

Irish Dairy Records Co-operative (IDRC)

This page contains information on:

- Structure of IDRC
- Statistics
- Analysis of performance

Structure of Irish Dairy Records Co-operative

IDRC is a co-operative consisting of 27 organisations representing the Dairy Industry and it is the responsible authority for co-ordinating national milk recording and authenticating official milk records. IDRC is a member of the International Committee for Animal Recording ([ICAR](#)) and is a signatory to the international agreement for milk recording.

IDRC is governed by a Board of Directors which consists of 10 members elected from the Shareholders' nominees and one member nominated by the [Department of Agriculture and Food](#). The Board is advised by a Technical sub-committee drawn from the organisations comprising the membership of the co-op. Professional animal breeding expertise and field supervision of recording is provided by the Department. The National Director is a seconded Department Officer.

Statistics

In 1998 a total of 394568 cows in 6982 herds were milk recorded by members of Irish Dairy Records Co-op. The total includes 7957 cows in 104 herds recorded in Northern Ireland by Herd Tech in association with Progressive Genetics. The 1998 recording numbers represent an increase of 5.7% cows and 4.7% herds over the 1997 level of recording. The results indicated that the annual rate of increase in cows under recording, which in 1997 had fallen to 3.5%, may return to levels required to meet the target of at least 60% of the national herd in recording early in the new century.

Figure A. Cows recorded
1987-1998

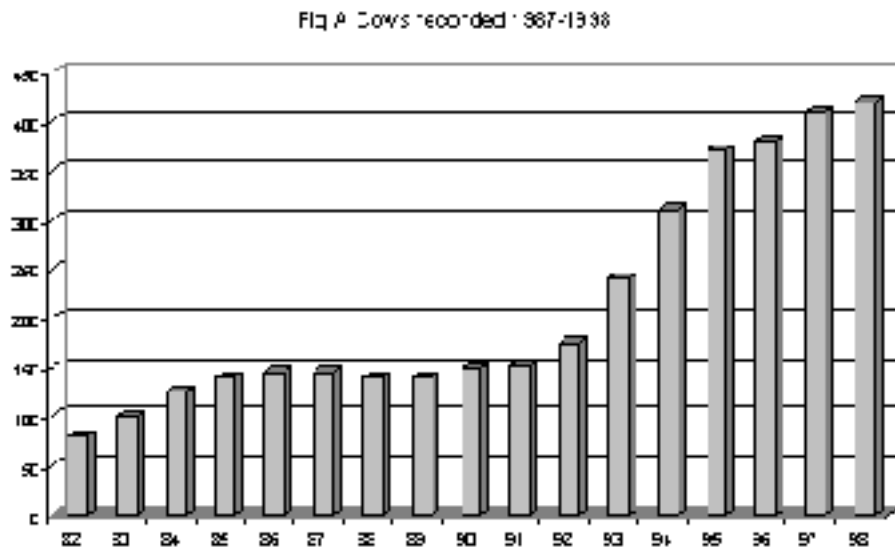
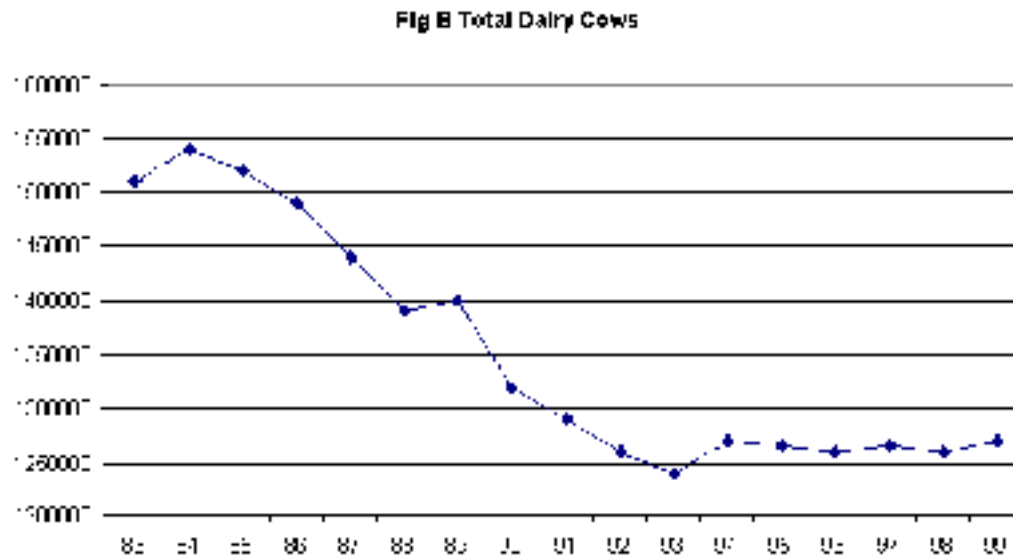


Figure A graphs the annual trend in cows recorded since IDRC assumed responsibility for milk recording in the early 80s. In the mid 1980s milk recording was highly subsidised by direct state funding. At the end of the decade direct subsidisation ceased resulting in a temporary fall off in numbers until the industry readjusted and real expansion in recording commenced in the early 1990s.

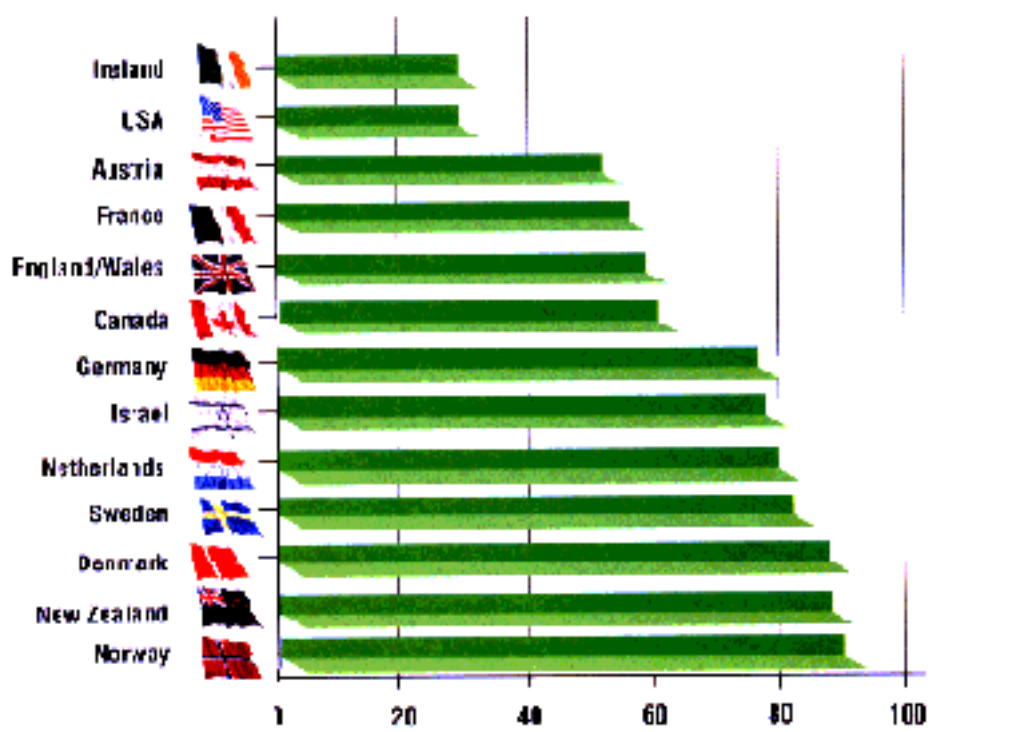
The total population of dairy cows in the country increased marginally (0.6%) in 1998 to 1276500. (Figure B).

Figure B. Total dairy cows.



Concurrently, the number of farmers continuing in dairying is decreasing resulting in bigger herds. However, the national trend towards larger herds is not reflected by a corresponding increase in the herd size in milk recording which has remained at about 57 for a few years.

Figure C. Recorded Cows as a % of all cows



In 1998 milk recorded cows accounted for 30.3% of the national dairy herd. (Note that the cows recorded by Herd Tech in Northern Ireland have been excluded in this calculation). While this figure compares favourably with the level of recording in Ireland of 10 years ago it compares unfavourably with the situation in other countries where levels of over 50% of the national herd are common and over 80% is not unusual. Our position in the international league table is illustrated in Fig C.

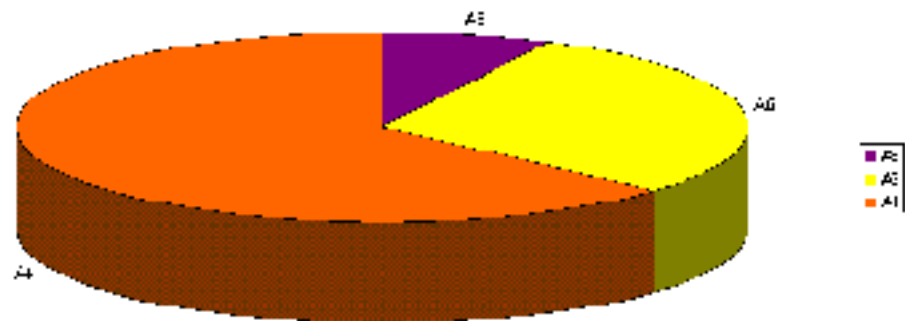
Table 1. Herds/Cows Recorded 1998

DPC	A4 Herds	A4 Cows	A6 Herds	A6 Cows	A8 Herds	A8 Cows	Total Herds	Total Cows	Herd Size
Progressive Genetics	1922	118414	0	0	47	3748	1969	122162	62
Dairygold Co-op	416	27647	1038	59466	142	8532	1596	95645	60
Kerry Co-op	324	17824	375	18388	315	12828	1014	49040	48
SWS Co-op	377	20880	490	25138	35	1958	902	47976	53
NECBS	394	15946	2	79	1	144	397	16169	41
Goldenvale Co-op	239	13649	18	1128	9	428	266	15205	57
CDAIS	121	9234	25	1402	2	141	148	10777	73
Tipperary Co-op	151	7945	34	2025	2	98	187	10068	54
Herd Tech Ltd.	90	6869	7	303	7	785	104	7957	77
Nenagh Co-op	25	1273	80	4136	13	722	118	6131	52
NCF Co-op	133	5593	7	280	1	116	141	5989	42
Donegal Co-op	37	2335	0	0	0	0	37	2335	63
North Cord Co-op	20	1167	20	1019	1	47	41	2233	54
Newmarket Co-op	17	761	23	1143	0	0	40	1904	48
Boherbue Co-op	13	467	9	510	0	0	22	977	44
All Societies Total	4279	250004	2128	115017	575	29547	6982	394568	57

In table 1 we see the detailed breakdown of the number of herds and cows recorded in 1998 by each of the recording societies. In addition the method under which the cows were recorded is shown.

Overall 63.4% of cows are recorded under method A4 (every 4 weeks), 29.2% under method A6 (every 6 weeks) and 7.5% under method A8 (every 8 weeks). The overall picture is illustrated in the pie chart Fig D. While the percentage of cows recorded under each of the 3 methods varies widely between societies the overall ratio countryside is similar to last year with a small increase in the preference for A4 at 65% of the total.

Figure D. The Percentage of Cows recorded by each method for the country overall.



Analysis of performance

A total of 369919 305 day records were analysed in table 2 - an increase of 23000 over last year. This is broadly in line with the overall increase in recording. Friesian records accounted for 99% of the total - pedigree 23% and non-pedigree 76%. Days in milk at 267 was 1 day longer than last year while total milk was down 9kg to 5293kg. In constituents Butterfat % increased 0.06 to 3.67% - continuing the trend upwards of recent years. Protein % at 3.29 shows only a marginal increase over the same period.

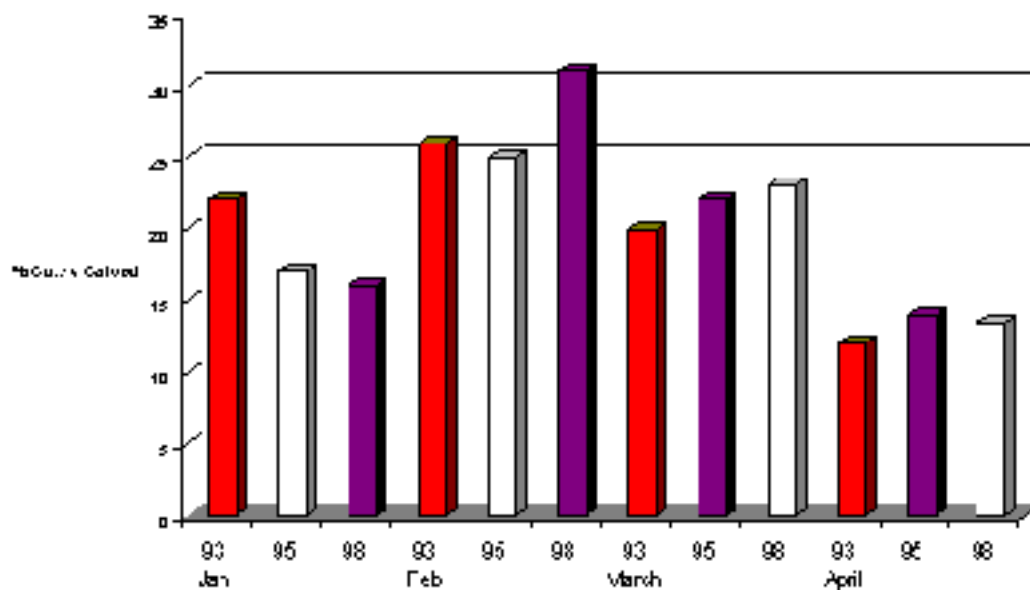
Table 2 Average Yield by Breed & Status (All Cows - 305 Days Lact.)

Breed	Records	Days	Milk (kg)	No. Tests	Butterfat %	Butterfat kg	Protein %	Protein kg
FR-PED	84826	276	6003	8.3	3.72	222.3	3.28	196.5
FR-NP	281059	265	5089	7.0	3.65	184.8	3.29	167.2
SH-PED	263	267	5016	7.9	3.55	177.8	3.35	167.6
SH-NP	240	262	4908	7.2	3.34	165.0	3.23	158.6
JER-PED	498	271	3682	8.2	5.34	197.7	3.93	144.8
JER-NP	111	238	3097	5.9	5.07	155.7	3.78	116.2
AYS-PED	237	278	5380	8.8	4.09	220.1	3.34	179.4
AYS-NP	64	257	4393	6.5	3.83	167.6	3.31	154.0
MRI-PED	170	276	5064	8.5	3.76	190.4	3.51	177.6
MRI-NP	1137	262	4679	6.5	3.67	171.3	3.38	158.3
KERRY	48	244	2964	7.1	3.74	110.5	3.23	95.3
SIMM'L	614	261	4769	6.8	3.62	172.5	3.35	159.9
OTHER	652	265	4661	7.0	3.70	171.5	3.33	155.3
OVERALL	369919	267	5293	7.3	3.67	193.3	3.29	173.8

Fig E illustrates that later Spring calving is now a feature of farming practice in the Spring calving herd. The percentage of the herd calving down in January decreased significantly

since 1993 while the percentage calving in February has correspondingly increased.

*Figure E. Calving
Patterns 1992 / 1998*



The average age of cows in recording herds is decreasing - a drop of 17% between 1990 and 1998. This trend is beneficial if culling is voluntary in that it offers the opportunity for more rapid genetic progress. However, if culling is due to fertility problems it would support the case for the inclusion of this trait in genetic evaluation.

ICBF © Copyright 2000