.

In summary, breeding for lower greenhouse gas emissions in Ireland depends on three connected strengths: accurate methane measurement, national scale data integration, and balanced genetic selection. The availability of methane evaluations for AI sires shows that Ireland is moving from research measurement to practical breeding tools. By selecting cattle that produce less methane without sacrificing performance, the industry can make environmental progress in a way that is measurable, cumulative and relevant to commercial farming.

Measuring Methane on Commercial Farms



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Key Points:

- Ireland is a global leader in the genetic evaluation of methane emissions in beef cattle
- Methane emissions can be measured and improved through animal breeding
- ICBF published the world's first across-breed genomic evaluations for methane emissions in beef cattle
- More than 3,300 cattle from 19 breeds have contributed methane records to the national evaluation system
- Genomic technology enables methane-efficient genetics to be identified and disseminated across the national herd
- Genetic gain is cumulative, making breeding a permanent and cost-effective emissions reduction tool.
- Lower-emitting cattle can be selected without compromising productive performance

Ireland's Pathway to Sustainable Cattle Breeding

The integration of genetic tools into cattle farming systems in Ireland is enabled through a centralised national database of cattle information, which includes information from conception through to milk and carcass output, and even further to beef on the consumer's plate. There are several connected steps along this pathway that transform research and farm data into measurable genetic gain, benefiting producers and the wider industry.

1. Research and Farm Data

Farmers can input their own farm records, including calving performance and liveweights, through the ICBF HerdPlus portal. Information on important but difficult-to-record traits, such as methane emissions and feed intake, is captured through cattle performance testing, primarily in research centres.

Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine-supported programmes, such as the Suckler Carbon Efficiency Programme (SCEP), the National Dairy Beef Weighing Scheme and the Dairy Beef Welfare Scheme (See page 32 for more information on Beef Schemes), help increase the volume of data available from commercial farms by incentivising data collection. These programmes are a vital source of high-quality data on individual animals that benefits the wider industry.

2. National Database

The national data captured on cattle in Ireland is brought together into a single centralised database within ICBF, creating a trusted single source of information for Irish cattle breeding. Data from commercial and research farms is combined with data from cattle marts, meat processors, milk co-operatives and advisory programmes, among others, alongside all associated animal pedigree and ancestry information.

This system avoids fragmented records and supports the concept of "one version of the truth" for continuous improvement within the cattle industry.

3. Genomics

Genotyping strengthens the system by connecting an animal's DNA information with its performance and ancestry records. Genomics is particularly valuable because young animals can be evaluated more accurately before they have their own lifetime performance data. Genomics also offers the benefit of verifying parentage, sex and breed information.

As the National Genotyping Programme increases the proportion of genotyped cattle, the value of genomic information grows and delivers greater benefits across the wider industry. Furthermore, large-scale genotyping accelerates selection and allows useful information from research herds to benefit the wider national population more quickly than would have been possible in the pre-genomics era.

4. Genetic Merit Evaluations

All of the combined data within the database is then used to estimate the genetic merit of individual animals. Genetic evaluations use algorithms to separate the genetic component of performance from environmental effects, allowing animals to be compared more fairly.

The research underpinning these genetic and genomic algorithms is peer-reviewed and published with open-science principles in mind, providing confidence to stakeholders. These evaluations provide genetic merit estimates for key traits related to revenue and costs across dairy, dairy-beef, beef maternal and beef terminal breeding goals, including productivity, fertility, efficiency, calving, carcass and sustainability traits.

5. Profit Indexes

Individual genetic merit estimates are combined into what is referred to as a balanced profit selection index. Each trait with a genetic merit estimate has an associated economic weight, which determines that trait's overall importance within the production system concerned.

There are four main profit selection indexes in Ireland for cattle:

- Beef EuroStar Replacement Index – used to identify females that will perform efficiently as breeding cows
- Beef EuroStar Terminal Index – used to identify animals with the potential to produce better performing progeny for beef production
- Dairy-Beef Index (DBI) – used to select beef bulls for use on dairy cows to generate more valuable dairy-beef animals for beef production
- Economic Breeding Index (EBI) – used to breed the next generation of dairy cows

The purpose of the profit selection indexes is to balance many traits at once, ensuring that breeding and selection decisions are not based on a single visible characteristic, but on the overall economic, environmental and production value of the individual animal within the system.

6. Better Breeding Decisions

Farmers, breeding companies and advisers use these indexes and evaluations to choose the most suitable sires and dams for each production system. More accurate information helps reduce risk, supports more targeted mating decisions and makes it easier to breed animals that are productive, profitable, fertile, efficient and well suited to Irish farming conditions.

7. Genetic Gain

When better decisions are repeated across many herds and many years, the national population moves in the desired direction. The result is long-term and cumulative genetic gain: animals that perform better generation after generation.

This is particularly evident in Ireland, where continuous genetic gain has been achieved across all available profit selection indexes, translating into real improvements for key traits in Irish ruminant systems. ICBF also works closely with colleagues in Teagasc to validate the profit selection indexes, providing further confidence to stakeholders in their ability to deliver genetic gain.

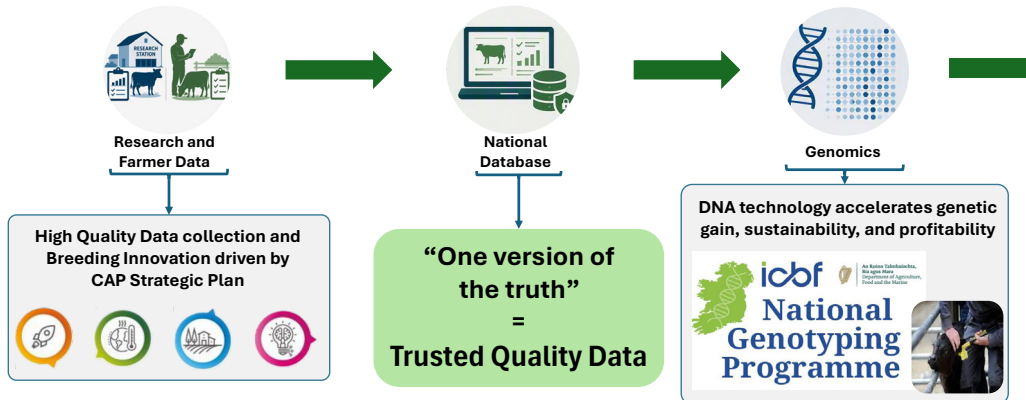
Because these are balanced selection indexes, genetic progress can be achieved for both productivity and sustainability at the same time. As index values improve, the resulting genetic gain contributes to more profitable, efficient and sustainable farm outcomes.

Summary

Ireland's breeding pathway demonstrates how coordinated data capture, national genetic evaluations, large-scale genotyping and balanced selection indexes can turn research and farm information into practical breeding decisions. By selecting for productivity, profitability and sustainability together, the system supports continuous genetic improvement while helping farmers produce animals that are better suited to future economic, environmental and societal demands.



Sustainable Breeding Pathway

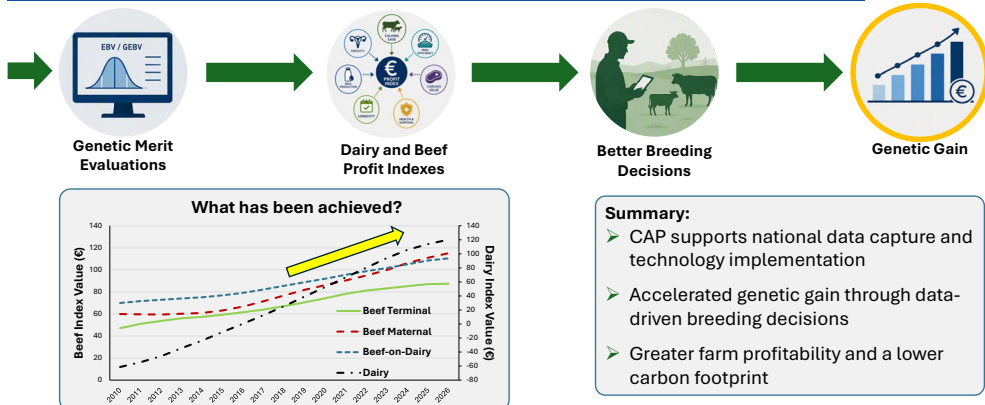


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Sustainable Breeding Pathway

An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine



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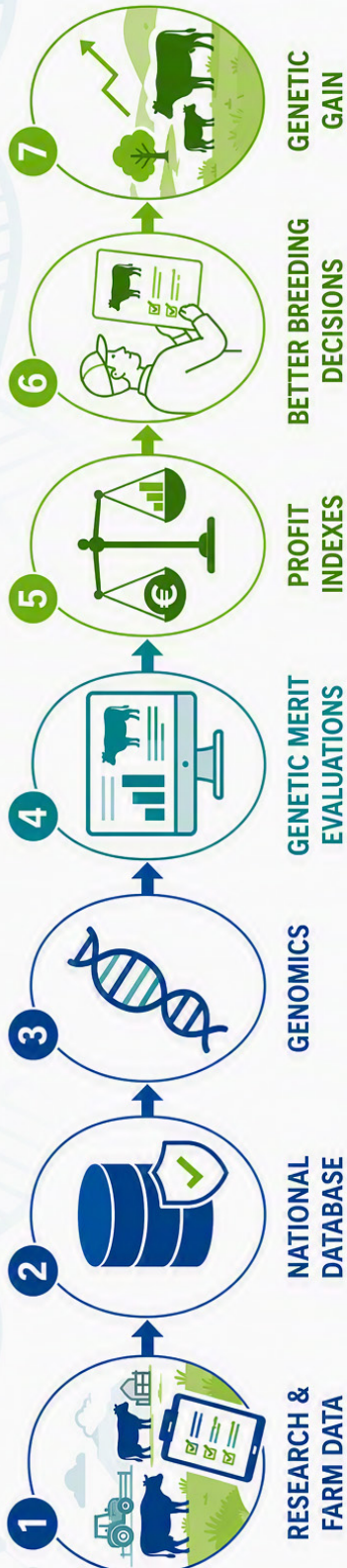
Key Points

- Ireland's breeding programme transforms farm and research data into measurable genetic gain
- A centralised national database provides a trusted single source of information for cattle breeding
- Large-scale genotyping improves the accuracy of genetic evaluations and accelerates genetic progress
- Genetic merit evaluations identify animals with superior genetics for economically and environmentally important traits
- Profit indexes combine multiple traits into a single measure to support balanced breeding decisions
- Better breeding decisions lead to cumulative and permanent genetic gain across the national herd
- The system supports improved productivity, profitability and sustainability for Irish cattle farming

Ireland's Pathway to Sustainable Cattle Breeding

Turning data and science into better breeding decisions

_____ and long-term genetic gain _____



Delivering continuous genetic gain for the future



On-farm decisions that reduce risk and increase efficiency



Balanced breeding for profitability and sustainability



High-quality data drives accurate genetic evaluations



Built on collaboration across farmers, industry and research



A national system working for Irish farmers

AgNav: Supporting More Sustainable and Profitable Farming

AgNav is Ireland's national online sustainability platform for farmers, developed through a collaboration between ICBF, Teagasc and Bord Bia, with support from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. The platform helps farmers understand the environmental performance of their farms and identify practical actions that can improve sustainability while maintaining productive and profitable farming systems.

Built on the principle of providing a single, trusted source of information, AgNav brings together data from multiple industry databases and transforms it into clear, actionable insights for farmers and advisors. By combining environmental modelling, farm survey information, and production data, the platform provides a comprehensive overview of farm sustainability performance.

Using AgNav, farmers can create customised farm sustainability action plans to help them reduce their emissions and improve water quality. AgNav is free and voluntary, and is currently available for beef, dairy, and tillage farms.

Assess

AgNav shows an assessment of current farm performance using data from Bord Bia, ICBF, Teagasc, and farmer-completed surveys. For beef and dairy farms, animal and production data from ICBF, along with information gathered in the Bord Bia Origin Green Producer Standard audit, are automatically entered into AgNav, which removes the need for farmers to do it themselves. Scientific models developed by Teagasc then use this data to calculate the individual farm's performance under key sustainability metrics:

- Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions
- Ammonia emissions
- Production
- Nutrient balance
- Soil carbon

Soil carbon will only be calculated if a farmer chooses to complete an AgNav-hosted survey on their farm's soils. If they do, AgNav will calculate how much carbon is captured in their soil and can adjust the farm's GHG emissions accordingly.

Analyse

The AgNav Forecaster is a core feature of the AgNav platform, and is currently available for beef and dairy enterprises. Farmers, or their advisors, can use the forecaster to analyse how changes in farming practices and management can impact each sustainability metric.

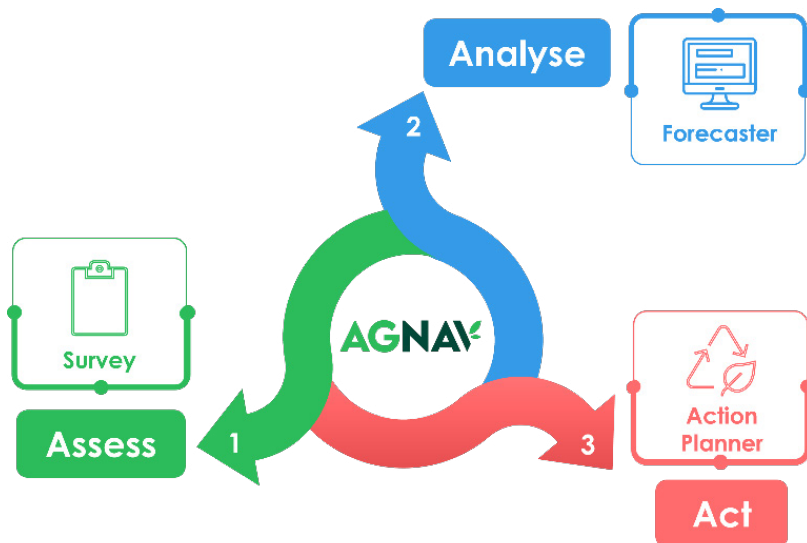
Act

Based on the forecaster analysis, beef and dairy farmers can identify which actions are most appropriate for their farm allowing them to create a personalised farm sustainability action plan. Farmers can choose from a wide variety of actions, such as reducing fertiliser use, enhancing soil fertility, and improving water quality.

AgNav was developed to support farmers in responding to the challenges and opportunities associated with climate action and sustainable food production. Every farm is different, and AgNav enables farmers to assess their current performance, analyse the impact of potential management changes, and develop farm-specific action plans tailored to their individual circumstances.

The platform combines Teagasc sustainability models with data already recorded through Bord Bia and ICBF systems, reducing duplication while improving accuracy and consistency. This approach provides farmers with reliable and verifiable information, allowing them to make informed decisions based on robust science and industry-leading data sources.

A key strength of AgNav is its collaborative nature. Farmers, advisors, researchers, industry stakeholders, and government agencies have worked together to develop a practical tool that supports both farm-level decision-making and wider national sustainability objectives. This partnership approach ensures that the platform remains scientifically robust, relevant to farmers, and aligned with evolving industry and policy requirements.



AgNav has evolved from an initial pilot programme into a national sustainability platform supporting multiple agricultural enterprises. As the platform continues to develop, it is playing an increasingly important role in helping farmers measure progress, identify opportunities for improvement, and demonstrate the positive sustainability achievements being delivered on Irish farms.

As of the end of June 2026, AgNav has reached significant national scale, with 18,114 farmer profiles, 12,731 action plans, and 13 meat and dairy sustainability programmes represented on the platform.

Key Points:

- National sustainability platform developed by ICBF, Teagasc and Bord Bia
- Provides a single, trusted source of sustainability information for farmers
- Combines farm, industry and environmental data into practical insights
- Helps farmers assess, analyse and improve sustainability performance
- Supports informed decision-making through science-based modelling and forecasting
- Developed through collaboration across industry, research and government partners
- Contributes to both farm profitability and national sustainability objectives

ICBF Beef and Dairy Research Centre, Tully: Delivering Data for Genetic Gain

The ICBF Beef and Dairy Research Centre, in Tully, plays a central role in supporting cattle breeding and genetic improvement in Ireland. Originally established to evaluate breeding bulls for feed efficiency and growth performance, the centre has evolved into a national facility for progeny testing, research and large-scale phenotyping.



Since 2012, Tully has focused on evaluating the progeny of artificial insemination (AI) sires through the Beef and Dairy Gene Ireland programmes (See page 28 for more information on Gene Ireland), while also supporting collaborative national and international research projects. By measuring the performance of the offspring of widely used AI sires, the centre generates the high-quality data needed to improve the accuracy of genetic evaluations and accelerate genetic gain across the national herd.

Progeny testing allows detailed performance information to be collected on traits that are difficult, expensive or impractical to measure on commercial farms. To ensure fair comparisons, cattle within each test group are managed under identical conditions, enabling observed differences in performance to be attributed more accurately to genetics rather than environmental influences.

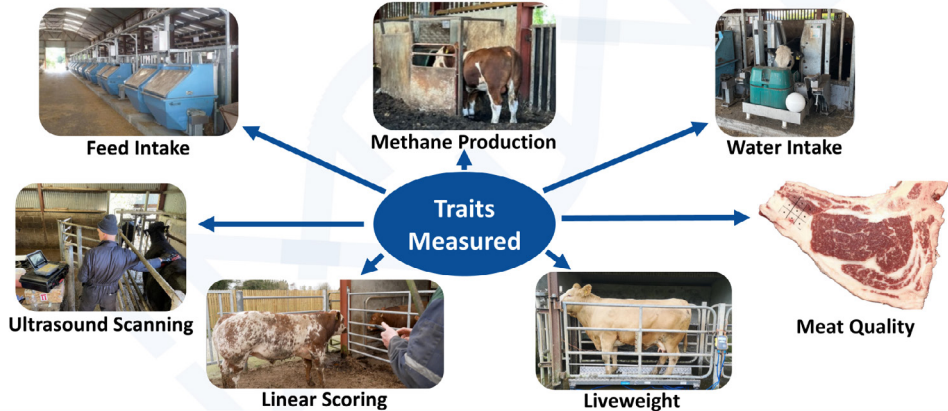
Approximately 700 cattle are evaluated at Tully each year. Animals enter the centre in contemporary groups of 30 to 50 cattle of the same sex and similar age, representing a range of breed types. Following a two to three-week acclimatisation period, all animals within a group begin testing on the same day. Depending on sex and breed type, the test period typically lasts between 55 and 90 days.

During this period, detailed measurements are collected on:

- Daily feed intake
- Daily water intake
- Liveweight gain
- Ultrasound body composition
- Linear scores for muscularity and functionality
- Daily methane production

ICBF Beef and Dairy Research Centre

Capture data on hard-to-measure traits on progeny of artificial sires of interest



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At the end of the test, all cattle within a group are finished on the same day and processed in the same meat processors. Detailed carcass information is then captured from each animal, including individual meat cut weights and striploin steak samples for sensory analysis.

These high-quality phenotypic records are incorporated into ICBF's centralised database, where they contribute to national genetic evaluations. When combined with genomic information and pedigree relationships, data from relatively small numbers of intensively measured animals can be used to generate accurate genetic evaluations for cattle across the wider national population. This enables valuable research information collected at Tully to deliver practical benefits on commercial farms throughout Ireland.

In addition to its role within the Gene Ireland breeding programmes, Tully provides specialist facilities and expertise that support collaborative research with national and international partners. Current projects supported through the centre include:

Marginal Abatement in Grazing Systems (MAGS)

- Funded by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
- Investigating practical approaches to reducing greenhouse gas emissions from grazing livestock systems

Meat Technology Ireland (MTI) – Genetics Pillar

- Funded by Enterprise Ireland and the Irish meat industry
- Large-scale phenotyping for methane emissions, meat eating quality, water intake and detailed carcass measurements

Roadmap

- Funded through the Ireland–New Zealand Joint Research Call
- Developing breeding strategies to support effective and sustainable reductions in enteric methane emissions from ruminant livestock

Methane-Predict

- Funded through the Ireland–New Zealand Joint Research Call
- Developing and validating high-throughput methods for identifying methane-emitting livestock at both individual animal and production system level

Key Points

- Tully is the national centre for cattle breeding research, progeny testing and large-scale phenotyping
- Approximately 700 cattle evaluated annually
- Supports the Beef and Dairy Gene Ireland breeding programmes
- Measures feed intake, water intake, methane emissions, growth, carcass and efficiency traits
- Generates high-quality data to improve genetic and genomic evaluations
- Supports collaborative national and international research projects
- Contributes to long-term genetic gain, productivity and sustainability across the Irish cattle sector



Commercial Beef Value: Better Genetics, Better Returns

The Commercial Beef Value (CBV) is a genetic decision-support tool that identifies cattle with the potential to be more efficient and profitable for beef production. The ICBF Beef and Dairy Research Centre, Tully, provides a unique environment in which CBV predictions can be validated under controlled conditions, allowing genetic effects to be separated from management influences. This provides producers and industry stakeholders with confidence in the predictive ability of CBV.

Benefits of CBV for Dairy-Beef

455 dairy-beef cattle tested in Tully

CBV Group	CBV at birth (€)	Carcass Weight (kg)	Carcass Fat	Carcass Conformation	Liveweight (kg)	Kill-out (%)	Growth Rate (kg/d)	Feed Intake (kg DM/d)	Methane Production (g/d)
Top 20%	168	318	3-	R-	598	53.0	1.54	12.34	256
Bottom 20%	48	305	3+	O+	601	50.7	1.65	13.04	280
Difference	+120	+13			-3	+2.3	-0.11	-0.70	-24

Top v Bottom 20 % = **€87** extra carcass revenue

(@€6.80/kg)

€21 saving in feed costs

over 100 day finishing period

Total profit difference = **€108/animal**



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Benefits of CBV for Suckler Beef

304 suckler cattle tested in Tully

CBV Group	CBV at birth (€)	Carcass Weight (kg)	Carcass Fat	Carcass Conformation	Liveweight (kg)	Kill-out (%)	Growth Rate (kg/d)	Feed Intake (kg DM/d)	Methane Production (g/d)
Top 20%	526	369	3-	U=	639	57.6	1.68	11.64	241
Bottom 20%	294	328	3=	R+	605	54.3	1.74	11.99	249
Difference	+232	+41			+34	+3.3	-0.06	-0.35	-8

Top v Bottom 20 % = **€287** extra carcass revenue

(@€6.80/kg)

€11 saving in feed costs

over 100 day finishing period

Total profit difference = **€298/animal**



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In simple terms, the analysis shows that selecting animals with a higher CBV can deliver better carcass output, lower feed costs and increased profitability at finishing.

CBV Delivers More Efficient and Profitable Cattle

Over the years, several thousand cattle, representing hundreds of sires and a range of breed types, have passed through Tully. Dairy-beef heifers and steers, including the progeny of young beef artificial insemination (AI) sires, make up a large proportion of the cattle evaluated annually. This reflects the importance of dairy-beef animals within Irish beef production.

An analysis was carried out on 455 dairy-beef cattle, comprising 153 heifers and 302 steers, tested at Tully between 2023 and 2025. To replicate the information available to farmers at calf purchase, each animal's CBV was calculated using only the performance of its relatives and excluding any performance information from the animal itself.

Cattle in the top and bottom 20% for CBV at birth were then compared. The performance and efficiency results are summarised below.

There was no difference in the relationship between CBV and performance traits for heifers and steers. As cattle within each batch were finished at a similar age, the observed differences were not due to age effects. In a commercial system, higher-CBV cattle would also be expected to finish at a younger age, further improving overall system efficiency.

What This Means in Practice

Higher-CBV cattle were more efficient at converting feed into saleable carcass. While they tended to grow slightly more slowly and were less efficient per kilogram of liveweight gain, they delivered greater carcass output from less feed overall.

In practical terms, higher-CBV cattle convert a greater proportion of feed into saleable carcass rather than into lower-value components, often referred to as the “fifth quarter”. This makes them more production-efficient and carcass-efficient overall, which is ultimately what drives profitability in a beef finishing enterprise.

The Financial Value of CBV

When the performance differences are combined with economics, the value of CBV becomes even clearer.

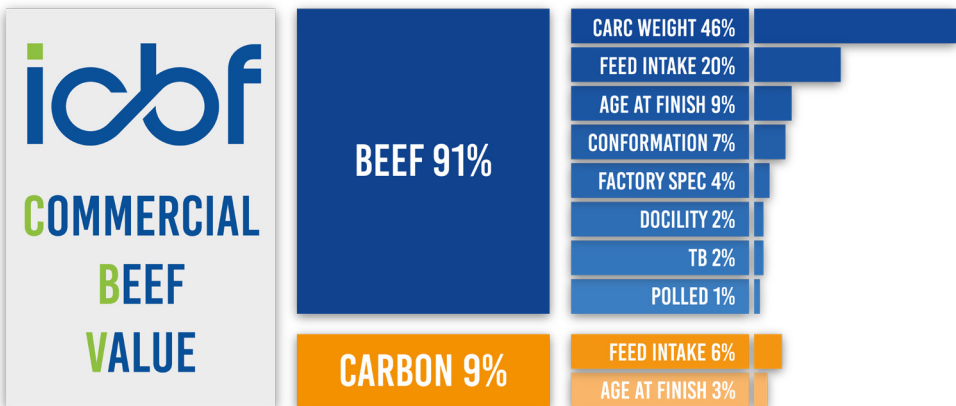
The analysis assumes:

- A carcass base price of €6.60/kg
- A feed cost of €300 per tonne of dry matter
- A 70-day finishing period

Under these assumptions, cattle in the top 20% for CBV are expected to return €99 more profit per head than cattle in the bottom 20%.

This figure is based solely on carcass value and feed intake, which together account for almost 60% of CBV. Even so, the margin calculated from the actual performance differences closely matches the predicted CBV difference of €120 per animal.

For a typical dairy-beef system purchasing and finishing 50 calves, selecting calves in the top 20% for CBV instead of the bottom 20% could result in an additional €5,283 in margin. This benefit is based solely on a more informed calf-purchasing decision made when the animals are just two to four weeks of age.





CBV in Action

Performance of dairy-beef cattle in the top 20% for Commercial Beef Value (CBV) compared with the bottom 20% (at birth), based on data from Tully (2023–2025).

Performance Measure	Bottom 20% CBV (Average)	Top 20% CBV (Average)	Difference (Top – Bottom)
Average CBV (€)	48	168	+120
Carcass Weight (kg)	305	318	+12 kg
Carcass Fat Grade (1 = Leaner, 5 = Fatter)	3+	3–	–1 grade
Carcass Conformation Grade (0– to E+)	0+	R–	+1 grade
Pre-Slaughter Liveweight (kg)	601	598	–3 kg
Kill-out (%)	50.7	53.0	+2.3%
Growth Rate (kg/day)	1.64	1.54	–0.11 kg/day
Feed Intake (kg DM/day)	13.04	12.34	–0.70 kg/day
Daily Methane Production (g/day)	280	256	–24 g/day



Better genetics

CBV uses the performance of relatives to identify superior genetics early in life.



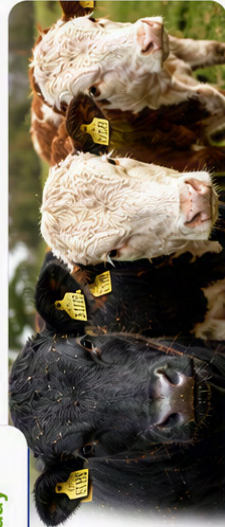
Better efficiency

Top 20% CBV cattle convert more feed into saleable carcass, not into lower-value components.



Better returns

More profit, lower emissions and a more sustainable beef production system.



CBV in Action



+€101

more profit per head



+12 kg

carcass weight



+1

conformation grade



–0.7 kg/day

less feed intake



–24 g/day

less methane produced

Summary

The detailed performance and efficiency data collected at Tully provide strong validation of the Commercial Beef Value. The results demonstrate that CBV can successfully identify cattle that are more profitable, more production-efficient and lower-emitting.

As cattle values increase, the ability to identify animals with superior genetic merit at an early age becomes increasingly important. CBV provides farmers with objective information to support better purchasing decisions, helping to improve profitability, efficiency and sustainability within commercial beef systems.

Key Points

- CBV identifies cattle with superior genetic potential for profitable beef production
- Validation at Tully confirms that higher-CBV cattle deliver better carcass performance from less feed
- Cattle in the top 20% for CBV produced heavier carcasses, achieved better conformation and emitted less methane
- Under the study assumptions, higher-CBV cattle generated approximately €99 more profit per head
- CBV supports more informed purchasing decisions, particularly when calves are only three to four weeks old
- The results demonstrate how genetic selection can improve profitability, production efficiency and environmental performance simultaneously

Genetic Evaluations: Driving Genetic Progress Across the National Herd

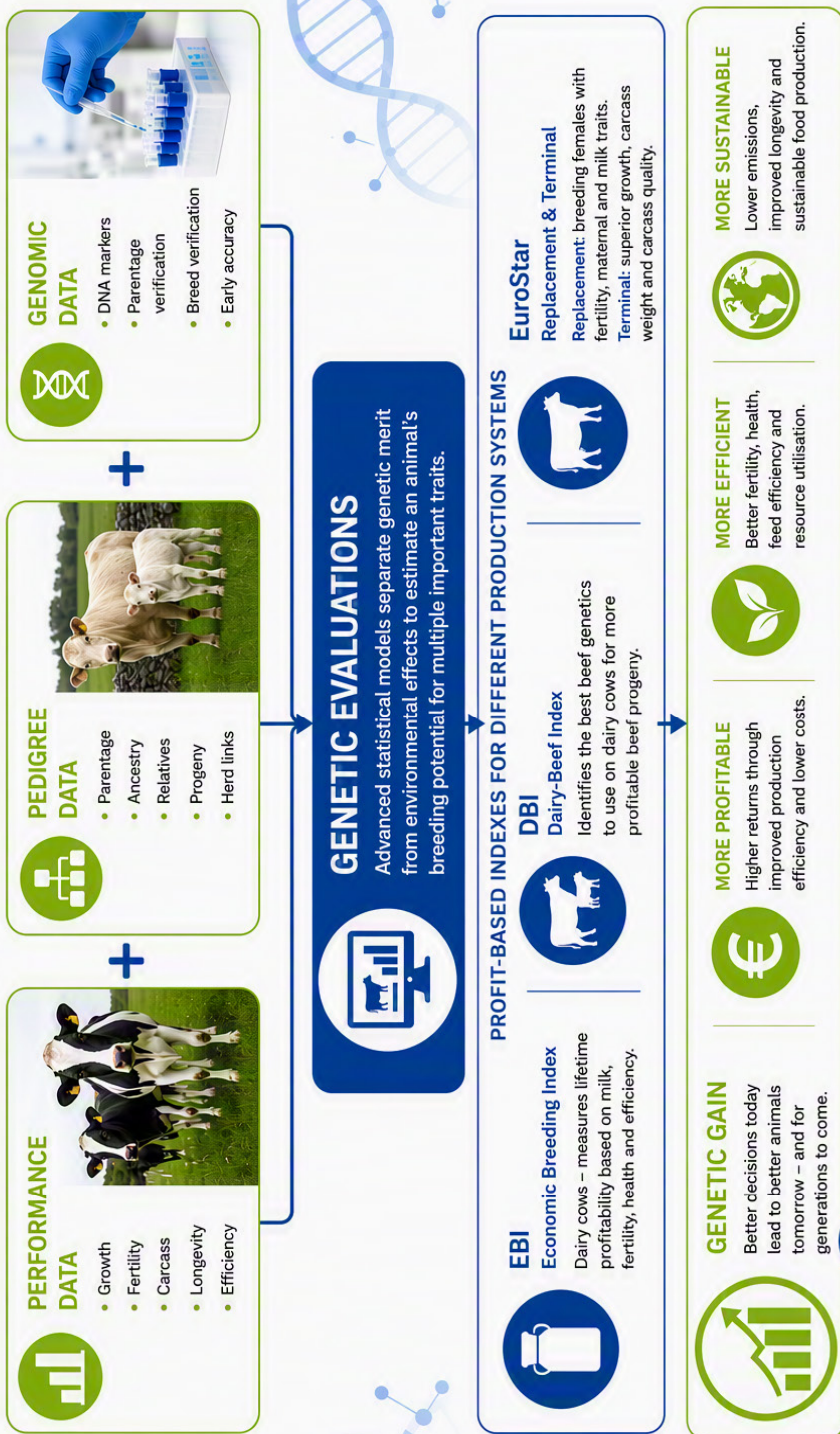
Genetic evaluations are the foundation of modern cattle breeding. They estimate an animal's breeding potential, allowing farmers to make informed breeding decisions based on objective data rather than visual assessment alone.

By analysing information from animal performance records, pedigree relationships and genomic (DNA) information, genetic evaluations identify the genetic component of performance and distinguish it from environmental influences such as nutrition, management or weather conditions. This enables animals to be compared more fairly and provides a more accurate assessment of their expected contribution to future generations.

Genetic evaluations provide insight into a wide range of economically and environmentally important traits, including fertility, calving performance, feed efficiency, carcass quality, longevity and sustainability. These evaluations form the basis of the breeding tools used by farmers and the wider industry. To make genetic information practical and accessible, individual trait evaluations are combined into profit-based indexes that reflect the economic realities of different production systems. The breeding indexes are developed using bio-economic models and are designed to identify animals that can improve profitability while supporting long-term sustainability.

From Data to Genetic Gain

The science behind Ireland's genetic evaluations



Better data. Better genetics. Better decisions. Better future for Irish cattle farming.

Impact of Genetic Evaluations in Ireland

Genetic evaluations have played a central role in the transformation of Irish cattle breeding. By converting millions of animal records into practical breeding information, they have enabled continuous and cumulative genetic gain across both the beef and dairy sectors.

This progress has contributed to improvements in productivity, fertility, calving performance, carcass traits and overall efficiency. Because genetic improvement is cumulative and permanent, each generation benefits from the progress achieved by the generation before it.

Ireland's ability to deliver genetic progress at a national scale is supported by the integration of large volumes of animal performance, pedigree and genomic information. Combined, this data provides the scientific foundation for breeding programmes that improve profitability, efficiency and sustainability across the national herd.

Summary

Genetic evaluations transform complex performance and genomic information into practical breeding tools that support better decision-making. By identifying animals with superior genetic merit and incorporating this information into profit-based breeding indexes, Ireland has delivered sustained genetic progress across both beef and dairy production systems.

Through continuous genetic gain, farmers can improve productivity, profitability and sustainability, helping to ensure that Irish livestock systems remain competitive and resilient into the future.

Key Points

- Foundation of Ireland's cattle breeding and genetic improvement programmes
- Converts millions of animal records into practical breeding information
- Combines performance, pedigree and genomic data
- Separates genetic merit from environmental influences
- Underpins breeding tools such as EBI, DBI and EuroStar indexes
- Has delivered long-term genetic gain across both beef and dairy sectors
- Supports more profitable, efficient and sustainable food production

National Genotyping Programme (NGP): Building the World's First Fully Genotyped National Herd

The National Genotyping Programme (NGP) is a collaborative initiative designed to accelerate genetic improvement and establish Ireland as the first country in the world to achieve a fully genotyped national cattle herd.

Launched in 2023, the programme is built on a partnership between farmers, industry and the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. By sharing the cost of genotyping, NGP delivers benefits across both the beef and dairy sectors while creating a national resource that will support breeding, traceability, sustainability and animal performance for generations to come.



NATIONAL GENOTYPING PROGRAMME (NGP)

BUILDING THE WORLD'S FIRST FULLY GENOTYPED NATIONAL HERD



A NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP
Farmers • Industry • Government



INVESTING IN GENETICS
Accelerating genetic improvement
across dairy and beef sectors



A LEGACY FOR GENERATIONS
Better data, better decisions,
a more sustainable future

NGP BY THE NUMBERS



18,600+
PARTICIPATING HERDS
Dairy and beef herds
across Ireland



13,000+
SUCKLER HERDS
Taking part in NGP



5,600+
DAIRY HERDS
Taking part in NGP



1.1 MILLION+
**BREEDING ANIMALS
GENOTYPED**
Cows, bulls and
breeding stock



2.5 MILLION+
**CALVES
GENOTYPED**
Through DNA calf
registration



~50%
**OF NATIONAL HERD
NOW GENOTYPED**
One of the most
comprehensive datasets
in the world



100,000
**SAMPLES PROCESSED
WEEKLY AT PEAK**
During spring 2026
calving period

FROM DNA TO BETTER DECISIONS



1. DNA SAMPLE
Tissue sample
taken from calf
at birth



2. GENOTYPING
Sample analysed
in accredited
laboratories



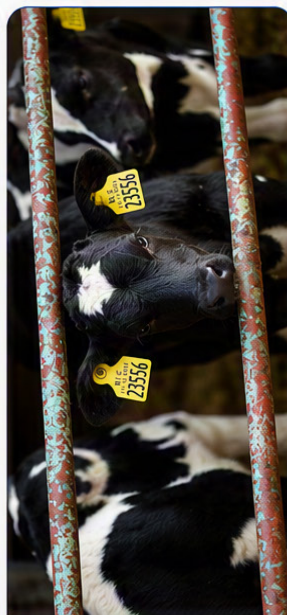
3. VALIDATION
Parentage, sex and
breed verified and
recording errors
identified



**4. GENOMIC
EVALUATION**
Genetic potential
estimated within
days of registration



**5. BETTER
DECISIONS**
Use information
to select the best
animals



IMPROVED TRACEABILITY
More accurate data through
the national identification
system



EARLY IDENTIFICATION
Identify elite animals earlier
to accelerate genetic
gain



GREATER PROFITABILITY
Better genetics deliver higher
carcass value, lower costs
and better efficiency



MORE SUSTAINABLE
Lower emissions, improved
resource use and a more
resilient sector

Since its launch, more than 18,600 herds have joined the programme, including almost 13,000 suckler herds and over 5,600 dairy herds, representing approximately 1.1 million cows nationwide. Participating herds genotype all breeding animals and subsequently genotype calves at birth through the DNA calf registration process.

To date, more than 1.1 million breeding animals and 2.5 million calves have been genotyped through NGP. As a result, approximately 50% of Ireland's national herd is now genotyped, creating one of the most comprehensive livestock genotype databases in the world.

The programme delivers immediate benefits at animal registration. Once a sample is processed, parentage, sex and breed information are validated against the breeder's recorded details. This improves the accuracy of the national database and increases confidence in pedigree, performance and traceability records. NGP currently identifies and corrects significant levels of recording errors while also enabling previously unknown sire information to be recovered using genomic data.

One of the most significant benefits of genotyping is the ability to generate reliable genomic information from the earliest stages of an animal's life. Within days of registration, calves receive genomic evaluations, helping farmers and AI companies identify high genetic merit animals and make more informed breeding decisions. Earlier identification of elite animals also increases the pool of candidates available for future breeding programmes.

Genotyping also supports commercial decision-making beyond the breeding herd. Beef and dairy-beef calves receive a Commercial Beef Value (CBV), helping purchasers assess likely growth, carcass performance and profit potential before making purchasing decisions. This improves transparency throughout the supply chain and helps ensure that animals with superior genetics are recognised and rewarded.

The scale of the programme is particularly noteworthy given Ireland's seasonal calving system. During peak spring calving, very large volumes of samples are processed within a short period while maintaining rapid turnaround times, ensuring farmers receive genomic information quickly enough to support on-farm decision-making. During spring 2026, approximately **100,000 samples were processed per week at peak**.

The long-term ambition of NGP is to achieve a fully genotyped national cattle population, creating a unique national resource that will support breeding, traceability, sustainability and research for generations to come. By combining genomics with Ireland's extensive performance recording systems, NGP is helping to strengthen the competitiveness, resilience and sustainability of Irish cattle production.

Key Points

- National initiative to establish the world's first fully genotyped cattle herd
- Partnership between farmers, industry and government
- More than 18,600 beef and dairy herds participating
- Over 1.1 million breeding animals and 2.5 million calves genotyped to date
- Approximately 50% of the national herd now genotyped
- Improves parentage verification, traceability and data accuracy
- Provides genomic information from an early age to support breeding decisions
- Supports calf purchasing decisions through Commercial Beef Value (CBV)
- Creates a unique national resource for future breeding, research and sustainability initiatives

Gene Ireland: Accelerating Genetic Gain Across the National Herd

The Gene Ireland Dairy, Dairy-Beef and Suckler Beef Programmes are national breeding initiatives coordinated by ICBF to accelerate genetic improvement across Ireland's beef and dairy sectors. Their purpose is to identify, test and promote high genetic merit sires that deliver more profitable, efficient and sustainable animals for Irish farming systems.



The programmes are built on a coordinated progeny-testing model. Each year, young genomic artificial insemination (AI) sires are used in commercial herds, with their progeny monitored across a wide range of performance traits. This approach allows ICBF and its industry partners to identify elite sires at an earlier stage and make superior genetics available to farmers more quickly.

Participating farmers play a central role by using Gene Ireland semen within their herds and recording key performance data, including calving, growth, fertility and carcass traits. This information feeds directly into the national cattle breeding database, strengthening breeding information and supporting continuous improvement across the national herd.

A key strength of Gene Ireland is the depth of information collected throughout the supply chain. In addition to commercial herd records, selected progeny are evaluated under controlled conditions at the ICBF Beef and Dairy Research Centre, Tully. This allows difficult-to-measure traits, such as feed efficiency and methane emissions, to be captured. These measurements support the development of future breeding traits while improving the accuracy of existing breeding tools.

Dairy Programme

The Dairy Gene Ireland Programme focuses on identifying and validating elite dairy sires capable of improving profitability within dairy herds. Through large-scale progeny testing and genomic technologies, the programme has played an important role in developing Irish-bred dairy genetics and supporting continuous improvement in milk production, fertility, health and efficiency traits.

Dairy-Beef Programme

The Dairy-Beef Gene Ireland Programme focuses on beef sires used on dairy cows, an increasingly important area as a significant proportion of Irish beef originates from the dairy herd.

The objective is to produce calves that meet the needs of both sectors:

- Easy calving and short gestation for dairy farmers
- Strong growth, carcass value and performance for beef producers

Central to this approach is the Dairy Beef Index (DBI), which balances calving performance with beef production traits, including carcass weight, feed efficiency, age at finish and environmental impact.

Suckler Beef Programme

The Suckler Beef Gene Ireland Programme plays a complementary role within the national suckler herd, focusing on traits that drive profitability and efficiency within suckler systems.

These include calving ease, growth, fertility, milk production, maternal ability and carcass performance. Depending on breeding objectives, sires may be selected for either replacement or terminal traits, supporting a balanced and targeted approach to genetic improvement.

Collaboration Delivering Progress

Gene Ireland is built on strong collaboration across the cattle breeding industry, involving farmers, AI companies, Teagasc, processors, breed societies and bull breeders. This coordinated approach ensures that superior genetics are identified, validated and made widely available.

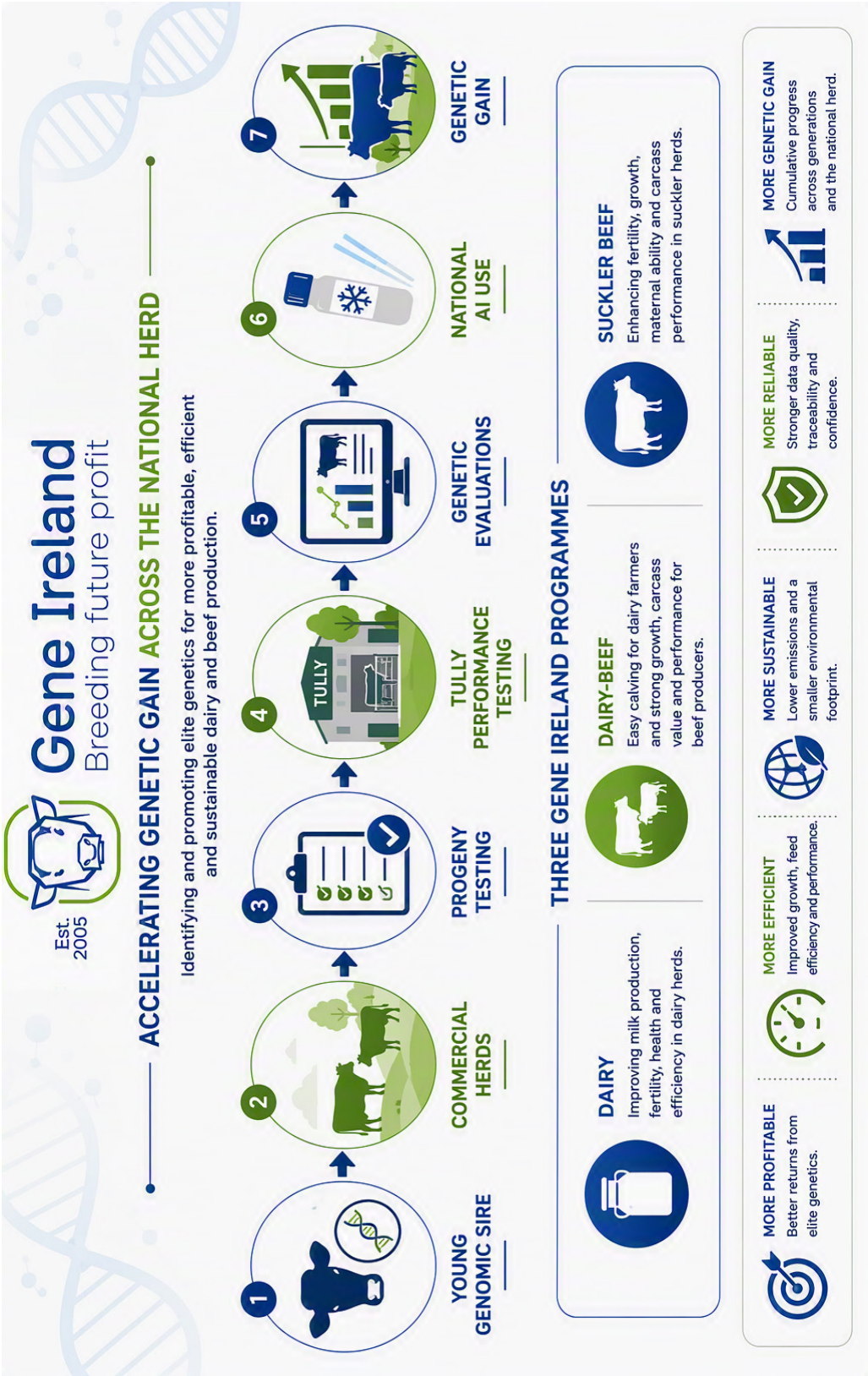
By combining genomics, progeny testing, farmer recording, controlled performance testing and industry collaboration, the Gene Ireland programmes play a central role in delivering genetic gain across the national herd. The result is continuous improvement in profitability, efficiency and sustainability, ensuring that future generations of cattle are better suited to the needs of farmers, the agri-food sector and the environment.

Key Points

- National breeding programmes for dairy, dairy-beef and suckler cattle
- Progeny testing of young genomic AI sires in commercial herds
- Identifies elite genetics at an early stage
- Strong collaboration between farmers, AI companies, industry and research organisations
- Connects the beef and dairy sectors through the Dairy-Beef Programme
- Measures difficult-to-record traits through controlled performance testing at Tully
- Delivers long-term genetic gain across Ireland's beef and dairy sectors



Some well known bulls tested through the Gene Ireland Suckler Programme through the years



HerdPlus: Turning Farm Data into Better Decisions

HerdPlus is ICBF's subscription-based decision-support service, designed to help Irish farmers improve the performance, profitability and sustainability of their herds. It brings together information already recorded on farm, including calving, weights, milk recording and genotyping, and transforms it into clear, practical insights that support everyday decision-making.



Today, more than 25,000 Irish beef and dairy herds use HerdPlus, with participating farms consistently outperforming national averages across key performance indicators.

By integrating information from multiple sources into a single platform, HerdPlus gives farmers a complete picture of herd performance. This allows them to identify higher and lower performing animals, monitor trends over time and make informed decisions around breeding, replacement selection, culling and overall herd management.

Practical Tools for Better Herd Management

HerdPlus provides farmers with a wide range of management tools, reports and performance profiles that transform data into actionable information. By bringing together animal records, genetic information and performance data in one place, the service helps farmers monitor herd performance and identify opportunities for improvement.

These tools support many of the key decisions made throughout the year, including breeding, replacement selection, culling, animal health management, fertility planning and overall herd development. Farmers can benchmark performance against previous years, identify top and bottom performing animals and track progress towards their breeding and production goals.

A range of reports and digital tools are available through the HerdPlus platform and mobile app, providing easy access to herd information whenever it is needed. By turning data into practical insights, HerdPlus helps farmers make more informed decisions, improve efficiency and build more productive, profitable and sustainable herds over time.

Key Points

- ICBF's subscription-based decision-support service for Irish cattle farmers
- Used by over 25,000 beef and dairy herds nationwide
- Transforms farm, performance, genetic and genomic data into practical insights
- Provides a trusted and integrated view of herd information
- Supports breeding, replacement, culling and herd-management decisions
- Provides management tools, performance profiles and benchmarking reports
- Helps improve productivity, profitability and sustainability over time

Beef Schemes: Driving Genetic Improvement, Sustainability and Profitability

Over the past decade, ICBF has played a central role in the development and delivery of Ireland's major beef support schemes. Working in partnership with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM), these programmes have helped drive measurable improvements in genetic merit, productivity, environmental sustainability, and profitability across the national beef herd. Building on Ireland's extensive cattle breeding database and national performance recording systems, ICBF has provided the data infrastructure, genetic evaluations, and technical expertise required to support the successful implementation of these initiatives.

Beef Data and Genomics Programme (BDGP)

The Beef Data and Genomics Programme (BDGP), which operated from 2015 to 2022, represented a significant milestone in the application of genomics within commercial beef production. The programme was designed to improve the genetic quality of the Irish suckler herd while contributing to national climate objectives through more efficient beef production systems.

ICBF played a key role in administering the genomics elements of the programme on behalf of DAFM. This included animal selection, genotyping, performance recording, and the calculation of genetic evaluations. By combining genomic information with performance records, BDGP helped farmers identify animals with superior genetic merit and accelerate the rate of genetic gain within their herds.

Importantly, the programme demonstrated the potential of genetics to deliver permanent and cumulative improvements in efficiency, profitability, and sustainability. The foundations established through BDGP continue to influence breeding decisions across the national herd today.

Beef Environmental Efficiency Programme (BEEP)

Building on the success of BDGP, the Beef Environmental Efficiency Programme (BEEP), and its successor BEEP-S, focused on collecting large-scale performance data from commercial suckler herds. A key component of the programme was the recording of cow and calf weights, providing valuable information on growth performance and maternal efficiency.

ICBF developed and managed the systems used to record, validate, and analyse this information. The resulting dataset provided farmers with the opportunity to benchmark herd performance while simultaneously strengthening Ireland's national genetic evaluations.

The information collected through BEEP has contributed significantly to the evaluation of economically important traits including growth rate, cow efficiency, and maternal performance. The programme also demonstrated the value of large-scale data collection in supporting both individual farm management and long-term national breeding objectives.

Suckler Carbon Efficiency Programme (SCEP)

Introduced in 2023, the DAFM lead Suckler Carbon Efficiency Programme (SCEP), builds directly on the foundations established through BDGP and BEEP. The programme aims to improve the genetic merit of the Irish suckler herd while supporting environmental sustainability through more efficient production systems.

ICBF plays a central role in the delivery of SCEP through the management of genotyping, genomic evaluations, and the calculation of the EuroStar indexes used within the scheme. Farmers can monitor their progress and compliance through online services provided by ICBF, while the organisation also supports data recording, surveys, training resources, and customer support services.

Today, more than 15,000 herds participate in SCEP, representing over 400,000 cows and their progeny. This makes SCEP one of the largest practical applications of genomics in beef cattle breeding worldwide and highlights the important role that data and genetics play in delivering both economic and environmental gains.

Supporting Dairy-Beef Farmers Through National Schemes

As dairy-beef production has become increasingly important within Ireland's beef industry, ICBF has expanded its role in supporting a range of dairy-beef focused initiatives. Through the administration of farmer applications, performance recording systems, data validation, and reporting, ICBF has become a key delivery partner for a number of national schemes designed to improve calf performance, animal welfare, and long-term profitability.

These programmes generate valuable information that contributes not only to scheme delivery but also to the ongoing development of Ireland's national cattle breeding database and genetic evaluations.

National Dairy Beef Weighing Scheme

The National Dairy Beef Weighing Scheme encourages dairy-beef farmers to record calf weights at key stages of growth. These records provide farmers with valuable insights into animal performance while also contributing to national genetic evaluations.

ICBF manages the systems used for recording, validating, and processing the weight information collected under the scheme. Weight records must be submitted and verified through the ICBF database before scheme payments can be processed, ensuring that the information collected is accurate and reliable.

The data generated through the scheme helps farmers benchmark performance, supports more informed breeding and management decisions, and strengthens the accuracy of national evaluations. By facilitating the collection of large-scale performance data, the scheme contributes to continuous improvement across the dairy-beef sector.

Dairy Beef Welfare Scheme

ICBF also supports the administration of the Dairy Beef Welfare Scheme, which aims to improve the welfare and performance of dairy-beef calves.

Through the integration of scheme data with pedigree, genomic, and animal performance records, ICBF helps ensure that farmers have access to reliable information that supports both scheme compliance and herd management decisions. Importantly, the data generated through welfare-focused initiatives contributes to broader breeding objectives by enhancing the information available for genetic evaluations and performance analysis.

This integrated approach ensures that animal welfare, sustainability, and productivity improvements can be pursued simultaneously, delivering benefits for farmers, the beef industry, and society as a whole.

A Common Foundation: Data and Genetics

A common theme across all of Ireland's major beef support schemes is the importance of high-quality data. Whether through BDGP, BEEP, SCEP, the National Dairy Beef Weighing Scheme, or the Dairy Beef Welfare Scheme, reliable information provides the foundation for informed decision-making and continuous improvement.

ICBF's national database, genetic evaluations, genomic technologies, and performance recording systems provide the infrastructure that enables these programmes to operate efficiently and effectively. By connecting data collection with practical breeding and management decisions, ICBF helps farmers identify superior animals, improve herd performance, and measure progress over time.

Through continued collaboration with farmers, industry stakeholders, researchers, and government agencies, ICBF remains committed to supporting more profitable, sustainable, and resilient beef production systems. These schemes demonstrate how data, genomics, and genetic improvement can work together to deliver lasting benefits for farmers, the wider agri-food industry, and future generations.

Key Points

- Central delivery partner in Ireland's DAFM lead beef schemes
- Key role in administering the genomics elements of BDGP
- Managed performance recording and data collection for BEEP and BEEP-S
- Supports SCEP through genotyping, genomic evaluations, EuroStar indexes, compliance monitoring, and farmer support
- More than 15,000 herds and over 400,000 cows currently participate in SCEP
- Provides the data infrastructure for the National Dairy Beef Weighing Scheme
- Supports administration and data management for the Dairy Beef Welfare Scheme
- Uses national performance, pedigree, and genomic data to support genetic improvement
- Helps farmers improve profitability, sustainability, and herd performance through data-driven decision-making
- Demonstrates the value of genetics and genomics in modern beef production systems

ICBF Beef Quality Awards: Celebrating Excellence Across the Irish Beef Supply Chain

BEEF QUALITY AWARDS 2026



The Beef Quality Awards represent the culmination of many of the initiatives described throughout this booklet. They provide a practical demonstration of how investment in genetics, performance recording, and data infrastructure can deliver measurable benefits for farmers, processors, consumers, and the wider agri-food industry.

The ICBF Beef Quality Awards were launched in 2025 to recognise and reward farmers delivering exceptional performance in commercial beef production. Developed by ICBF in partnership with **ABP, Ashbourne Meats, Dawn Meats, Foyle Food Group, Kepak, Liffey Meats**, and the **FBD Trust**, the awards celebrate farmers who successfully combine genetics, management, and data-driven decision-making to produce high-quality cattle that meet the needs of the modern beef supply chain.



The awards were established to highlight the role that breeding, performance recording and genetic improvement play in delivering more profitable and sustainable beef production systems. By recognising the achievements of top-performing farmers, the programme demonstrates what can be achieved when reliable data is combined with informed management decisions on commercial farms.

A distinctive feature of the awards is that winners are identified using objective performance data. Rather than relying on visual assessment alone, farmers are evaluated using information recorded throughout the production cycle, including genetic merit, animal performance, and carcass quality. This ensures that award recipients are identified using transparent, evidence-based criteria that reflect the goals of modern beef production.

The awards draw on the extensive information available through the ICBF database and showcase the practical benefits of tools such as HerdPlus, Commercial Beef Value (CBV), genomic evaluations and performance recording. Together, these tools help farmers make better breeding and management decisions that ultimately translate into stronger profitability and improved sustainability.

A key strength of the ICBF Beef Quality Awards is the collaboration between farmers, processors, and industry stakeholders. The participation of **ABP, Ashbourne Meats, Dawn Meats, Foyle Food Group, Kepak, and Liffey Meats**, together with the financial support of the **FBD Trust**, reflects a shared commitment to recognising excellence and encouraging continuous improvement throughout the Irish beef sector.

The awards also help strengthen the connection between on-farm breeding decisions and market requirements. By rewarding farmers whose animals consistently achieve superior performance and carcass quality, the programme provides a clear demonstration of how genetics and data can create value throughout the supply chain.

2025 Winners:



Following a successful inaugural year in 2025, the programme continues in 2026, further showcasing the progress being achieved by Irish farmers and highlighting Ireland's leadership in data-driven beef production.



Key Points

- Launched in 2025 to recognise excellence in commercial beef production
- Partnership between ICBF, ABP, Ashbourne Meats, Dawn Meats, Foyle Food Group, Kepak, Liffey Meats, and the FBD Trust
- Uses objective genetic, performance, and carcass data to identify award winners
- Demonstrates the value of data-driven breeding and management decisions
- Rewards farmers delivering high-quality cattle and strong carcass performance
- Strengthens the link between genetic improvement and market requirements
- Encourages continuous improvement across the Irish beef sector

Acknowledgments

Our Farmer & Government Representation



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine



IFA

Our AI & Milk Recording Organisations

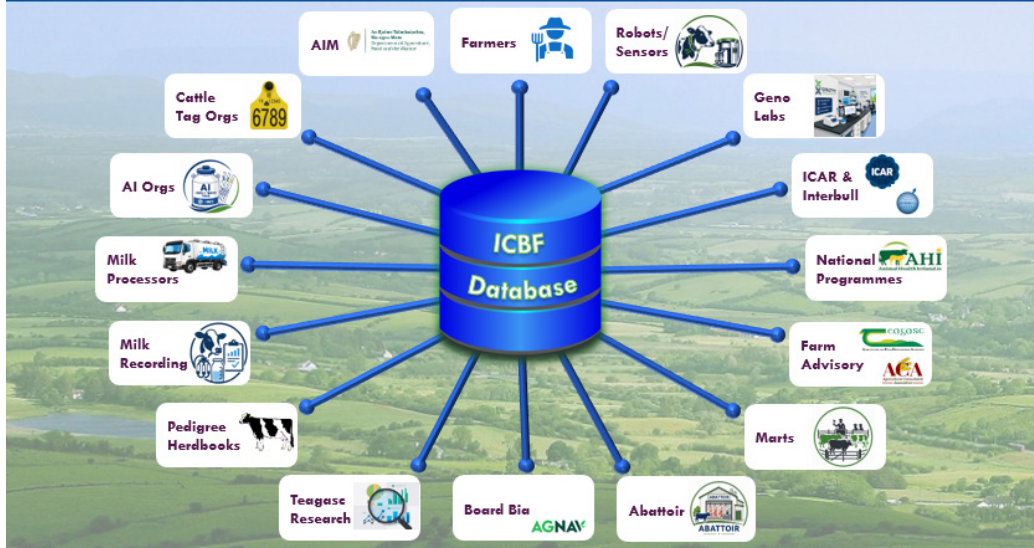


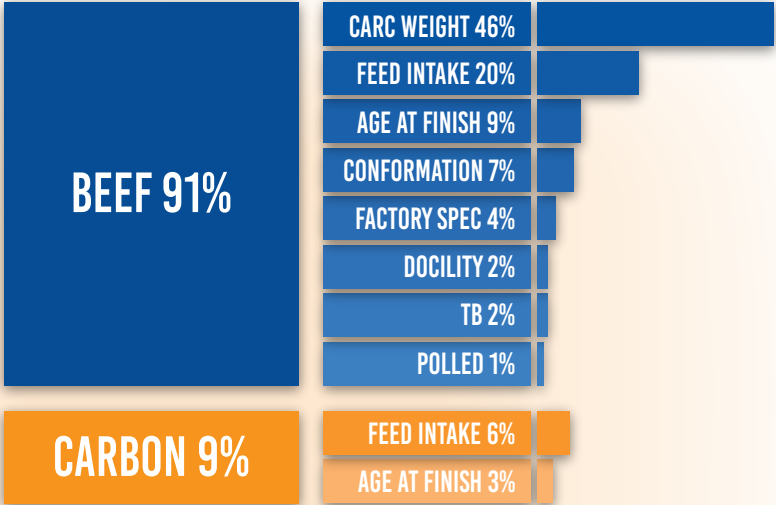
Our Herdbooks



Acknowledging Our Members

One Database, Many Partners





Commercial Beef Value (CBV)

The **Commercial Beef Value** is a simple, practical tool that helps farmers to identify and **buy better cattle**, improve performance and increase profitability.



01

What is the Commercial Beef Value?

The **Commercial Beef Value (CBV)** is a **genetic index** provided by ICBF that shows how an animal is expected to perform **for beef production** over its lifetime.

It is shown as a **euro value (€)** – the higher the figure, the higher the animal's genetic merit for beef performance.



02

What does CBV measure?

CBV focuses on traits that directly affect **profitability** for beef farmers, including:

- Carcass weight
- Carcass conformation
- Age at finish
- Feed efficiency
- Ability to meet factory specifications

03

Why is CBV important?

Animals with higher CBV are more likely to finish earlier, use feed more efficiently and achieve better carcass results. This is particularly important when purchasing calves. Calves that look similar at a young age can perform very differently.

Using CBV helps farmers:

- Identify animals with **better beef potential**
- Reduce risk when buying young calves
- Make **more informed purchasing decisions**
- Put a **fairer value** on calves

04

How is CBV shown?

Displayed as a **euro value (€)**

- Also shown as a **1–5 star rating**
- Star ratings are based on **acrossbreed comparisons**, making animals easy to compare i.e. dairy x dairy, dairy x beef, beef x beef

05

Which animals have a CBV?

CBV is available on animals **likely to be finished for beef**

- The **sire must be recorded** at registration
- **Only genotyped animals** will have a CBV shown on mart boards

Buying calves without a recorded sire means their CBV cannot be calculated.

06

Where can farmers find CBV?

CBV is available:

- On **mart boards** (for genotyped animals)
- Through **ICBF HerdPlus** or the **ICBF HerdPlus App**

icbf HERDPLUS APP



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