

ICBF Weekly Update 28th March 2014

1 Important Dates

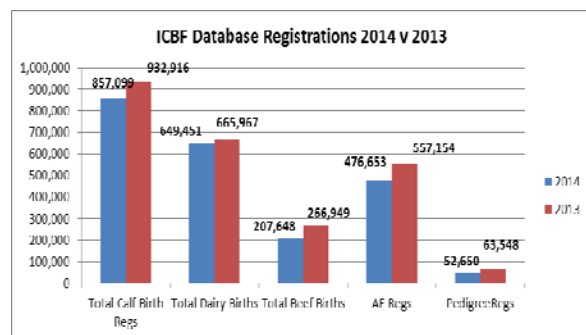
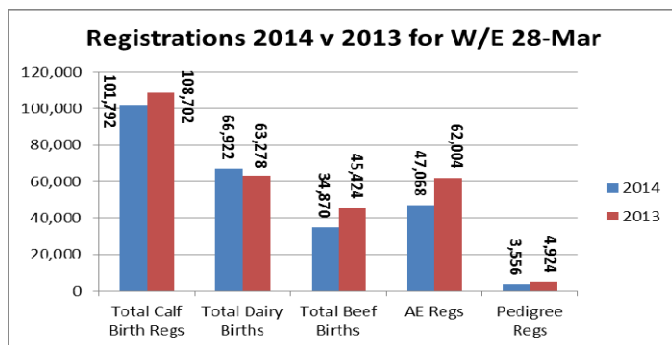
- ✚ **ICBF Board Meeting** – Thursday 1st May 2014, 10:30 to 13:30, Killeshin Hotel, Portlaoise.
- ✚ **Sheep Ireland Board / AGM Meeting** – Thursday 1st May 2014, 14:00 to 17:00, Killeshin Hotel, Portlaoise.

2 ICBF Board Meeting

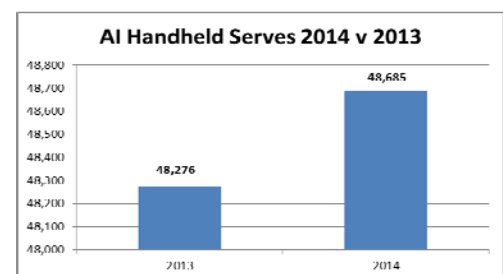
Some of the topics covered at ICBF's board meeting yesterday included:

- ✚ **Finances** – the audited accounts were discussed and adopted by the board.
- ✚ **Sexed Semen** – a wide ranging discussion took place on the role and impact of Sexed Semen on the industry as its usage increases.
- ✚ **Beef Genomics Scheme** – the first of the herd have been sent from DAFM to ICBF and they are currently being processed, and tags ordered for distribution.
- ✚ **Gene Ireland Beef** – An update on progress on the collection from the first batch of bulls was discussed, and the challenges that need to be addressed in terms of getting the semen used.
- ✚ **Calving Evaluations** – Andrew Cromie presented some of the work currently being done in relation to calving evaluations. This work has previously been presented by Ross Evans at meetings with the industry, and the work is on-going.
- ✚ **Dairy Genetic Evaluations** – Andrew also presented an update on the Test Day Model work (done by John McCarthy) for milk production and some of the challenges we are facing in relation to that. There is significant further work to be done on the Test Day Model before it is ready for implementation.

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 921,000 results received since January 1st, of which 118,000 have come in the last 7 days. Since the beginning of the voluntary phase in 2012 3.58 million results have now been received.
- ✚ The graph shows Inseminations recorded on AI Handhelds in 2013 compared with 2014.

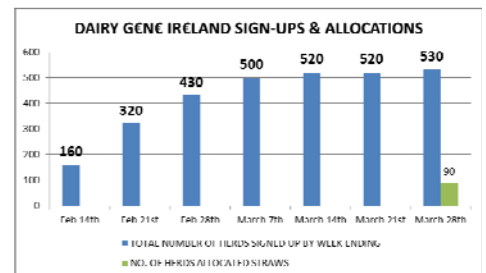


4 Genetic Evaluations

- Routine genetic evaluations are almost complete. Interbull files are being processed and genomic evaluations will commence next week. Official publication date is Tuesday 8th April.
- Research on an update to the calving evaluations is on-going and test proofs will be available as soon as the work has been completed.

5 GENEIRELAND[®] Dairy

- Sign-ups and allocations are on-going.
- There are 7 Friesians, 4 Jerseys and 9 Crossbred Jerseys on the panel to date.
- All packs will be dispatched as soon as straws are available.
- Call **1850 600 900** to order.



6 Herd Plus[®]

- Application forms for the 2014 Beef Data Programme (BDP) and Beef Genomics Scheme (BGS) must be returned before the 4th April. Applications can also be completed online through agfood.ie. Farmers need to ensure that both boxes are ticked on the form if they wish to participate in both schemes. If you wish to sign up to the BGS you **must** also be in the BDP. The forms **must** also be signed on the back. ICBF encourages all suckler farmers to sign up to these schemes as strong participation will be hugely important to the continued improvement of Irish beef breeding.
- Farmers are again reminded to input any missing data that is required for the 2013 BDP scheme. This data can be recorded through the ICBF website, farm software packages or on paper forms.
- Dairy farmers have until Sunday 30th March to complete their sire advice. This can be done through HerdPlus. This deadline is for the inclusion of suggested bulls on breeding charts. Sire advice completed after this deadline will still be available to AI technicians through their handhelds. Breeding charts will be generated and posted to farmers in early April. Breeding charts with a completed sire advice are very useful as they match bulls to cows based on index. They also act as an inbreeding checker. If you have any queries on sire advice please call HerdPlus on 1850 600 900.
- As the 2014 calving season is now in full swing farmers are again reminded of the importance of recording all relevant data on calves at registration. Recording sires and calving ease surveys are critically important to the genetic evaluation process and the continued development of genetic indices. These details can be recorded at registration through a farm software package, agfood.ie or the animal events (white) book.

7 Milk Recording

National Milk Recording Statistics - Herds, Cows & EDIY 28/03/14						
Milk Recording Organisation	Total Herds Recorded YTD 28/03/14	No. EDIY Herds YTD 28/03/14	% Herds EDIY	Total No. Cows Recorded YTD 28/03/14	No. EDIY Cows YTD 28/03/14	% Cows EDIY
Munster	1,801	196	11%	106,496	14,230	13%
Progressive	1,415	350	25%	99,601	26,462	27%
Tipperary	30	7	23%	1,888	473	25%
Total	3,246	553	17%	207,985	41,165	20%

Recorded Cows by Milk Recording Organisation - Year on Year Comparison			
Milk Recording Organisation	YTD 2013 Cows Recorded 01/01/13 - 28/03/13	YTD 2014 Cows Recorded 01/01/14 - 28/03/14	2014 vs 2013 Year on Year Difference (%)
Munster	120,110	106,496	-12.8%
Progressive	103,442	99,601	-3.9%
Tipperary	1,674	1,888	11.3%
Total	223,552	207,985	-7.5%

8 Sheep Ireland

- The latest Sheep Ireland board meeting took place on Thursday 27th March (yesterday). Much was discussed on the day including the need to increase the visibility of our validation on the €uro-Stars. Breeders, farmers and the wider industry need to be continuously reminded that the €uro-Stars do work and that there are immediate gains to be achieved by adopting this technology when choosing rams. All 2014 CPT data is now in the Sheep Ireland database, this data can now be included in our regular examinations of how 5 Star rams (across all the Indexes) are performing compared to 1 Star rams. Once this is complete we will be making the information available to all.

Below are some of the early results based on the raw data collected for our CPT flocks (excluding UCD). UCD's data will be loaded onto the Sheep Ireland database during the next week.

Birth type	No. of Lambs	Average Birth Weight (kg)	Max Birth Weight (kg)	Min Birth Weight (kg)	Average Lambing Difficulty Score
Singles	323	5.97	9	2.7	1.27
Twins	1331	5.11	8	1.8	1.29
Triplets	527	4.24	7.2	1.7	1.31
Quads	91	3.73	6.5	1.6	1.56
Quins	15	3.42	4.6	2.8	3.53

Breed	Average Birth Weight (kg)
Blue Faced Leicester	4.98
Belclare	4.93
Charollais	4.90
Lleyn	5.11
Suffolk	5.05
Texel	5.07
Vendeen	4.86

- The validation of the €uro-Star evaluations does not just happen in-house in Sheep Ireland. For people to start believing in this technology, of course there needs to be other sources of validation. In Autumn 2013 the Teagasc Better farm programme embarked on a major validation project on the €uro-Star evaluations. Across upland and lowland flocks single sire mating was used at the beginning of the breeding season using both 5 and 1 Star rams on the Production Index. A similar validation was organised the previous year, but only involved proportion of the Better farm flocks. The results of this validation were positive across all the flocks. These publicly accessible examinations of the Indexes are critical to convince commercial sheep farmers across the country that these 5 Star breeding rams are worth using. The farm walks that were organised last year across all the Better farm flocks were a great forum to discuss the evaluations with farmers and we look forward to doing the same in 2014.
- Our Ultrasound scanning (Backfat and Muscle) service for 2014 was another topic of discussion at the board meeting. Each year we analyse all aspects of our scanning service, from how the service is administered, right through to the impact of the data in the genetic evaluations. In 2014 there will be changes that affect all aspects of the service. Firstly breeders will need to notify us of their intention to scan in advance of April 30th. This will allow us to deliver the service in a far more efficient manner than ever before. The first Pedigree ram sale takes place in Mid-July and it is critical that all scanning data has been collected for this breed and included in the evaluations before this date. Some later lambing breeds will hold their first ram sales a little later than mid-July but the urgency to collect the scanning data will be no less.

- ✚ Sheep Ireland have also looked at all the flocks that carried out the Ultrasound scanning in 2013. It is clear that some flocks that are using this service are not getting the maximum value from their investment. In order to obtain the maximum benefits of scanning it is essential that a flock is very well linked to other performance recording flocks. If very well linked, scanning can help boost accuracy% quite considerably. Where a flock is not linked, it is questionable how much benefit they can achieve from scanning. Indeed the same can be said for all data that these flocks submit to Sheep Ireland, breeders need to ensure they are well linked if they wish to receive meaningful evaluations with reasonable accuracy%. Once lambing data has been submitted this year Sheep Ireland will write to all breeders notifying them of their current status regarding linkage. Where flocks are not linked we will make a number of recommendations to help these flocks to improve this situation and in doing so get the most from the Euro-Star evaluations.
- ✚ On Wednesday our Ultrasound scanners completed their third day of proficiency training this year. The objective of this training is to ensure that all of our three scanners refine their skills for the coming year and ensure there are minimal differences in the scans collected by each individual technician. All lambs involved in the training are scanned at random by all three scanners, the results are recorded and once all lambs have been scanned the results are analysed. This process has been repeated numerous times **annually** and the results show minimal differences between all three scanners at this stage.

Below is a picture of one of Sheep Irelands experienced Ultrasound Scanning Technicians refreshing his skills for the busy year ahead.



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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, 19-MAR-2014 To 28-MAR-2014

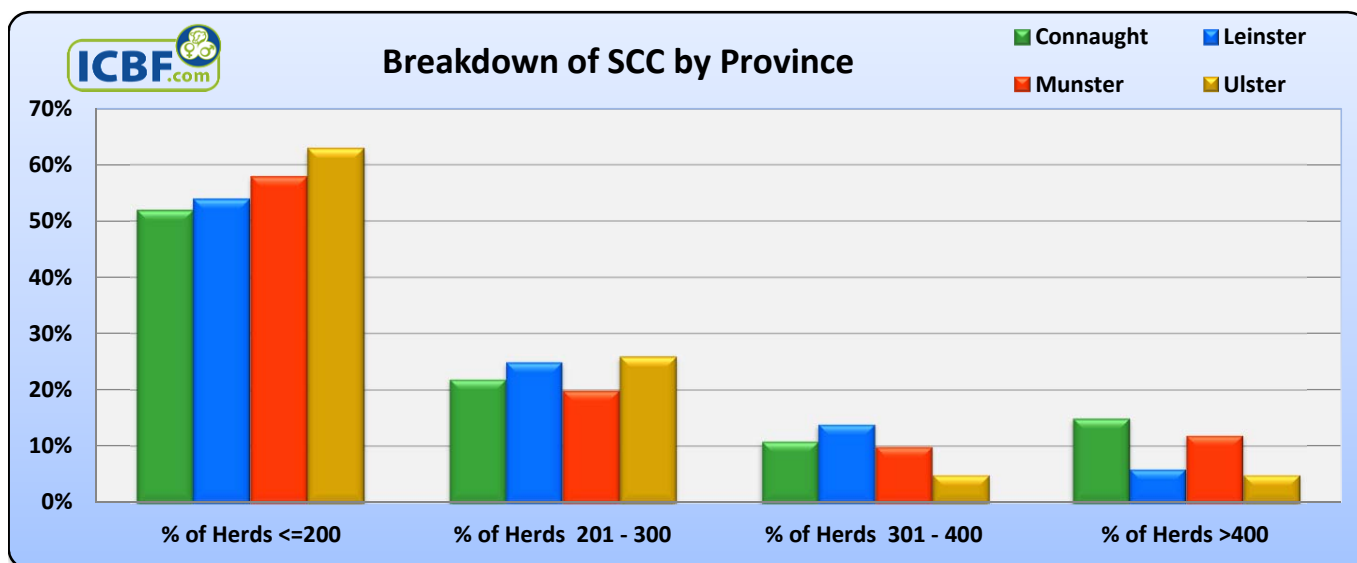
No. Herds Recorded	No. Cows Recorded	Avg Herd Size	Avg Milk kg/Cow	Average Fat %	Average Protein %	Average F+P kg	Average SCC*
Connaught	27	1,553	58	25.3	3.97	3.30	191
Leinster	146	11,584	79	25.9	4.01	3.33	178
Munster	323	20,802	64	26.2	4.04	3.27	179
Ulster	38	1,811	48	26.6	3.90	3.25	144
National Statistics	534	35,750	67	26.1	4.02	3.28	176

* Geometric Mean Herd SCC

SCC Distribution for the 10 day period, 19-MAR-2014 To 28-MAR-2014

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	27	1,553	52%	22%	11%	15%	191
Leinster	146	11,584	54%	25%	14%	6%	178
Munster	323	20,802	64%	20%	10%	12%	179
Ulster	38	1,811	48%	26%	5%	5%	144
National Statistics	534	35,750	67%	22%	11%	10%	176

* Geometric Mean Herd SCC



% Herd Breakdown for the 10 day period, 19-MAR-2014 To 28-MAR-2014								
No. Herds Recorded	No. Cows Recorded	Avg Herd Size	Best 20% SCC	Best 40% SCC	Average SCC**	Worst 40% SCC	Worst 20% SCC	
Connaught	27	1,553	58	108	145	195	235	324
Leinster	146	11,584	79	104	159	182	221	301
Munster	323	20,802	64	104	155	173	205	321
Ulster	38	1,811	48	74	118	167	189	268
National Statistics	534	35,750	67	102	155	177	211	311

** Percentile Herd SCC Rank (Median SCC)

