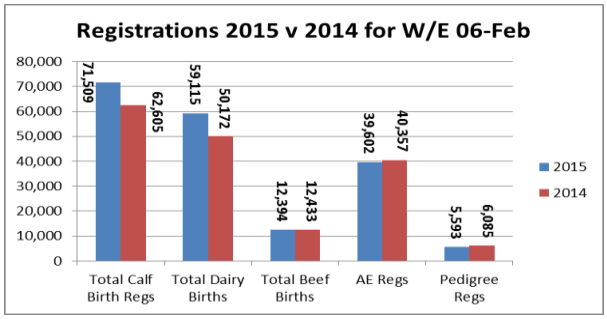
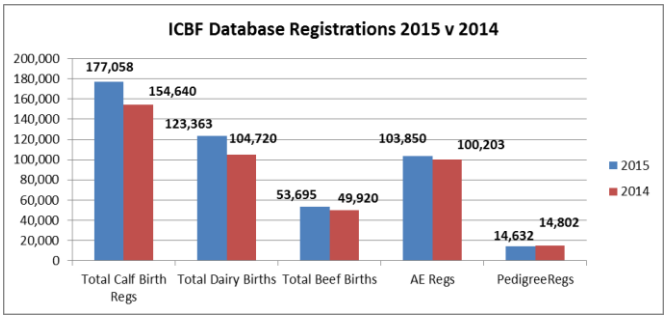
ICBF Weekly Update 6th February 2015

1 Important Dates

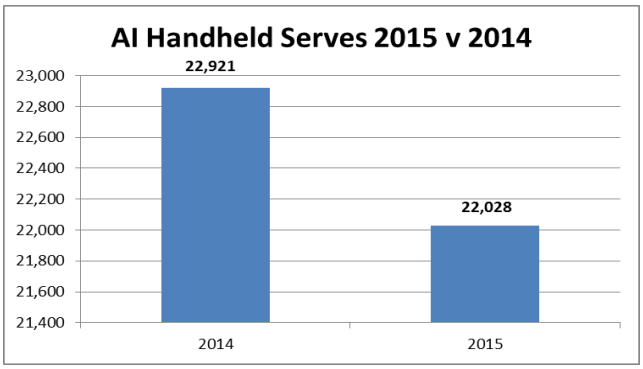
- **Audit & Finance Sub Committee Meeting** – Thursday 12th March 2015, 10:30 to 13:00, Horse & Jockey Hotel.
- **ICBF Board Meeting** – Thursday 26th March 2015, 10:30 to 13:30, Killeshin Hotel, Portlaoise.
- **Sheep Ireland Board Meeting** – Thursday 26th March 2015, 14:00 to 16:30, Killeshin Hotel, 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 183,000 results received since January 1st, of which 66,000 have come in the last 7 days. Since the beginning of the voluntary phase in 2012, 5.13 million results have now been received.
- The graph shows Inseminations recorded on AI Handhelds in 2014 compared with 2015.



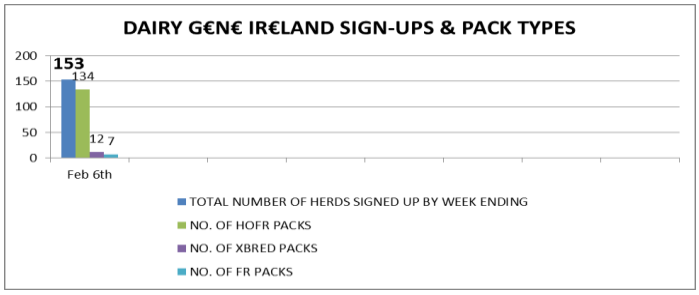
3 Herd Plus®

- EBI & Dairy Cow reports are now available online. Dairy Cow Reports are currently being printed and dispatched.
- Dairy HerdPlus customers that wish to run sire advice for the 2015 breeding season can now do so as all December evaluations are up to date.
- All Co-Op performance reports are available online and all have now been posted. Discussion group reports can also be generated with this data. Group reports can be very useful to advisors at discussion group meetings.
- Farmers need to ensure that dry off dates are recorded so that milk recording records will be accurate. Annual reports also require that dry off dates are recorded. This can be done through the dry off sheets which were posted out by the milk recording organisations or online through ICBF or a farm software package.
- As spring calving will have commenced or is about to commence on many dairy and beef farms around the country, it is an appropriate time to remind farmers of the importance of data recording. ICBF acknowledges that spring can be a busy and stressful time for farmers with an endless list of tasks to be done. However, ensuring that data (namely sires and calving ease) is recorded comprehensively and accurately is vital, not only to the work that ICBF does, but also to the development of our Agri-food industry going forward.

- Better data recording leads to more accurate genetic indexes. This will in turn lead to more informed breeding decisions which will leave more profitable stock on farms and increase output at both farm and processor levels. For this reason, people across the industry that find themselves in regular contact with farmers e.g. agri advisors, breed society representatives, AI company reps & technicians etc. need to constantly stress the importance of recording basic breeding information when registering calves. Click here for a link to an article on best practice in farm data recording.
- Any farmers that still register calves on the white cards which come with the tags, should be encouraged to switch to an animal events book or, where possible, to register calves online through www.agfood.ie or through a farm software package. The animal events book and online methods allow for much more comprehensive data recording at calf registration. Animal events books can be ordered by calling **1850 625 626**. Online registration can be set up by going to the Department of Agriculture & Food website or contacting your farm software provider.
- HerdPlus staff were in attendance for the Teagasc Cork West StrategicPlan 2015-2020 launch on Tuesday 3rd February in Fernhill House Hotel, Clonakilty, Co. Cork. The event was chaired by Mr. Alan Jagoe, former President of Macra ne Feirme and current board member of Teagasc. Billy Kelleher, regional manager for Cork West outlined some of the targets while Mr. Jim Daly TD for Cork South-West spoke of the importance of a thriving agricultural sector in the West Cork region. There was a large crowd in attendance made up of farmers, advisors and various industry representatives from co-ops, AI companies etc. ICBF was mentioned as an important part of the plan providing genetic indexes and performance reports to farmers and statistics to the wider industry.

4 G€N€ IR€LAND® Dairy

- The programme has commenced with an excellent group of bulls this spring.
- The panel consists of 54 Holstein Friesians, 4 Pure Friesians, 6 Jerseys and 4 Crossbreds.



5 Genetic Evaluations

- Work is underway to create a genetic linkage criterion for sheep evaluations which will be used to ascertain the level of connectedness between individual herds and the rest of the population. This work may potentially filter into reliability calculations for animals from these herds. Collaboration is underway with INRA in France on this.
- A beef mini run has commenced which will be made official by the middle of February. The delay from the normally 1st of the month update is due to changes being made to the age at scoring bracket which is being moved from 250-350 days of age to 250-365 days of age. Animals scored up to 365 days from the start of January will now be eligible for inclusion in evaluations.
- Work is almost complete on a calving survey which will be sent out by email next week to farmers. The survey will hopefully provide valuable information on the perceptions of both dairy and beef farmers on the economic consequences of increase calving difficulty.

6 Genomic Evaluations

- Genomic evaluations for young bulls are now running weekly. The numbers of bulls requested has increased significantly over the last week or so as the number of bull calves being born on farm increases.

7 Milk Recording

National Milk Recording Statistics - Herds, Cows & EDIY 06/02/15						
Milk Recording Organisation	Total Herds Recorded YTD 06/02/15	No. EDIY Herds YTD 06/02/15	% Herds EDIY	Total No. Cows Recorded YTD 06/02/15	No. EDIY Cows YTD 06/02/15	% Cows EDIY
Munster	326	15	5%	18,412	1,728	9%
Progressive	607	100	16%	36,795	6,246	17%
Tipperary	6	1	17%	395	51	13%
Total	**939**	**116**	**12%**	**55,602**	**8,025**	**14%**

Recorded Cows by Milk Recording Organisation - Year on Year Comparison			
Milk Recording Organisation	YTD 2013 Cows Recorded 01/01/14 - 06/02/14	YTD 2014 Cows Recorded 01/01/15 - 06/02/15	2015 vs 2014 Year on Year Difference (%)
Munster	19,990	18,412	-8.6%
Progressive	45,045	36,795	-22.4%
Tipperary	501	395	-26.8%
Total	**65,536**	**55,602**	**-17.9%**

8 Sheep Ireland

Ovigen

- This week, information letters have been circulated to all LambPlus breeders informing them of plans for this research project. We plan to visit our first pedigree flocks next week. We will use these early visits to test our data collection procedures and make sure our flock visits are as efficient as possible. Below details the data we plan to collect from each flock we visit during the spring.

  - DNA sample from each ewe and ram – Using an ear punch which will collect an ear tissue sample
  - Ewe and lamb weights
  - Ewe condition scores
  - Lamb visual scores
  - Ewe mastitis incidence
  - Ewe and lamb dag scores
  - Ewe and lamb lameness scores

  } This data will contribute to the development of a new health trait

What breeds will be involved in Ovigen?

- To deliver any benefit to a breed, genomics requires a number of critical ingredients. The main ingredient is a solid foundation of performance data for that breed. Development of genomic genetic evaluations is not possible without this foundation.
- The breeds within Ireland that have established a sufficient foundation of performance recording up to this point in time are as follows: Texel, Suffolk, Charollais, Belclare and Vendeen. These are currently the only breeds with sufficient performance data to justify the cost of genotyping as part of Ovigen.

Will any other breeds be included in this research?

- DNA samples are currently being collected from a host of other Irish sheep breeds that are performance recording with Sheep Ireland in lower numbers, than the five breeds mentioned above. This process will allow us to determine how genetically related these other breeds are to the five strongest performance recording breeds. In the absence of sufficient performance recording data, other breeds may be included in Ovigen based on their relatedness to the five strongest recording breeds.

Ultrasound Muscle and Fat scanning 2015

- Preparations for our 2015 scanning season are already underway and on Tuesday of this week our scanning technicians spent a day together to calibrate their scanning technique. A group of finished commercial lambs were used for the day. Each of the technicians scanned the group of lambs separately and lambs were presented randomly. The measurements recorded by each of the technicians will now be analysed.
- This group of lambs were slaughtered the day after our Ultrasound scanning and were followed through the slaughter process to ensure maximum accuracy in terms of animal identification through the grading process. We will now analyse our scanning data and assess the correlation between this data and the actual carcase data recorded in the meat plant.

MALP and CPT meetings next week

- Each year in advance of the busy lambing season, we meet with our MALP and CPT flocks to discuss all aspects of each respective programme. These meetings will be taking place next week.

Sean Coughlan Chief Executive, ICBF & Sheep Ireland , Highfield House, Shinagh, Bandon Co. Cork., Phone: +353 238 820 222, Mobile: +353 872903121, Email scoughlan@icbf.com, **Registered Office:** Irish Cattle Breeding Federation Society Ltd trading as "ICBF", Highfield House, Shinagh, Bandon,Co Cork. Registered Dublin, Ireland. Registration Number 4914R, Industrial and Provident Societies Acts, 1893 to 1978. Web: www.icbf.com. **Registered Office:** Sheep Database Ltd trading as "Sheep Ireland". Highfield House, Shinagh, Bandon, Co Cork. Registered Dublin, Ireland. Registration Number 465004, Companies Acts 1963 to 2006. Web: www.sheep.ie.

National Milk Recording Results for the 10 day period, 28-JAN-2015 To 06-FEB-2015

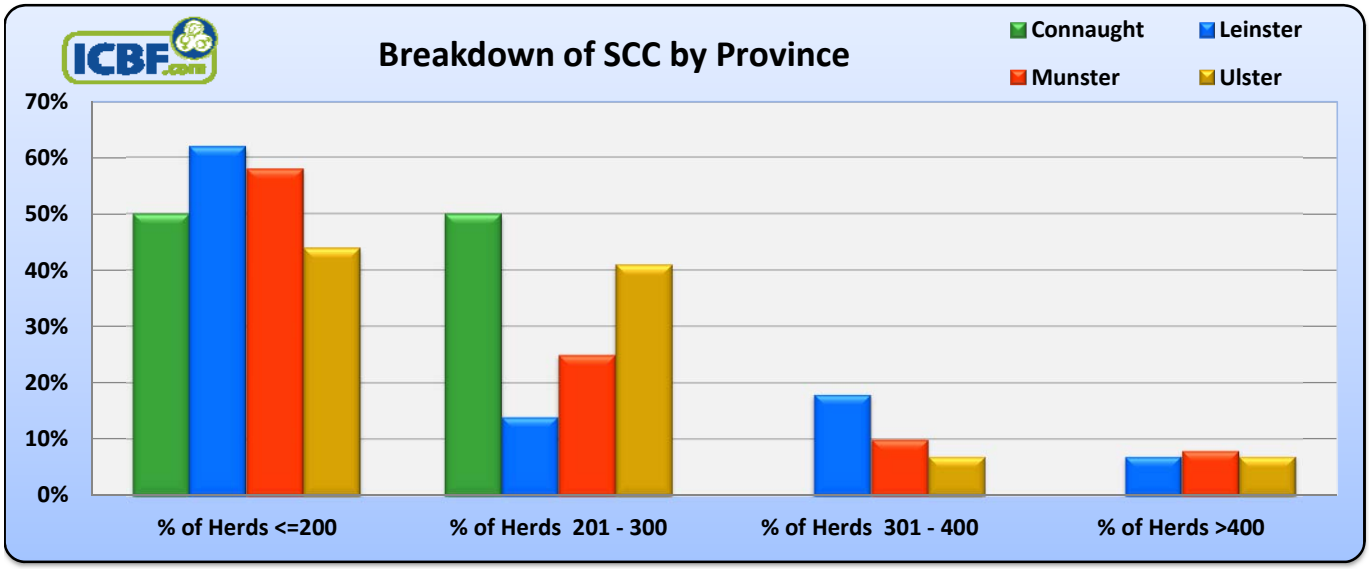
	No. Herds Recorded	No. Cows Recorded	Avg Herd Size	Avg Milk kg/Cow	Average Fat %	Average Protein %	Average F+P kg	Average SCC*
Connaught	8	310	39	25.6	4.15	3.32	1.90	171
Leinster	74	4,857	66	22.6	3.94	3.28	1.63	181
Munster	102	5,818	57	22.0	4.16	3.34	1.64	172
Ulster	27	1,195	44	24.2	3.78	3.20	1.68	182
National Statistics	**211**	**12,180**	**58**	**22.6**	**4.03**	**3.30**	**1.65**	**176**

* Geometric Mean Herd SCC

SCC Distribution for the 10 day period, 28-JAN-2015 To 06-FEB-2015

	No. Herds Recorded	No. Cows Recorded	Avg Herd Size	% of Herds <=200	% of Herds 201 - 300	% of Herds 301 - 400	% of Herds >400	Average SCC*
Connaught	8	310	39	50%	50%	0%	0%	171
Leinster	74	4,857	66	62%	14%	18%	7%	181
Munster	102	5,818	57	58%	25%	10%	8%	172
Ulster	27	1,195	44	44%	41%	7%	7%	182
National Statistics	**211**	**12,180**	**58**	**57%**	**24%**	**12%**	**7%**	**176**

* Geometric Mean Herd SCC



% Herd Breakdown for the 10 day period, 28-JAN-2015 To 06-FEB-2015

	No. Herds Recorded	No. Cows Recorded	Avg Herd Size	Best 20% SCC	Best 40% SCC	Average SCC**	Worst 40% SCC	Worst 20% SCC
Connaught	8	310	39	129	182	198	206	237
Leinster	74	4,857	66	120	154	172	194	316
Munster	102	5,818	57	102	153	174	209	289
Ulster	27	1,195	44	112	178	204	252	278
National Statistics	**211**	**12,180**	**58**	**114**	**155**	**179**	**206**	**290**

** Percentile Herd SCC Rank (Median SCC)