

ICBF Weekly Update 9th January 2015

1 Important Dates

ICBF Board Meeting – Thursday 29th January 2015, 10:30 to 13:30, Killeshin Hotel, Portlaoise.

Sheep Ireland Board Meeting – Thursday 29th January 2015, 14:00 to 16:30, Killeshin Hotel, Portlaoise.

2 2015 Begins

Happy New Year to all our readers, as we start into 2015, it is clear that we have a huge amount of work to get through.

A subset includes:

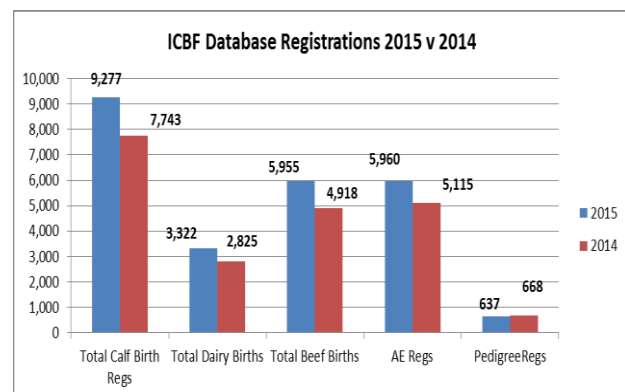
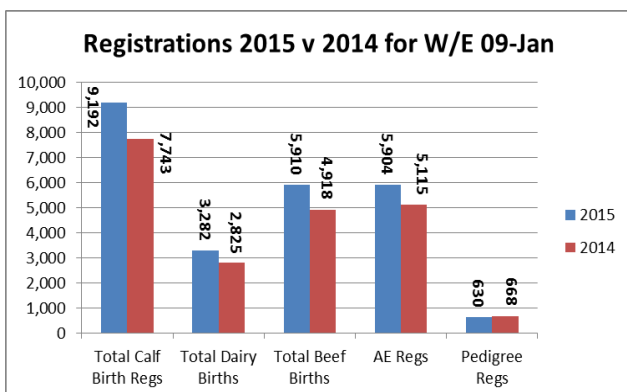
- The on-going rollout of the Beef Genomics Scheme and streamlining the wider genomics processes.
- Continued roll-out of the new Gene Ireland Beef Program.
- Completing developments to the Beef Indexes (incorporating genomics) and rolling out the use of the indexes across the wider industry.
- Developing the Gene Ireland Dairy program and the support of the various AI companies in that regard.
- Building a collaborative approach to maximising farmer engagement in the benefits of cattle breeding services, which will be especially important with low farm-gate prices.
- Expanding the data collection and breeding information distribution infrastructure through HerdPlus.
- Assisting AHI in the continued rollout of its national disease control programs.
- A substantial upgrade of the underlying technical infrastructure at ICBF.

Our sheep priorities are very much moving towards growing the use of the LambPlus and helping sheep farmers to make better use of the new Euro-Star genetic evaluations for sheep.

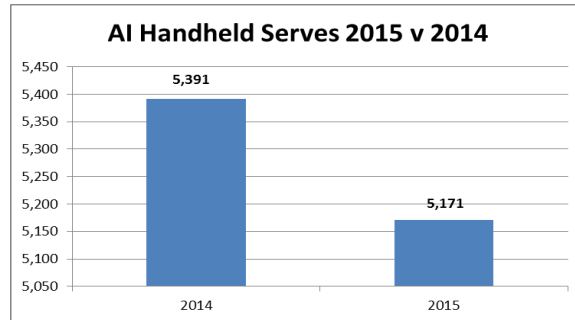
For both ICBF and Sheep Ireland, our priorities reflect the excellent opportunities that are created by the rapidly developing technologies in computing, genetics and statistics. We remain focused on our mission – farm profitability through improved breeding – and be prepared to change from systems and structures developed in a different technological environment.

We again have a very ambitious program for 2015. It builds on the breeding systems and extensive database built up over the years. We look forward to working with the wider industry and Irish farmers and delivering increased value through our services and to overcoming the unexpected challenges that will inevitably arise in 2015.

3 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 17,000 results received since January 1st. Since the beginning of the voluntary phase in 2012, 4.96 million results have now been received.
- ✚ The graph shows Inseminations recorded on AI Handhelds in 2014 compared with 2015.



4 Herd Plus®

- ✚ Final batches of dairy pocket notebooks will be posted in the next week. The notebooks are a very useful means of recording information during the calving season before registering calves.
- ✚ 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 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 to farmers the importance of recording basic breeding information when registering calves. Click [here](#) for a link to an article on best practice in on farm data recording.
- ✚ All in the HerdPlus team would like to wish our customers and everybody in the industry a happy and prosperous new year. Here's looking forward to another busy and even more successful year in 2015. As always, if you have any queries, no matter how small or trivial they may seem our team is here to help at 1850 600 900 or query@icbf.com.

5 Genetic Evaluations

- ✚ Work on preparation of files for next week's Interbull test run for the test day model for milk production and calving was undertaken this week.
- ✚ A Beef mini run for animals linear scored since the last full update in December is also underway.

6 Sheep Ireland

Happy new year to all readers of this weekly update. We look forward to the next performance recording season with a lot of optimism and hope that we can continue to develop the EuroStar evaluations in association with our LambPlus breeders for the benefit of all sheep farmers.

Plans for 2015

- ✚ At the minute we are busy planning for 'Ovigen', the new research project being undertaken in association with Teagasc and UCD to genotype a large number of Ireland's pedigree breeding sheep. In order to genotype these sheep, we will need to collect a sample of DNA from these sheep and this will need to be done this spring. The practicalities of this DNA collection will be very challenging as each flock will need to be visited individually. We have no doubt that the breeders involved will be as helpful as usual in accommodating us to do this successfully.

2015 lambing season

- ✚ Many breeders are now in the middle of, or almost finished lambing their early batch of pedigree ewes. This time of the year is the most critical when it comes to data recording. LambPlus breeders certainly do have a far greater labour burden at lambing time when compared to your average sheep farmer. Not only do LambPlus breeders need to take care of the normal duties at lambing time, but they must also invest a lot of time and energy into capturing the required data for Sheep Ireland - recording parentage details, DOB, birth weights, lambing difficulties, fostering info, pet lambs and lamb deaths. This is no easy task and hopefully commercial sheep farmers will continue to recognise the benefits of buying rams from these breeders which will help to justify their efforts.

New Sheep Ireland web screens

- ✚ LambPlus breeders are now beginning to enter lambing information onto our database through our new web screens. The feedback so far has been very positive and hopefully this positivity will grow as we add new features to the system over the coming months.

Step back in time

- ✚ The image shows some of the earliest Texel sheep in Ireland. The picture was taken in 1978 by the Department of Agriculture in Teagasc, Mellows College, Athenry, Co. Galway.



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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, 31-DEC-2014 To 09-JAN-2015

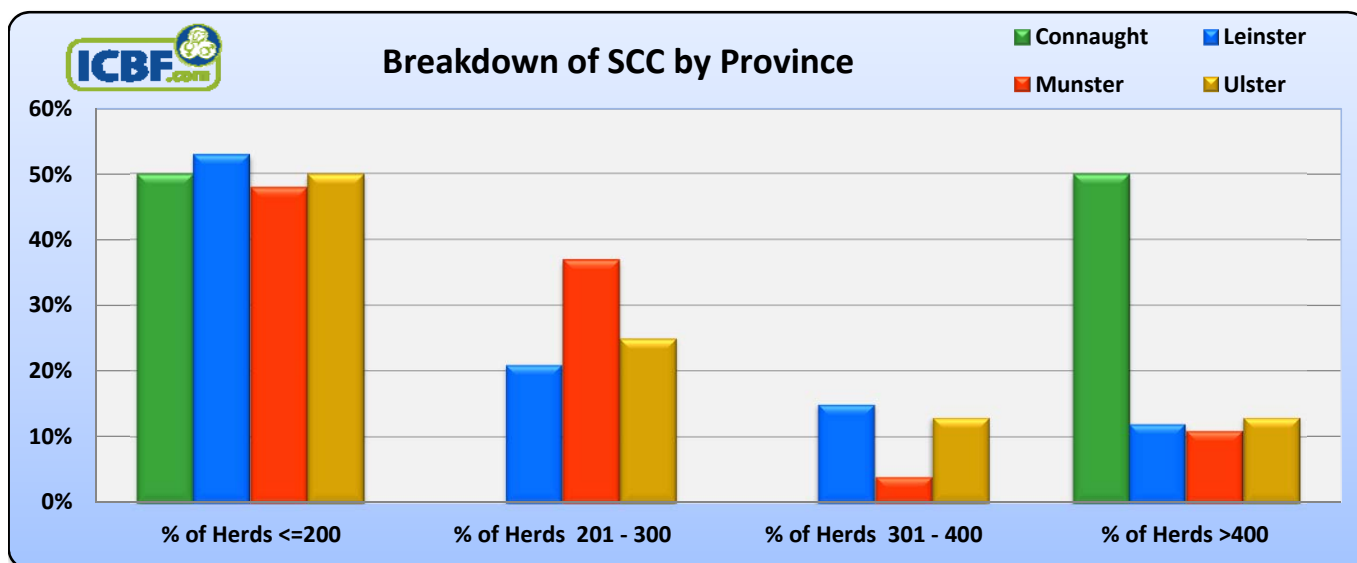
ICBF	No. Herds Recorded	No. Cows Recorded	Avg Herd Size	Avg Milk kg/Cow	Average Fat %	Average Protein %	Average F+P kg	Average SCC*
Connaught	2	127	64	18.4	4.16	3.30	1.37	244
Leinster	34	2,066	61	21.0	4.25	3.24	1.57	181
Munster	27	1,547	57	19.7	4.15	3.36	1.46	216
Ulster	8	295	37	22.4	3.94	3.25	1.62	177
National Statistics	71	4,035	57	20.6	4.17	3.29	1.53	195

* Geometric Mean Herd SCC

SCC Distribution for the 10 day period, 31-DEC-2014 To 09-JAN-2015

ICBF	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	2	127	64	50%	0%	0%	50%	244
Leinster	34	2,066	61	53%	21%	15%	12%	181
Munster	27	1,547	57	48%	37%	4%	11%	216
Ulster	8	295	37	50%	25%	13%	13%	177
National Statistics	71	4,035	57	51%	27%	10%	13%	195

* Geometric Mean Herd SCC



% Herd Breakdown for the 10 day period, 31-DEC-2014 To 09-JAN-2015								
ICBF	No. Herds Recorded	No. Cows Recorded	Avg Herd Size	Best 20% SCC	Best 40% SCC	Average SCC**	Worst 40% SCC	Worst 20% SCC
Connaught	2	127	64	198	251	277	303	356
Leinster	34	2,066	61	108	141	172	224	314
Munster	27	1,547	57	172	194	206	228	276
Ulster	8	295	37	107	171	204	240	354
National Statistics	71	4,035	57	118	175	200	226	307

** Percentile Herd SCC Rank (Median SCC)

