



National Genotyping Programme

NGP & SCEP Beef Herds



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine

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AgTech - it's in our DNA

New National Genotyping Programme

Media Brand of the Year 2023



New €83m tagging scheme to open in June

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A world first genotype cattle tagging scheme will open for farmer applications later this month.

The five-year scheme is anticipated to cost €83m, with €23m of Brexit Adjustment Reserve funding to fully cover implementation costs in the first year of the programme.

Year one will target 800,000 cattle. All calves born to genotyped cows will also need to be genotype-tagged in the following four years.

Participation will cost a 20-cow suckler herd €480 and a 90-cow dairy herd €2,160 over the duration of the

scheme. Controversially, farmers participating in the Suckler Carbon Efficiency Programme will have a higher cost for each animal required to be genotyped under the scheme.

Years two to five of the scheme will be funded by the Department of Agriculture, processors and farmers to the tune of €5m each per annum.

How the dairy and meat processors will fund their contributions to the scheme has yet to be agreed. Minister for Agriculture, Charlie McConalogue has cautioned that this payment cannot fall back on farmers.

FULL STORY INSIDE
See page 4



May hay

Eddie Barry stacking square bales of hay at Banogue, Co Limerick, with his dog 'Boss'. Eddie and his son, David, make around 5,000 square bales every year. The hay is fed to cattle and horses and they also sell to neighbouring farmers.
S. O'Brien/DAE

Fears rewetting will slash land prices

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There are mounting fears that the value of farmed peatland could be slashed due to rewetting proposals. Roscommon-based property consultant John Earley said four recent

EXCLUSIVE

sales fell through, due to a lack of clarity around rewetting and the eligibility of peatland for forestry.

Furthermore, the Irish Nature and Hill Farmers Association (INHEA) warned that rewetting will collapse the value of farmed peatland as has occurred with designated ground. It pointed out that designated land

was selling for €500/ac to €700/ac, while rough ground for forestry was making €5,000/ac to €6,000/ac.

INHEA leader Vincent Roddy questioned why anybody would invest in farmed peatland, given the threat of rewetting.

➔ Read more on pages 6, 12, 13 & 16

Revealed: how many farmers applied for SCEP in your county



SPECIAL NINE-PAGE TRACTOR FOCUS IN MACHINERY

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- Genotype remaining breeding animals (Cows/heifers/stockbulls) in 2023 for free under BAR funding.
- 4-year follow on commitment to genotype all calves at birth using Double Tissue Tag.
 - Calf samples count towards SCEP 70% Genotyping requirement. Remaining calves = €6/calf (heavily subsidised by DAFM and industry).
- Open for applications currently for **beef and dual purpose herds**
- 200k Beef cows + followers. Great opportunity for herds in SCEP (Especially new herds).
- Farmer must be registering their calves online.

Steps involved- Existing Stock in 2023

- Sign up online only via icbf.com
 - HerdPlus or SCEP membership required
 - Farmers must sign-up themselves (Cannot be signed up by Advisor)
- Generate button tags for cows, stock bulls and all replacement heifers.
 - All done for free through BAR.
 - Return to lab within 28 days.
 - Samples for all animals must be fully processed and complete before the end of the year.
 - Samples will only be sent for Animals not previously genotyped.



Steps involved- All calves born 2024 +

- Buy double tissue tags this autumn
 - Button tags will be available to purchase for herds with existing tags leftover from 2023
- Tag calves at birth and send samples to DNA lab
 - Addressed envelopes provided. Farmer pays for postage.
- Farmer records the calf details on Agfood.ie or through Farm Software (**Paper Registrations are not compatible**)
- DNA result automatically corrects any parentage errors and completes the registration triggering the blue card to be sent out



Typical DNA Registration Timeline



Farm



Day 1

Calf is born and tagged. Calf details recorded with AIMS. DNA sample posted to lab.

DNA Lab



Day 3

Sample is received in the DNA lab & acknowledged.

ICBF/DAFM



Day 7

Parentage confirmed & communicated with DAFM/farmer.

Farm



Day 11

Blue card arrives in the post from AIMS.



What are the main benefits to the farmer?

- **Labour saving:** Farmers signed up to NGP will have exclusive access to Double Tissue Tags.
- **Cost:** Genotype any remaining ungenotyped breeding stock **FREE**.
€6/calf cost for those calves not counted towards their annual 70% SCEP genotyping requirement.
- **Parent verification:** Parentage errors fixed prior to issuing of blue card

What are the main benefits to the farmer?

- **Genomic Eurostar figures:** Genomic Eurostars on calves by 4-6 weeks old
- **Commercial Beef Value (CBV):** CBV will be displayed on mart boards for all NGP herds.

How will NGP work for a herd in SCEP? Example

- SCEP reference of 25. Must sample 70% = 17 animals
- 28 calves born in the herd = 28 samples.
- 17 of the 28 samples will be counted towards SCEP (11 samples outside SCEP).

Step 1: Genotyping breeding animals in the herd 2023			
	Number	€/head	Cost
Ungenotyped breeding animals currently in the herd	6	€0	€0
Total cost to get herd fully genotyped for NGP ahead of DNA registration in 2024			€0
Step 2: Genotyping calves for NGP DNA registration each year 2024-2027			
SCEP reference number		25	
70% genotyping requirement		17	
Estimated number of calves born each year 2024-2027		28	
	Number	€/head	Cost
Calves counted towards SCEP genotyping requirement	17	€0	€0
Calves above SCEP genotyping requirement	11	€6	€66
Total estimated annual cost to John to participate in the NGP DNA registration from 2024-2027***		€66	

*** this cost will change depending on the actual number of calves born each year

- €6/calf already paid by the farmer will be accounted for when genotype deduction is made from their SCEP payment. Farmer will only be deducted €12 rather than €18/sample (**no double charge**).
- SCEP Billing: 17 samples x €12 (instead of 17 x €18).
- Farmer will only incur the €6 cost for the remaining 11 calves.
- **Total cost to herd from NGP: 11 x €6 = €66**

Other Common Questions

- **Will my calves born this autumn be genotyped?**
 - Genotyping at birth will not kick off until January. Any calves born before then will be registered under the existing system.
 - Female calves born after the Genotype button tags have been issued, and prior to January, will be up to the farmer to genotype privately.
- **When can I order double tissue tags?**
 - Double tissue tags are not currently available. ICBF will notify NGP herds once double tissue tags are available to order.
 - If herds need tags in the meantime, order enough conventional tags to last until the end of the year.
- **What if I have conventional tags left over in January?**
 - Order a matching button tag to take DNA samples for any conventional tags left over from autumn. These button tags will be available to order at the same time as the double tissue tags

Other Common Questions

- **Do DNA and BVD samples go to separate places?**
 - Yes. BVD and DNA labs are different. BVD as usual. Addressed envelopes provided for DNA which just need stamp!
- **How do I tell the difference between DNA and BVD samples?**
 - BVD = white bottle. DNA sample = pink bottle.
- **How often should I post samples?**
 - Recommended least once a week. The sooner you post samples, the sooner you will receive your blue cards.
- **How long will it take to get my blue card?**
 - Between 10 and 18 days (average 13 days in 2022).

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Questions from Webinar

- **If I join NGP, but then wish to get out of sucklers in the next couple of years, how will I be affected?**
 - Herds joining NGP are committing to registering calves and genotyping those calves at birth until 2027. If a herd were to leave prior to the end of the programme, they would be subject to a claw-back of the genotyping cost of any of the cows/heifers/stock bulls genotyped for free in 2023 under BAR funding. The percentage claw-back potentially owed is reduced each year longer the herd stays in the programme.
 - So, the exact impact of leaving the programme early, depends on the number of animals genotyped for free in 2023 and when the herd is leaving. Full details can be found in the T's and C's: [NGP T's and C's](#)
- **When will I get my button tags this Autumn? Do I have to order them myself?**
 - Button tags for your existing herd will be ordered within a few weeks of you being accepted into the programme. These will be ordered automatically by ICBF.

Questions from Webinar

- **What happens if I have an empty/invalid/poor quality sample.**
 - For cows/heifers/stock bulls genotyped for free in 2023, a hair-card sample will be issued to retest the animal free of charge where the previous sample was empty/low quality etc.
 - For calves genotyped at birth from January 2024, the farmer will have to order a replacement button tag from their tag supplier directly. The farmer will pay the tag supplier directly and will pay €4 by direct debit for the lab retest.
- **What if I buy in in-calf cows, heifers or other breeding animals after I have been issued my free genotype button tags in 2023?**
 - Any breeding animals bought into the herd after the button tag order for existing breeding animals is placed, will need to be genotyped privately by the farmer prior to calving down, at the farmers own cost.

Questions from Webinar

- **I have purebred male calves born in my herd this year. Will they be genotyped for free in 2023?**
 - No. Any homebred pedigree males will have to be genotyped privately by the farmer at their own cost in 2023. Pedigree males will be sampled at birth through the programme from 2024 onwards.
- **Some of the ungenotyped females currently in my herd are for slaughter and not for breeding. Do I need to genotype these animals?**
 - No. Only breeding animals need to be sampled this year. You can make sure that you do not get tags for non-breeding animals by logging into www.icbf.com, clicking “record events” and then “mark for culling”. If you receive a button tag for an animal that will not be calving in your herd, then you can dispose of the button tag and inform ICBF so we can close the sample on the tracking system.
- **What do I do if I receive a button tag for an animal that is already sold.**
 - Just dispose of any button tags that arrive for animals already dead or gone from the herd.

Questions from Webinar

- **Will the Double Tissue tag be more expensive than the current tags I use?**
 - The Double Tissue tag is on average approximately €1 more expensive than regular calf tags depending on supplier.
- **Can I use my current tag supplier?**
 - Yes. All four approved tag suppliers have tags compatible with NGP so you can stay with your existing supplier or switch suppliers as you see fit.
- **Are Double Tissue Tags compatible with EID?**
 - Yes. EID calf tags have been made a mandatory requirement by DAFM for all calves born since July 1st 2022. All double tissue tag solutions therefore must be compatible with EID.
- **Will my existing tagger work with the Double Tissue tag?**
 - Yes. Your existing tagger should work but if you want to be 100%, contact your tag supplier.

Questions from Webinar

- **When will Double Tissue tags be available to order?**
 - Double Tissue tags are not currently available to order but will be in the coming weeks, well in advance of January 2024.
- **When ordering Double Tissue tags for next year, do I have to notify the tag supplier that we need Double Tissue tags, or will ICBF notify the supplier?**
 - Your tag supplier will be notified by ICBF that you are participating in NGP and you will then only be able to purchase double tissue tags.
- **Can I replace unused tags with double tissue tags?.**
 - No. Unused calf tags cannot be swapped. A matching button tag will need to be ordered to use up these tags.

Questions from Webinar

- **Will the Euro-Star value be shown on the blue card/animal passport?**
 - No. There are no plans currently to include any Euro-star information on the animal passport.
- **Do I need to send in genotype sample for dead calves.**
 - Yes. The €4 lab cost will have already been paid by the farmer up front for all tags so there will be no saving to be made by not sending the sample for dead calves. It is also important to still sample dead calves to make sure the dam of the dead calf has not been mixed up with the dam of a live calf born at the same time.
- **What is the cost of stamps/postage to post DNA Samples.**
 - The estimated average cost of postage will be €1/calf. This will vary depending on how many samples are posted together in a single envelope.
The DNA Samples are roughly the same size, shape and weight as BVD samples, so the same number of stamps should suffice to post the same number of DNA samples as BVD samples.

Questions from Webinar

- **How long can I store samples? What is the best way to store samples?**
 - Samples are best posted straight away. However, if you must store samples for a short period, **the following should be avoided:**
 - Extreme heat (do not leave next to heater, radiator or fire/stove)
 - Extreme cold (do not place in freezer)
 - Direct sunlight
 - The best place to store samples is in a cool dark place such as cupboard. If storing in the fridge, place on a high shelf and away from any icy build up at the back of the fridge.
- **Must all calves be sampled at birth? What is the benefit of genotyping commercial male calves?**
 - All calves must be sampled regardless of sex or breed. Once genotyped, commercial animals intended for slaughter will get a Commercial Beef Value (CBV) which will be displayed on the martboard when selling.

Questions from Webinar

- **How long will it take to get Genomic Euro-star results from samples**
 - For existing breeding animals sampled in 2023, due to the volume of samples being processed, it will be a number of weeks before we get a result back from the lab. Once the lab have reported a result to ICBF, genomic evaluations happen on a weekly basis.
 - For calves sampled at birth should have a genomic evaluation within 2 weeks of receiving the blue card/animal passport.
- **Are calves fully parentage verified? Should I include the sire details when registering?**
 - Calves should will be fully parentage verified provided there is a DNA sample for both parents in the ICBF database. All dams and any ungenotyped sires still in the herd should be sampled in 2023 but if the sire is an ungenotyped male, then it will not be able to verify/predict that sire.
 - If you know/think you know what the sire of a calf is, then you should continue to record the details. If you are unsure, you can just record the sire breed. Either way, the genotype will correct/fill in the blank where possible.

Summary

- Applications open now.
- HerdPlus OR SCEP membership required
- Sign up by farmer online at www.icbf.com
- Online Calf Registration only (agfood.ie or Farm software)
- Only herds that sign up to NGP will have access to the double tissue tags
- Great opportunity for new **SCEP herds** and herds previously in BDGP to genotype rest of cows/heifers
- Button tags for ungenotyped animals this Autumn.
- Double tissue tags available this autumn
- Queries: email ngp@icbf.com or call 023-8820452

Our Farmer & Government Representation



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Our AI & Milk Recording Organisations



Our Herdbooks



Acknowledging Our Members