

★★★★★ **New Euro-Star Sheep Indexes** ★★★★★  
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New Sheep Euro-Star evaluations are being released for the first time at Sheep Sales this year. Sheep bred in flocks that participated in the new ‘Lambplus ®’ Sheep Breeding Scheme will have their ‘Euro – Star’ evaluations printed in sales catalogues.

**Background.**

‘Sheep Ireland’ was established late last year after consultation with the Sheep Industry. ‘Sheep Ireland’ aims to use new technology and ICBF (who run Sheep Ireland) systems to develop new Euro-Star evaluations that will integrate commercial and pedigree data. The breeding information, recording, and reporting service – LambPlus® is also in its development phase. More information can be found at [www.sheep.ie](http://www.sheep.ie).

**Emphasis on “Easy-Care” Traits.**

To improve commercial ewe performance, the emphasis must be on maternal traits that will lead to lower cost and easy care sheep. Sheep Ireland aims to develop breeding values for a wider range of performance traits and indexes with a higher emphasis on maternal performance that will not only provide breeders with better tools to make breeding decisions, but very importantly give commercial farmers more information to aid in ram purchasing decisions.

**Overall Index & relevant sub-indexes.**

The new indexes are based on the same profit principles as the Dairy EBI & Beef Euro-Star systems. The total index ‘Sheep Value’ is the overall evaluation of the lamb combining three sub indexes. The Health Sub-Index will be developed as data is recorded.

1. The **Production** sub index shows a lambs genetic merit for Terminal traits i.e. growth rate, carcass score, fat score etc. Its the ability of a ram or ewe to produce good terminal progeny.
2. The **Maternal** sub index is a reflection of the genetic merit of an animal for Maternal traits i.e. how efficient their progeny will be at getting a lamb to slaughter weight, how easy lambed they are & their mothering ability etc. The main aim of this index is to help select efficient replacement females & for selecting rams for breeding efficient replacement females from.
3. The **Lambing** sub index shows an animal’s genetic merit for lambing – the main components being ease of lambing & survival ability.

Sheep Ireland Euro-Star Overview					
Overall Index	Sub - Indexes	Traits			
Sheep Value	<b>Production</b> (Direct Progeny)	Days to Slaughter	Ultrasound Muscle & Fat		
	<b>Maternal</b> (Daughters Progeny)	Weaning Weight	Ultrasound Muscle & Fat	Lambing Ease	Lambing Survival
	<b>Lambing</b> (Direct Progeny)	Lambing Ease	Lambing Survival		

## €uro-Stars – Sales Catalogues

Following is an example of what Ram Purchasers can expect to see in Sales Catalogues this year.



**€uro – Value (€):**  
Shows extra profit expected from lambs sired by this ram compared to an 'average' lamb.

**Sheep Value:**  
Gives overall Eurostar rating.

**Sub Indexes:** Shows which market the Ram is most suitable for. Ram Purchasers can focus on the Sub – Index that best fits their needs.

Sheep Ireland @ €uro-Star Evaluation		
Tag Number	IE1234567012345	
Date of Birth	01/01/2009	
	€uro-Value (€)	Acc (%)
Sheep Value	€0.24	30
<b>Sub-Indexes</b>		<b>€uro-Stars (Within Breed)</b>
Production	€0.45	41 ★★★★★
Maternal	-€0.23	42 ★★★★★
Lambing	€0.02	12 ★★★★★

**Acc %:** Accuracy % shows how much confidence can be placed in the figures. It is a reflection of how much data & in what size flocks it was collected in.

0-20% = **Low**

20-30% = **Average**

30 – 40% = **High**

40%+ = **Very High**

**It is very important to always take the Accuracy % figure into account when making a decision based on the €uro-Stars.**

**€uro-Stars:** The €uro - Stars help give an instant indication as to where an index for a particular animal places it compared to all others within its breed.

- ★★★★★ 5 Stars: **Top 20%**
- ★★★★ 4 Stars: **Top 60-80%**
- ★★★ 3 Stars: **40-60%**
- ★★ 2 Stars: **Bottom 20-40%**
- ★ 1 Star: **Bottom 20%**

**Attention all Beef & Sheep Farmers:**  
This is the same €uro-Star system that will have been seen in catalogues for Beef Bulls at sales.

### Guidelines about how to use the €uro-Stars.

Ram Purchasers should:

1. Identify what aspect(s) of their flocks performance they would like the Ram to improve in their flock. i.e. Production, Maternal, Lambing Sub-Index.
2. Select those Rams that have at least 4 €uro-Stars for the desired Sub Index(s).
3. Pay attention to the Accuracy % of the €uro-Stars at all times.
4. The selected Ram should of course meet with the Purchasers requirements from a visual viewpoint (conform to Breed Type etc).
5. The €uro-Star figures should be used as a **tool** to help in the selection process. The higher the Accuracy % of the figures the more emphasis use can be made of this selection tool.

You can find out more about Lambplus & the new €uro-Star evaluations by contacting Stephen Potterton 045-520796 (Tully Bull Performance Test Centre, Tully, Co.Kildare).

**Distribution of Euro-Star Values (for Breeds in Lambplus)**



<b>Vendeen</b>					
	★	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★
<b>Overall Sheep Value</b>	-0.122	0.01	0.01 - 0.093	0.093	0.235
<b>Sub - Indexes</b>					
<b>Production</b>	-0.155	-0.019	-0.019 - 0.068	0.068	0.21
<b>Maternal</b>	-0.155	-0.036	-0.036 - 0.05	0.05	0.185
<b>Lambing</b>	-0.02	0.006	0.006 - .011	0.011	0.038



<b>Suffolk</b>					
	★	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★
<b>Overall Sheep Value</b>	-0.138	-0.043	-0.043 - 0.015	0.015	0.122
<b>Sub - Indexes</b>					
<b>Production</b>	-0.204	-0.084	-0.084 - -0.03	-0.03	0.103
<b>Maternal</b>	-0.102	0.013	0.013 - 0.068	0.068	0.178
<b>Lambing</b>	-0.002	0.005	0.005 - 0.007	0.007	0.023



<b>Charollais</b>					
	★	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★
<b>Overall Sheep Value</b>	-0.233	-0.149	-0.149 - -0.032	-0.032	0.136
<b>Sub - Indexes</b>					
<b>Production</b>	-0.277	-0.166	-0.166 - -0.027	-0.027	0.168
<b>Maternal</b>	-0.143	-0.034	-0.034 - 0.05	0.05	0.166
<b>Lambing</b>	-0.021	-0.009	-0.009 - -0.007	-0.007	0.004



<b>Belclare</b>					
	★	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★
<b>Overall Sheep Value</b>	-0.124	-0.006	-0.006 - 0.081	0.081	0.198
<b>Sub - Indexes</b>					
<b>Production</b>	-0.074	-0.003	-0.003 - 0.052	0.052	0.137
<b>Maternal</b>	-0.176	-0.055	-0.055 - 0.04	0.04	0.158
<b>Lambing</b>	-0.003	0.02	0.02 - 0.036	0.036	0.039



<b>Texel</b>					
	★	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★
<b>Overall Sheep Value</b>	-0.26	-0.146	-0.146 - -0.052	-0.052	0.097
<b>Sub - Indexes</b>					
<b>Production</b>	-0.18	-0.054	-0.054 - 0.029	0.029	0.162
<b>Maternal</b>	-0.178	-0.062	-0.062 - 0.022	0.022	0.152
<b>Lambing</b>	-0.104	-0.067	-0.067 - -0.061	-0.061	-0.01

### Where to find sheep with Euro - Stars this year

#### **Pedigree Flock-Owners**

71 Pedigree Flockowners from 6 breeds participated in the Lambplus Scheme this year:

Texel	45 Flocks
Suffolk	15 Flocks
Vendeen	8 Flocks
Charollais	6 Flocks
Belclare	2 Flocks
Ile de France	1 Flock

They are the only Flocks which will have Euro-Stars available for their sheep (see list 'Pedigree Rams with Euro-Stars – Supplier list 2009').

These Flock Owners have put great effort into recording: Identification, Ancestry, Lambing Difficulty, Rearing, Liveweight & Mating data on their flock.

These Flock Owners also had Ultra sound Muscle & Fat scan measurements recorded on their lambs. Donegal FRS carried out the Ultrasound scanning work. All of the historic PSBIP data together with this new Lambplus data was used in the ICBF Genetic evaluation software to produce the new Euro-Star Sheep Indexes. The Index development work was overseen by Dr Peter Amer & his team from Abacus Bio in New Zealand.

#### **Pedigree Sheep Sales**

Ram's from these flocks will also be sold at both the Premier Sheep Sales as well as other Society Sales.

#### **Premier Sale Dates 2009**

<b>Breed</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Contact</b>
<b>Vendeen</b>	Wednesday 29 <sup>th</sup> July	Roscommon Mart	Yvonne Johnston - 087 - 2663020
<b>Charollais</b>	Saturday 1 <sup>st</sup> August	Tullow Mart	Sheena McCarthy - 086-2730363
<b>Belclare</b>	Tuesday 4 <sup>th</sup> August	Kilkenny Mart	Liam Delaney 087 - 6471134
<b>Suffolk</b>	Saturday 8 <sup>th</sup> August	Roscrea Mart	Anne Mitchell - 086-2428554
<b>Texel</b>	Saturday 15 <sup>th</sup> August	Blessington Mart	Jim Walker - 087-9873264

#### Using the new Euro-Star Indexes to purchase Rams – A Commercial Sheep Farmer's opinion

Andy Moloney, Rathgreedon, Edenderry, Co.Offaly. 600 breeding ewes & 150 Suckler Cows.

“I have experience of working with the Beef Euro-Star system when selecting Sires to use in my Suckler Herd. I find the system easy to follow and allows a producer to focus in on what traits are important to their particular herd.

“The new Sheep Ireland Euro-Star figures are presented in the very same way. They are a tool to help Sheep Farmers make their Ram selection decisions with. They are not replacing a farmer's visual inspection of an animal but rather giving them extra information to use before buying a Ram. I will be looking to source Rams for my flock that have 4 – 5 Stars for ‘Production’. Commercial Sheep Farmers should make use of Euro-Star figures, where available, when purchasing their Rams.”

### **How to get Euro-Stars on your flock.**

In order for Flock owners to get Euro-Stars on their sheep they must first join up to Lambplus. Joining Lambplus will require the recording of Sheep Breeding data throughout the year.

Lambplus Participants will be required to record the following data:

1. **Lambs Identification & Ancestry details** - NSIS/Tattoo numbers of Lambs & their Sire & Dam.
2. **Lambing Difficulty** - Level of assistance required at lambing.
3. **Lamb Rearing Status** - Single reared as a twin etc.
4. **Weight Data** - Birthweight & Liveweight data.
5. **Mating Data** - Date & Details of Ram(s) used.

ICBF then uses this data recorded in your flock together with all other data for recorded for sheep in your breed to produce Euro-Star evaluations. Any data recorded on relatives of your sheep that are belonged to other Lambplus Flock Owners will also have an effect on your figures. **That is why it is important that as many Pedigree Flockowners as possible take part in Lambplus so as a true picture of how different bloodlines are performing is able to emerge.**

Flock Owners have the option of recording their data through the web or by paper. The cost is as follows:

<b>Lambplus Service Fees</b> (Incl VAT)	
<b>Service Type</b>	<b>Payment by Direct Debit</b>
Website Service	€50
Paper Service*	€90 + €1 per Ewe

*\*Paper Service costs more due to Data keying & Postage costs.*



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