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Integrated Dairy Beef Program

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Integrated Dairy Beef Program

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

- **Key Objectives**
  - To develop a National **framework/infra-structure =>** greater integration in the supply of beef from the dairy herd into the broader beef industry.
  - To **improve the quality of beef** coming from the dairy herd => improved genetics, calf rearing and management practices.
  - To compliment the existing supply of high-quality beef coming from the suckler beef herd.

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Dairy Animal Numbers Increasing

- 1.5m dairy cows => 1.4m calves.
  - 800k dairy * dairy calves.
  - 600k beef sired calves.
- 1.0m “non-core” dairy bred calves
  - 350k stay on farm.
  - 100k dead/disposed (50k dead birth, 20k dead subsequently & 30k slaughtered)
  - 200k exported → **Need to reduce?**
  - 350k moved to rearers **- Can this be increased?**

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The challenge – finding more rearers

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

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Average
Rearing Herds	9,831	10,455	10,469	9,825	9,798	10076
Calves Purchased	332,427	381,148	391,091	378,303	375,733	371740
Av no. of calves purchased	34	36	37	39	38	37
% rearing herds retained	n/a	74%	79%	77%	76%	77%

2015 rearers => only 39% reared calves right through to 2019.

Irish Examiner, 2019

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

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Integrated Dairy Beef Program

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

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

Advantages for rearing herds

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

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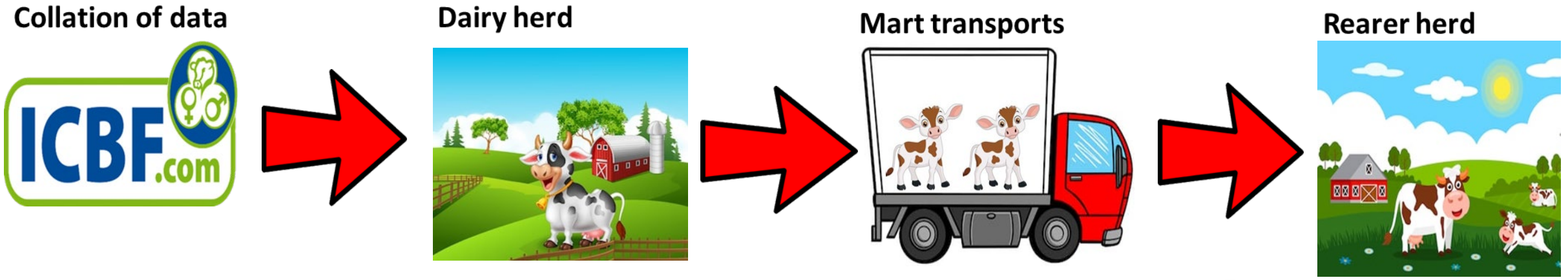
Key elements of the Program

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



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The Spring 2019 Pilot Program

Pilot project in Spring 2019 with Cork Marts:

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

Summary of calves sold through Integrated Dairy Beef Program 2019

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

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Positives & Challenges

Positives

- **Birth herds;**
  - "Collection service" at busiest time
  - Guaranteed market outlet
  - Genotyping of animals (errors corrected).
- **Rearing herds;**
  - "Delivery service"
  - Well reared calves (i.e. select herds, older/stronger).
  - Fair pricing model – more reflective value
- **Cork marts;**
  - New customers.
  - New & complimentary business model, albeit at higher cost for service.
- **ICBF;**
  - Key elements on infra-structure in place (birth => mart => rearer).
  - Harnessing the power genetics/genomics to deliver change – new approach.

Challenges

- "Lower value/quality calves" – finding rearers – using industry money to encourage rearers – not sustainable - Alternative solutions required.
- Overall process – a lot of manual elements – small scale manageable. Scaling up – technology?

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Integrated Dairy Beef Program – 2020.

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

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

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

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

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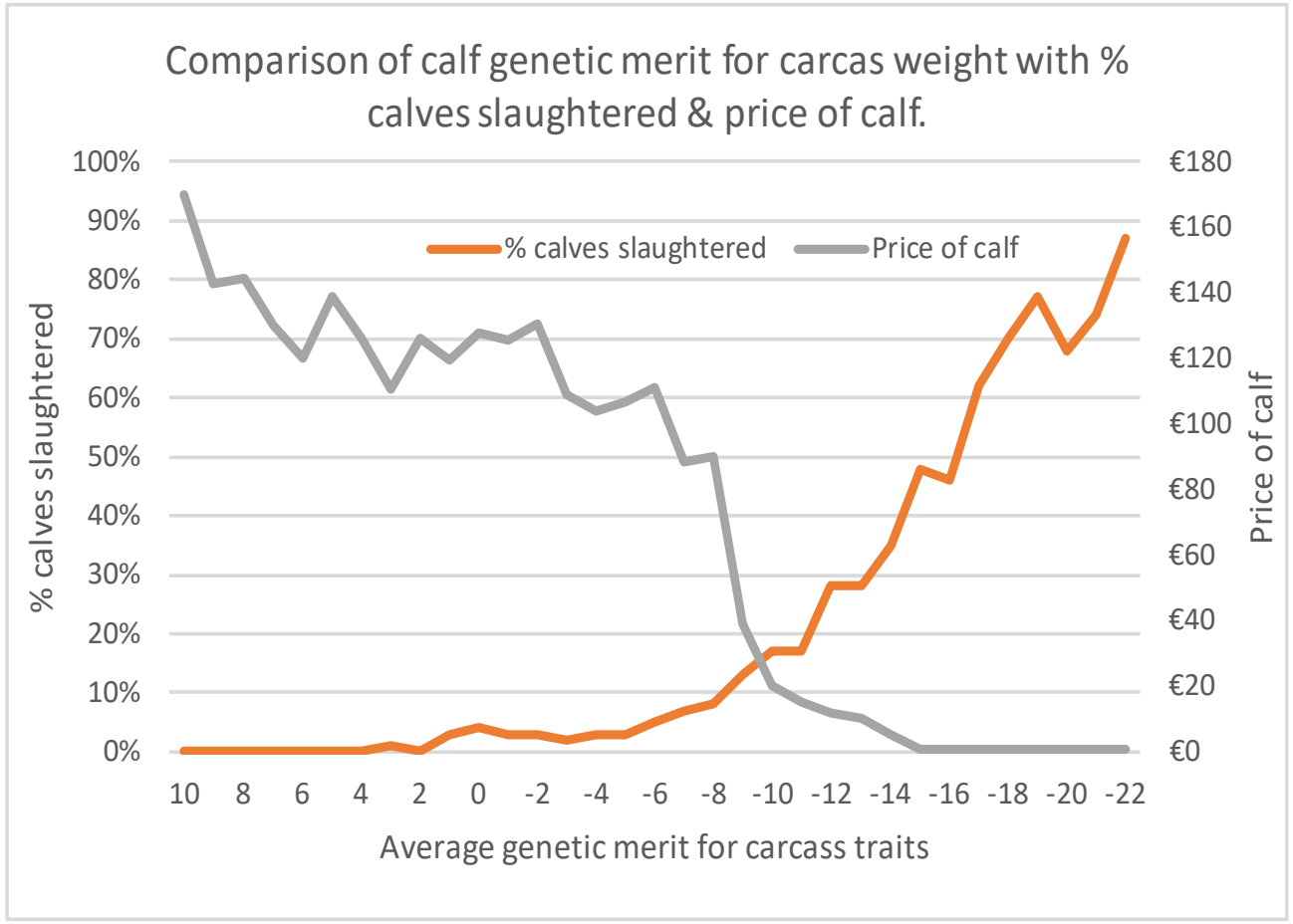
Providing a Quality Calf

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



- Based on data from;
  - Herds involved in project (2019 calves).
  - Last years project (calf price).
- Suggests a **"tipping point" of -10kg PD Cwt**, below which calf price drops & likelihood of calf being slaughtered increases.
- Selection based on science – breed is good indicator **but genetic merit more accurate**. 4% of male calves with no JE genes are <10 kg Cwt.
- Calves <10kg Cwt – Contract rearing – valuable data

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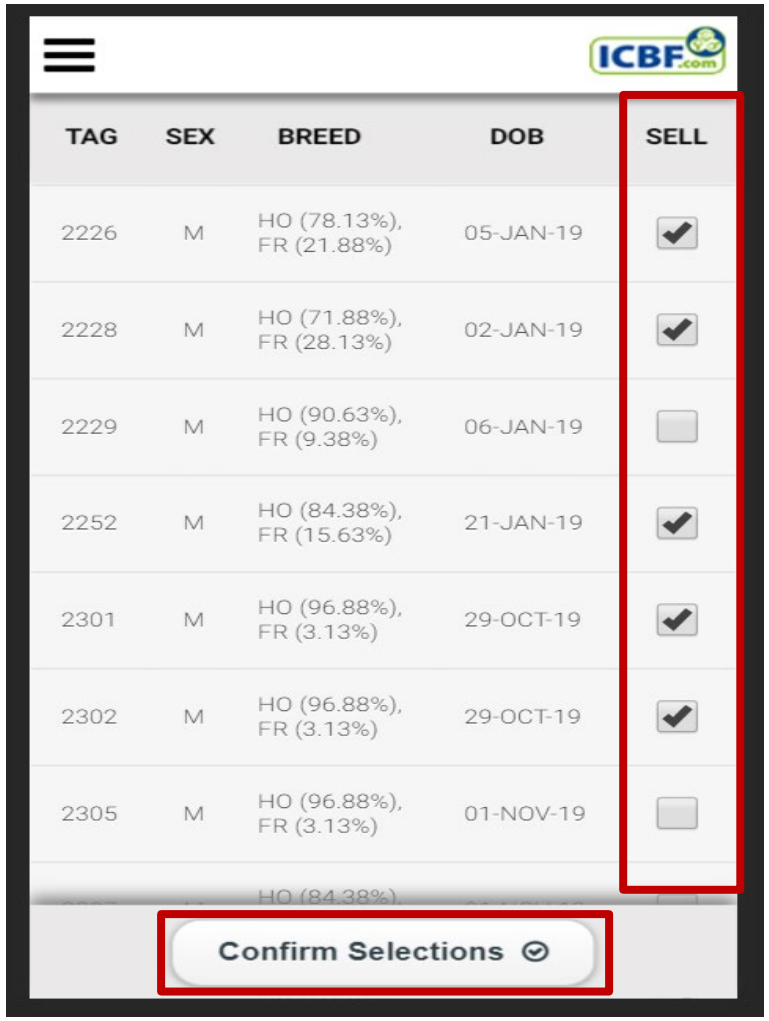
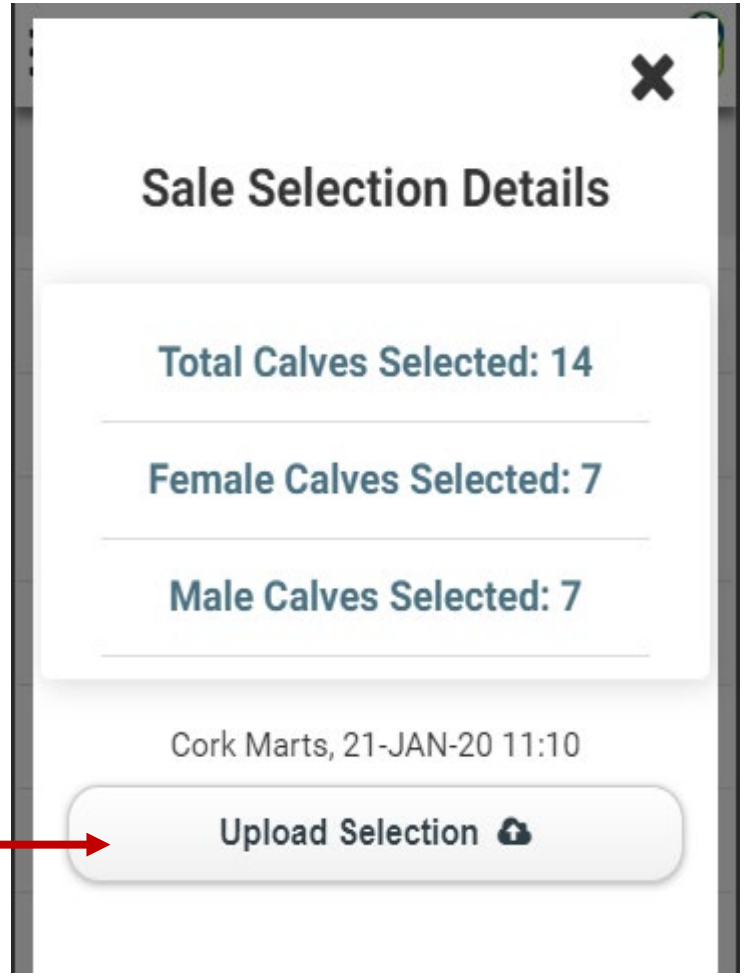
Making the process more efficient



- **New web app feature** allowing herds enter calves for sale. Entry criteria;
  - Age
  - BVD negative
  - genotyped
  - Carcass Weight > 10kg

- Once herd is happy with selection – upload to Marts tracking screen



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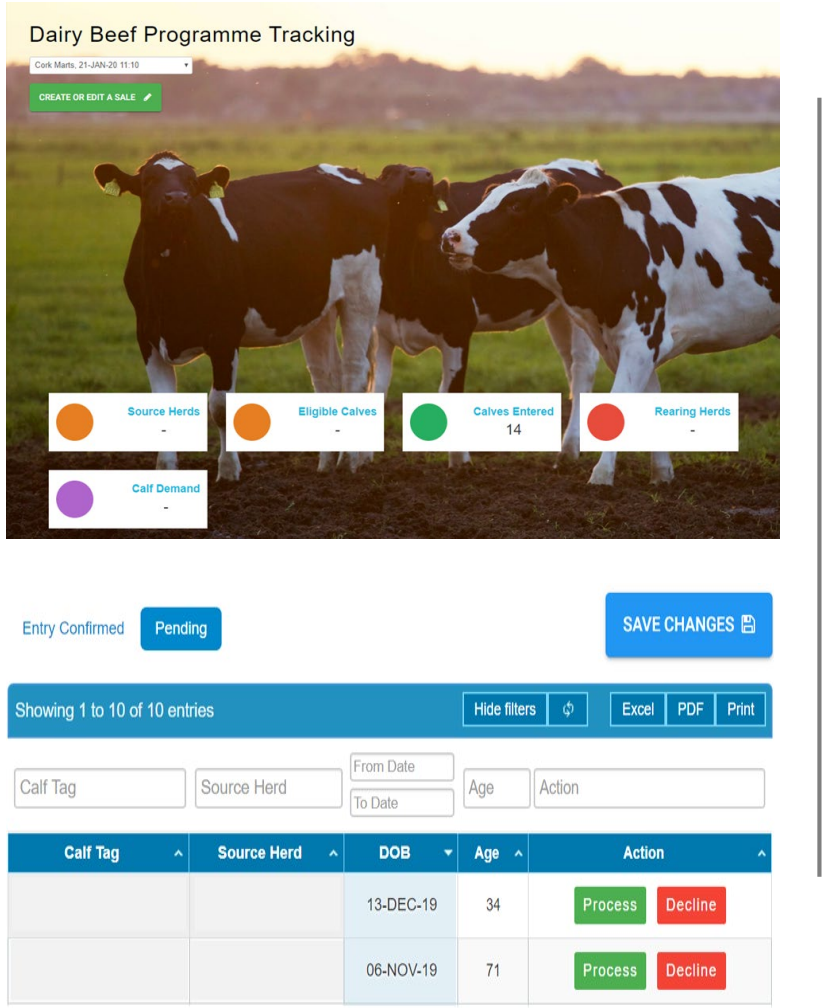

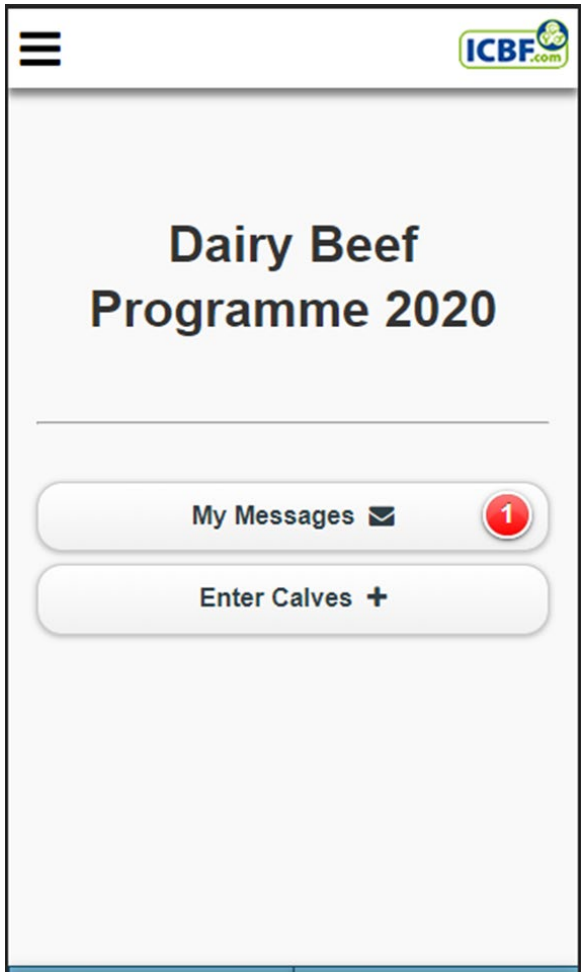

- Message detailing calves entered, collection date etc.
- Removing a lot of the manual elements – time saving – farmer & project coordinators.
- On course for mid February start date.

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Summary

- Increasing number of calves => slaughter/exports?
- More rearing herds required => challenging => Need to build trust.
- Integrated Dairy Beef Program => new approach to moving calves => providing a calf of sufficient quality.
- Dairy Beef Index & Beef's Own Worth crucial to achieving this objective.
- Harnessing the power of genetics/genomics to give the buyer more confidence, create trust => increase rearer numbers.