

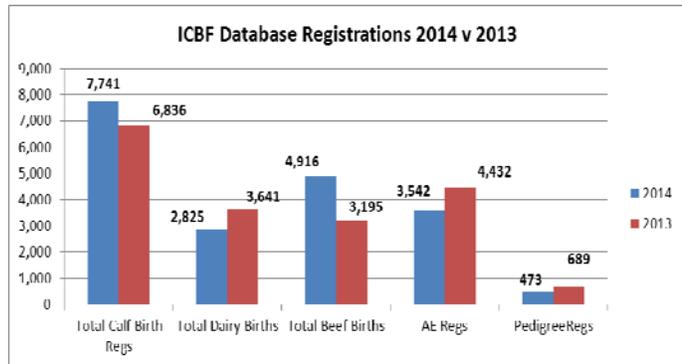
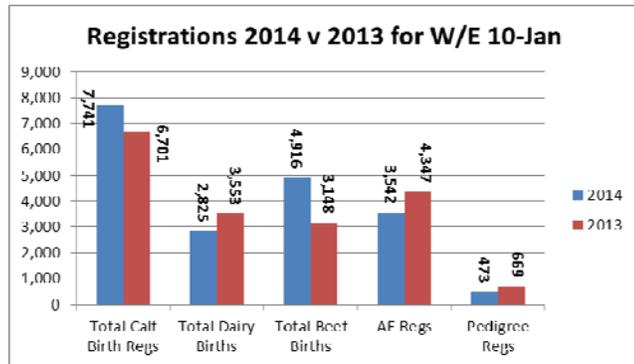
ICBF Weekly Update 10th January 2014

1 Important Dates

✚ **ICBF Sheep Board Meeting** – Thursday 23rd January 2014, 14:00 to 16:30, Killeshin Hotel, Portlaoise.

✚ **ICBF Board Meeting** – Thursday 30th January 2014, 10:30 to 13:30, Killeshin Hotel, Portlaoise.

2 Database



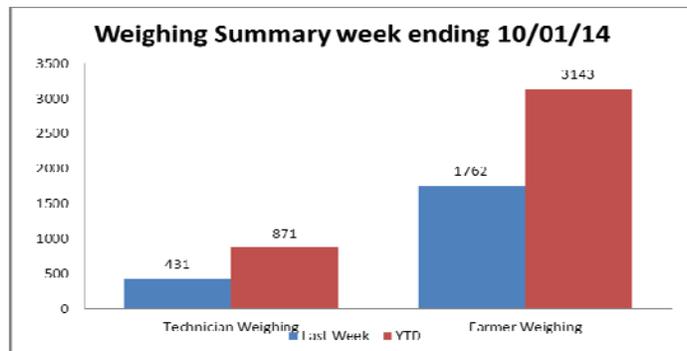
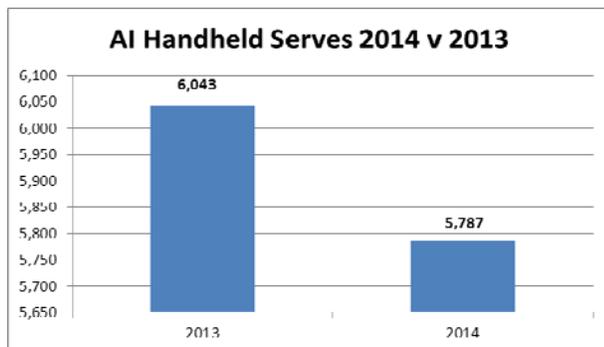
✚ The stats above are compiled with the assistance of DAFM AIM systems.

✚ BVD test results continue to be received at ICBF and are being processed accordingly. There have been 24,000 results received since January 1st, of which 23,000 have come in the last 7 days. Since the beginning of the voluntary phase in 2012, 2.69 million results have now been received.

✚ The graph below shows Inseminations recorded on AI Handhelds in 2013 compared with 2014.

✚ This week there were 431 weights received through the technician service and 1762 weights recorded by farmers.

✚ The graph below shows the week and year to date totals.



3 Herd Plus®

✚ All pocket notebooks have now been posted out to HerdPlus dairy farmers. Replacement ones can be ordered through the HerdPlus office.

✚ Farmers are also reminded to ensure that they send in dry off dates for cows. This is very important to the accuracy of milk recording data. This can be done through your HerdPlus login or through your farm software package.

✚ The latest EBI reports are now available to HerdPlus farmers online.

- ✚ Euro-Star reports are currently being generated.
- ✚ Suckler farmers participating in the Beef Data Programme (BDP) are reminded to send in any outstanding data. This data can be recorded online or through postal forms.
- ✚ Suckler farmers participating in the BTAP (discussion groups) scheme are reminded to record any data for the upcoming year. Autumn calving herds will be pregnancy scanning this spring and it is important that this data is recorded ASAP after the event. AI serves and weights should also be recorded as they occur.
- ✚ As the 2014 calving season is now underway, ICBF reminds farmers of the importance of recording vital breeding data when registering calves (sires and calving ease). This data can be recorded when registering through the animal events book (white book) or online through agfood.ie or through a farm software package.
- ✚ Any farmers that are interested in recording extra data on their calves this spring will soon be able to record:
 - Birth Weights.
 - Birth Measurements (chest + height).
 - Calf Size.
 - Calf Vitality/Vigour.
 - Malpresentation e.g. breached birth, leg down etc.
 - Defects.
- ✚ ICBF acknowledges that farmers are extremely busy at calving time, but by contributing this data you will help to improve the reliabilities on genetic indexes which will identify the most profitable animals to breed from. For more information on this, call the HerdPlus office on **1850 600 900**.

4 Genetic Evaluations

- ✚ Files are currently being prepared for the Interbull test run next week. We hope to submit new data for the test day model, as well as fertility for Red Breeds and calving for breeds other than Holsteins.

5 Sheep Ireland

- ✚ Throughout the past week Sheep Ireland have been busy setting up the many new flocks that have applied to join the LambPlus programme for the 2014 season. This work will take a number of weeks. With the exception of Texel, Belclare and Vendeen flocks, every sheep in the flock of a new LambPlus applicant must be manually created on the sheep Ireland database. This requires Sheep Ireland personnel to manually type the identities, DOB, and ancestry information for every sheep, which is a very time consuming process. Full ancestry information for all Texel, Belclare and Vendeen pedigree sheep is available to Sheep Ireland and for that reason there is far less work involved with these breeds.
- ✚ The growth in performance recording breeders has been very significant. Our final count of breeders now involved in the programme has exceeded the 500 mark - with over 200 pedigree ram breeders joining Sheep Ireland for the first time in 2014. While participation in LambPlus has grown year on year since the first year of Sheep Ireland in 2009, this marks the most significant progress to date.
- ✚ This bodes well for our sheep Industry. Up to now the potential impact that the Euro-Star evaluations could make on the industry was greatly hindered, due almost solely to the small number of performance recorded rams available to Irish sheep farmers annually. Euro-Star rated rams were the minority at our pedigree rams sales across the country.- We now find ourselves in the great situation where these performance recorded sheep will be the majority, affording the commercial farmer far greater choice in what breeding ram they purchase for their flock.
- ✚ The major increase in performance recorded sheep across each breed will also have a major impact on the accuracy% that currently accompany each evaluation that we produce. Higher accuracy will result in more

trustworthy evaluations while also facilitating faster genetic progress. This genetic progress will translate into a more profitable sheep Industry for all stakeholders.

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