

INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDERS FORUM

Forum Summary

The first meeting of the ICBF Stakeholders Forum took place on February 1st in Tullamore.

This Forum was established by ICBF arising from the debacle following the roll out by ICBF of its changes Index on November 28th.

Purpose:

The purpose of this meeting was to allow Stakeholders an opportunity to explore with ICBF & Teagasc all aspects of the New Index and to agree on measures to correct the failings of the ICBF November 28th evaluations.

Chairman: The meeting was chaired by Paul Dillon, a former official in the Department of Agriculture.

In Attendance:

- Breed Societies: Abrac, Belgian Blue, Blonde, Dexter, Charolais, Hereford, Holstein Freisian, Irish Angus, Irish Aberdeen Angus, Limousin, Parthenaise, Piedmontese, Saler, Shorthorn, Simmental & Speckle Park.
- Farm organisations: IFA, ICMSA, IBLA, ICSA, INHFA & Beef Plan.
- Department of Agriculture, Bord Bia, Teagasc. ICOS, MII & ICBF.
- A.I. Organisations: Dovea Genetics, Eurogene & NCBC

SCEP – The fact that the Minister had in effect Decoupled SCEP from the Eurostar Evaluations was highlighted from the Stakeholders, therefore demonstrating that the Evaluation System was unworkable and broken.

This means that Commercial Farmers meeting the SCEP targets should no longer be an issue. However, the problem facing Pedigree Farmers has not been addressed and Sean Coughlan was adamant that there would be no row back in spite of being asked by many Stakeholders. Stakeholders were in agreement that this issue must be addressed before the start of Bull Sales.

Presentations & Discussion:

There were two presentations given from Aidan Murray Teagasc & Paul Crossan Teagasc and this was followed by close on two hours of discussion.

Key Actions:

In Summary Sean Coughlan CEO of ICBF outlined 8 Key Action Points which ICBF would strive to work on prior to the next Stakeholders Forum which was scheduled for February 22nd.

The action points agreed on were as follows:

- Cow Weight – The Meeting agreed that in addition to there being too much of a bonus given to extremely light cows and too much of a penalty applying to heavy cows, that the ideal cow

weight of 670kgs was too light in order to allow for the production of high-end saleable animals.

- Weanling Prices – It was agreed that ICBF would undertake to analyse sale price data for weanlings by Breed. This action is required as it is felt that a set weanling price across all breeders is not reflective of current markets.
- One Size Fits All – ICBF are to undertake a review of the Beef Model which is currently a Calf to Beef model. The meetings' view was that this system does not reflect farmers who sell at the weanling stage.
- Market Specification – The evaluation model currently uses the UK Supermarket specification as the idea and it was agreed that the impact of other specifications also be look at.
- Imported Genetics – ICBF committed to working on a mechanism whereby Breeders could introduce new outcross genetics without having their evaluations hit rock bottom.
- Animal Search – It was agreed that ICBF restore the € values to the sub index in the animal search as it was shown prior to the November 28th run. Without these € values it is not possible to see where animals had fallen or risen between runs.

Additional Information:

Carbon: The impact of Carbon in the evaluations was discussed at length. It was confirmed that there is no financial reward for Carbon and the positive impact of Suckler Cows on marginal land is also not factored in. The situation in France where Farmers are getting rewarded for carbon was noted as it contrasts with what ICBF are inflicting on Irish Farmers.

Stakeholders in Agreement

The Stakeholders were all in agreement that the work of this forum should be two pronged as follows:

- ✓ Immediate – Take action to restore the saleability of Pedigree Animals that were decimated by the November Evaluation Run.
- ✓ Medium Term – Work through the Index to ensure errors are corrected in order to try and restore credibility to the index.