

Irish Dexter Cattle Society

Members Handbook

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1. Introduction

The Aim of the Irish Dexter Cattle society (IDCS) is to preserve, with the aid of available technology, the Dexter breed by adhering to a strict breeding programme which maintains the breed characteristics.

1.1. Geographical territory

The geographical territory within which the Society is licenced to conduct its breeding programme is the Republic of Ireland. This licence is granted by the Department of Agriculture food & Marine (DAFM).

1.2. Breed Characteristics

The Dexter is an ancient Irish breed of cattle. Due to their displacement by so called 'improved' breeds they have become rare and are categorised as an Irish native rare breed.

It is the smallest breed of cattle in the EU. It is a dual purpose breed that produces very high quality milk and beef. They are hardy, doing well on marginal land and are excellent foragers. They finish easily off grass without concentrates. They are regular breeders, easy calving with excellent maternal traits and have very good disease and parasite resistance.

2. The Herd book

The Irish Herd book was established on the 1st of January 2021 following Brexit, and received its Licence to operate shortly afterwards. Before that all registrations were done through the UK Dexter Cattle Society (UKDCS).

2.1. What is a Herd book?

A herd book is the system of recording the breed line (ancestry) of any fully registered animal born in the geographical area for which the herd book is licenced. This is done in Republic of Ireland through the online service Taurus, provided by the ICBF (Irish Cattle Breeding Federation).

New members are asked to sign an ICBF consent form, this is an instruction from the member to the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Marine (DAFM) to allow both ICBF and The IDCS (Irish Dexter Cattle Society) to have access to the data held by the DAFM on their herd.

Without access to this data the IDCS cannot verify the breeding line of an individual animals and in turn cannot issue a certification verifying the pedigree (Pedigree certificate).

3. Memberships & Subscriptions

Membership to the Irish Dexter Cattle Society (IDCS) can be taken out in two ways.

- Using the online facility on our website www.dextercattlesociety.ie or
- Using a paper based form, see the documents & forms section of the website for details.

The society encourages the use of the online system to reduce cost and speed up processing. A **Membership** as it relates to the online system is merely an account with a user ID and password. To avail of the full suite of services especially all discounts a user must have a **Subscription**, this is a paid service. To take out a subscription go to www.dextercattlesociety.ie and click on [Membership & Registration/Membership New & Renewals](#) and complete the online forms.

Note - A full set of instructions can be found at [Membership & Registration/Website Instructions for Members](#)

Upon completion of the registrations process & payment the online system will retain the user's payment method and will automatically renew the subscription on the anniversary of the initial payment, the user can choose to stop payments at any time.

If a member changes their payment method e.g. credit card, they will need to update the system. This can be done by logging on to the system, and selecting **My Account/Dashboard** and choosing **Payment Method**.

Note - A member can cancel their membership at any time by going to **My Account/Dashboard & selecting My Subscription** and clicking on **Cancel**. If a member asks the office to do the cancellation, a charge of €20 will incur.

The initial membership/subscription fee includes the allocation of a herd prefix; the herd prefix is a unique identifier or name used to identify a farm or herd e.g. Craggy Hills. All subsequent animals registered to that farm will be named as follows, prefix + name e.g. Craggy Hills Millie.

If you join by paper application the fee is higher and you will need to remember to pay annually. Full membership entitles the member to significantly reduced rates for registering calves, birth notifying bulls, fully registering bulls, genotyping etc. it also entitles the member to vote on issues and committee elections.

3.1. Associate Member

The society has an Associate membership, this level on membership does not include the right to register calves or to vote. It is used mainly by members only wishing to finish stock for slaughter and by overseas breeders who wish to be connected to IDCS.

4. Registering a female calf

All female calves must be tagged and registered with the Department of Agriculture Food & Marine (DAFM) as per the Department guidelines. This can be done online through www.agfood.ie and the AIM system or the older white card paper based system

Female calves should be notified/Registered with the Irish Dexter Society before they are 45 days old. If they are over 45 days of age a late fee will be applied. Instructions for registering a female calf online can be found on our website by choosing [Membership & Registration/Website Instructions for Members](#). Notifications/Registrations on paper costs more (See Fee Schedule, Section 12).

Note – Once a member had completed the online membership process each time they log in they will be directed to what is called their **Dashboard**. Most tasks can be performed in this area (see website instruction for members above).

The information for each calf must include the animal name (to appear on Cert, remember prefix + name), the **Correct** ear tag number, the Sire Ear tag No, and the colour of the calf. The office will obtain the date of birth and the dam details from the national data base.

Each calf born after 1/1/2022 will have the genomic status of their sire and dam checked and only calves whose parents have a genomic record will be registered. All calves must have registered parents and grandparents on the system.

As a concession the IDCS council have agreed a basic fee for the registration of older females born before 31/12/2021 provided they have two generations of pedigree registered parents and grandparents. The dam does not need a genomic record. The female herself will need a genomic record before a calf can be registered to her.

Any animal registered after 1/1/2022 that fails to its nominated sire or dam following genotyping and where no alternative is predicted will be de-registered and the Zoo technical cert (Pedigree cert) returned to the IDCS office.

5. Birth Notification

Birth Notification is used to give a certificate identifying an animal as bred from pedigree registered Dexter stock. It is mainly used for males intended for the beef trade or occasionally for females that are not intended for breeding.

Many of the Dexter beef marketing outlets require an animal to be Birth Notified. There is no time limit on notifying animals for Birth Notification and the certificate is issued only in electronic format i.e. a pdf.

To Birth notify a Bull online, go to the IDCS website section, **Membership & Registration/Registrations & Fees**, see [Link](#) scroll down to the **Bull Registration & Birth Notify** area and select **Birth Notification**.

6. Fully Registering a Bull

The bull calf must be tagged and registered with the Department of agriculture as per the Department of Agriculture Food & Marine (DAFM) guidelines. This can be done online through www.agfood.ie and the AIM system or the older white card paper based system

To fully register a Dexter bull with the IDCS, the animal has to be genotyped, and checked for the Chondroplasia gene. To fully register a Bull online, go to the IDCS website section, [Membership & Registration/Registrations & Fees](#), scroll down to the **Bull Registration & Birth Notify** area and select **Full registration of a bull (or through your members dashboard)**

The fee for fully registering a bull includes genotyping and the Chondroplasia test (see fee structure Section 12). The online registration system will require a Name for the bull, the Herdprefix for the herd, his colour and his sire tag number or AI code.

It should be noted that the bull's sire and dam must have a genomic record. If the sire and dam's genomic record is in Rep of Ireland parent verification will be established once the bull has been genotyped.

If the bull was imported from the UK, the genomic record will be held in the Netherlands where UKDCS (UK Dexter Cattle Society) do their genotyping. If this is the case, the hair sample will need to be sent to VHL laboratories in the Netherlands to confirm the parent. Email address is info@vhlgenetics.com

Once the member has completed registration and paid the fee as above, the process can begin.

1. A hair sample kit will be sent to the current member/owner of the bull and when the sample is returned to the ICBF the genotyping process can begin. This process can take about a month.
2. Once parentage is confirmed, the same sample is then sent to the lab to test whether the animal is carrying the Chondroplasia gene. These tests are only carried out sporadically, so it can take a couple for months for the results to come back.
3. When the Chondroplasia results are returned to the office a Zootechnical Cert will be sent to the current owner.

7. Genotyping

Genotyping in modern cattle breeding programs is used for many things e.g. analysing traits that are required in a breed e.g. weight gain, ease of calving, forage efficiency etc. In this case, the IDCS use Genotyping mainly to establish parentage i.e. is the dam & sire the same as that reported on the registration. This can only be achieved properly if the sire and dam already have an Irish genomic record i.e. a record of their parentage on the ICBF database.

The DAFM requires control measures to be in place before a breed society licence is issued. One of the control measures requires that all breeding animals both dams and sires have an Irish genomic record before they become breeding animals. This is being done in order that their calves can be parent verified.

Currently the failure rate to the nominated parent, in the Dexter herd, is 10% in sires and 5% in dams so there is still a lot of incorrect information recorded for the existing breeding herd. Only strict adherence to the control measures will address this.

Any animal registered after 1/1/2022 that fails to its nominated sire or dam following genotyping and where no alternative is predicted will be de-registered.

In the Irish system once a genomic hair sample is submitted for an animal, that sample will be compared to the nominated parents genomic record, if it fails to one or both parents, the database will be searched and if a different animal is predicted that animal will be proposed. In that case the sire will be substituted. In the case of a failed dam the owner will be notified, it's the owners responsibility to alert their local DAFM office (DVO) and make the change accordingly.

Where there is no genomic record for a sire in the Rep of Ireland but there is a record through the UKDCS in VHL in the Netherlands then samples from the offspring can be sent to VHL for sire verification. This service has been availed of by a number of members who unfortunately slaughtered an older registered bull without getting a genomic record in the Rep of Ireland.

8. Chondrodysplasia

Chondrodysplasia is the gene which causes the dwarfing of an animal. Currently all fully registered bulls are tested to ascertain whether they carry this gene. It is not a fault and some members like to breed SHORT Dexters. Two animals which carry the Chondrodysplasia gene should not be bred together as a quarter of the resultant calves will be 'Bulldogs' meaning they will be deformed and will be aborted at between four to seven months with potential damage to the dam and with the loss of a breeding year for the cow.

For those seeking to breed short animals, breeding short to short does not increase the chances of producing a short calf. When one short parent and one non short parent is bred, 50% of calves will be short and 50% non-short. If both parents are short 50% of calves will be short, 25% will be non-short and 25% will be bulldogs'. These figures are approximations, the point being that it is not a good idea to breed two animals with the Short Chondrodysplasia gene BD1 variant

The hair sample used to create a genomic record for a bull can, once he is parent verified, can be used in the Chondro/ BD1 test. This test is only run periodically by Weatherby's labs and so can delay the issuing of a pedigree certificate for a fully registered bull by a couple of months. The result of the BD1 test will be printed on the Pedigree Cert of the bull.

Note. Buyers should always ask for a Pedigree Certificate or ZC when buying an animal that is said to be registered.

9. Information on Importing a Dexter

When importing a Dexter animal from outside the Rep of Ireland follow the DAFM rules on importation.

For the IDCS, the animal must be accompanied by a pedigree certificate issued by the country of origin. A copy of that pedigree cert must be sent to the IDCS office and the appropriate fee paid through the IDCS website. All imported animals must be genotyped in the Rep of Ireland in order that their offspring can be parent verified.

The office will then create the back pedigree record for each animal imported. Where a male is already fully registered, the parent verification and the result of the Chondroplasia test recorded on the copy of the Pedigree Cert will be sufficient and will not need to be repeated but a hair sample must be submitted so that he can have an Irish genomic record to parent verify his calves.

10. Information on breeding practices

It is NOT GOOD PRACTICE to breed closely related animals together such as father and daughter, however the rule from DAFM is that these animals are entitled to be registered and so we are obliged to register them. Close breeding is sometimes practiced in order to secure a desirable trait in a breed and if it works well it is referred to as Line Breeding but if it does not breed the desired good quality animal it is called in-Breeding and the animals should be culled. This is the breeder's decision.

11. Information on Duplicate Certs/Documents/Transfers

It is not necessary to notify the change of ownership of an animal to the IDCS, this information is available to the society when it is recorded through the AIMS/DAFM system. If a member requires a pedigree cert with their name on it, the member can order a duplicate cert through the registrations section of the IDCS website. Members can apply for any duplicate document through the IDCS website see the Fees Structure, Section 12.

12. Schedule of fees

12.1. Memberships

Annual membership renewal (Online application)	€60
Annual membership renewal (Paper application)	€70
New membership including fee to register a herd prefix (Online application)	€85
New membership including fee to register a herd prefix (Paper application)	€95
Lapsed member re-joining. Annual membership fee plus admin charge of	€20
Associate membership annual fee. Online application	€30
Associate membership annual fee. Paper application	€40

12.2. Registrations

(BOTH parents must be genotyped before an animal can be registered. Registration costs do not include the cost of genotyping or Chondrodysplasia testing)

Female registrations

Online registration of female calf within 45 days of birth	€20
Paper registration of female calf within 45 days of birth	€30
Late online registration of female calf	€35
Late paper registration of female calf	€45
Registration of imported female, copy of pedigree cert required & Irish Genotyping required.	€60
Female registration. Non-members. Genotyping required	€100
Registration of imported female. Non-members. Genotyping required.	€150

(All outstanding fees must be paid before a registration will be processed)

Bull registration

(Chondrodysplasia test required. Genotyping required)

Bull Registration (Members)	€70
Bull Registration (Non-members)	€150
Registration of Imported bull, Proof of parent verification.	€60
Registration of Imported bull, (copy of pedigree cert required & Irish Genotyping required)	€170
Birth notification, On request. Delivered electronically (Members only)	€5
Embryo registration. Members only, price per embryo. Calf registration & parent verification fees will also apply at birth	€20

12.3. Other Services

Genotyping through the society each animal to be genotyped. (Note parent verification is via genotyping)	€25
Transfer of ownership fees. Members only. Not required but may be requested by new owner. Per animal being transferred	€7.50
Duplicate cert. Members only Duplicate cert	€7.50
Chondrodysplasia test of genotyped animal Chondrodysplasia test	€10