

Notes and Explanations for Members and Potential Members of the Irish Dexter Cattle Society -- IDCS

Genotyping Considerations

The IDCS is a new society and in order to be given permission to operate a herd book we needed to have a breeding programme approved by the Dept. Of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM). All new breeding programmes are required to be fully compliant with all EU and DAFM regulations. Existing societies will have to come into compliance with these rules and regulations over time. At the time we began working on our breeding programme the only cattle society in Ireland with a breeding programme approved under the current rules was the Irish Limousin Society.

When it comes to the integrity of the herd book the rules are very stringent and their aim is to ensure that no animal is entered into a herd book unless it's parents are correctly recorded and both parents are fully registered within the breed.

The only acceptable solutions were full genotyping or a high level of random sampling conducted in a verifiable way, combined with inspections. The latter would have proven difficult, expensive and less effective than the former and the level of oversight of the society by DAFM would have been much higher.

The benefits of full genotyping have been pointed out in previous notes but some follow up questions need to be addressed. They fall into two main categories.

The first category regards providing proof that a problem exists. Examples are;

So accidental or intentional introduction on non-Dexter blood is a major problem?

And Irish breeders cannot be trusted to submit accurate data about female registrations?

What errors have arisen?

What size of a problem is this?

What are all these problems with Irish registered Dexters and by extension Irish Dexter breeders?

What errors have arisen?

What size of a problem is this?

How does 'corruption of the breed' manifest itself?

How big an issue is this? Details please.

Genotyping 'increases herd integrity'. What are the details and scope of current problems with herd integrity?

Without Genotyping it is impossible to estimate the level of the problem. However through the BDGP scheme many breeders have found out about errors in their data recording. From calves being sired by incompletely castrated bulls, through fence jumpers, through cows taking other cows calves and accidental errors in data recording etc; errors do arise. Also as in every part of life there are always individuals who are prepared to break rules to advantage themselves. Genotyping will help in eliminating such errors.

The other general category accepts that such errors occur but questions whether or not such errors are important and worries about how to deal with such errors when they are notified.

It is an absolute requirement of the DAFM and the EU that pedigrees are correctly recorded. It is also the basic function of a herd book that it correctly records the breeding of the animals entered into it.

When errors arise some may be easily corrected, for example if the true parents of the calf have been genotyped and are registered pedigree Dexters, the animal can be registered with the corrected data. Some breeders may choose to genotype other animals in their herd to identify the parents and if successful that animal can be registered provided both parents are pedigree registered Dexters. For an animal where the parents cannot be identified as pure bred registered Dexters, that animal cannot and should not be entered into the herd book.

Membership

Since the IDCS is new all people joining the society are new members. However new members who are or were members of the UKDCS and had a herd name (prefix) with the UKDCS will be treated as renewing members rather than as new members. For this first year of the IDCS the date after which renewals will be considered late has been moved to 1st March in order to give people time to get their applications in.

Please note in order to register animals a member must have a herd name. However if a member does not intend to register stock a herd name is optional.

Associate members can attend IDCS meetings, receive IDCS communications and attend IDCS events but cannot register animals nor vote on matters decided by members. This type of membership might suit a person with an interest in the breed but no with intention of breeding animals.