



UPDATE – for period 28th July – 3rd August 2007

1 Important Dates

- ✦ **Friday 10th August, 1:00pm – 5:00pm.** Due to essential maintenance on the data links the ICBF network (IRIS, intranet and web) will be unavailable from 1.00pm – 5:00pm. If you have any issues regarding this please contact Niall Naughton at (023) 20217.
- ✦ **August 24th to 30th.** Interbull and EAAP Annual Meetings, UCD, Dublin. If you would like to attend (most of it is an open meeting) you should register through the EAAP Dublin 2007 Website (<http://www.eaap2007.ie/>).
- ✦ **Wednesday, August 29th.** EAAP Field Trip – Cattle Breeding in Ireland. Visit a beef & dairy farm.
- ✦ **Tuesday, September 11th.** EBI €100 Open Day. On farm of Pat & Noreen Cronin, Macroom, Co. Cork.
- ✦ **September 25th to 27th.** Ploughing Championships, Tullamore.

2 Dairy Genetic Evaluation Consultation meeting 2nd August

- ✦ An industry consultation meeting was held on 2nd August 2008 at Teagasc Moorepark, to discuss proposed developments in the EBI and dairy genetic evaluations for the 2007/2008 season.
- ✦ The objective of the meeting was to establish industry consensus on key work priorities for the ICBF team over the coming months, ahead of proposed implementation of changes in November 2008.
- ✦ Some 30 people from across the dairy industry attended the meeting.
- ✦ In total 10 potential work areas were discussed, with all attendees then asked to score each piece of potential work on a 1 (lowest priority) to 5 (highest priority) scale. The results from this industry survey, together with a brief summary of each of the work areas, are presented in the following table.

Title	Description	Priority ¹
1. Update the EBI.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review economic values in the EBI <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Milk price, feed costs & land availability. ○ Consider inclusion of new traits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Calf quality (replacing beef value) ▪ Age at 1st calving. 	4.7
2. Improve female fertility evaluations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider additional predictors of Calving Interval & Survival; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Insemination data. ○ Age at first calving. ○ Use of data from maiden heifers. 	4.3
3. Update calving performance evaluations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review calving performance evaluations. Areas to be considered to include; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Animal model. ○ Data from all parities. ○ Heifer vs. later lactations (separate traits). • Submit data to Interbull test run. 	4.0
4. Update linear type proofs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review linear type proofs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Proofs for other breeds. ○ Irish base and scale. ○ Definition of composites. 	3.3

¹ Higher numbers correspond to higher priority.



Title	Description	Priority ¹
5. Managing inbreeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide farmers & the industry (i.e., G-EN-€IR-€LAND) with information that will help manage inbreeding at both the herd & industry level. 	3.0
6. Develop new indexes for farmer management traits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review options for new farmer management traits. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farmer satisfaction (based on farmer surveys). Milking speed and temperament (based on information from EDIY meters). 	3.0
7. Improve accuracy of across breed proofs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine ways of ensuring that the effects of heterosis are adequately removed from EBI values. Submit data to Interbull test runs for other breeds, e.g., JE and red breeds. 	2.9
8. Calf quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine options for a new beef trait (calf quality), based on price information from marts. Review possibility of including this trait in EBI (as opposed to information on slaughter value – see 1). 	2.8
9. Develop new “culling” index for farmers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Combines data on EBI + phenotypic record to identify potential animals for culling. 	2.6
10. Male fertility evaluations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examination of differences in male fertility. Do they exist? 	2.4

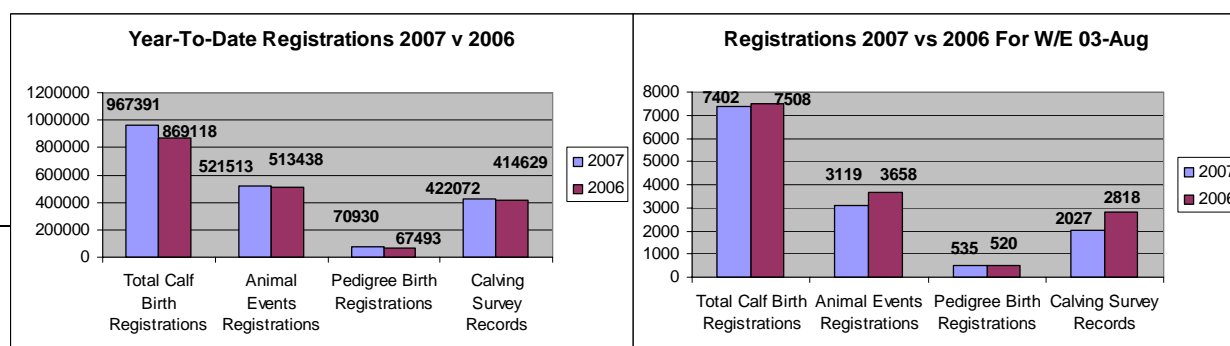
✚ Based on feed-back from the industry, ICBF will now be prioritising its work efforts, according to the above listing. Results from this work will be presented at the next dairy industry meeting (18th October 2007), ahead of proposed implementation in January 2008.

3 Profit with AI Partnership meeting 2nd August

A meeting of the partners was held on Thursday 2nd August. Key points from the meeting included:

- ✚ The uptake of AI in spring 2007 has increased over 2006 with the % for DIY being greater than for technician service.
- ✚ The special page in the Irish Farmers Journal, over 16 weeks this spring, worked well and some minor improvements will be made in future features of this type.
- ✚ The partners will continue the campaign in the autumn of 2007 with a focus on Ploughing, brochures for dairy and beef and further special pages in the Irish Farmers Journal.
- ✚ The campaign in 2008 will be planned earlier with a view to reducing the amount of last minute work required.

4 Database Update





- ✚ 324,444 inseminations have been received so far in 2007 from the AI handhelds, compared with 137,794 in 2006 for the same period.
- ✚ The majority of Herd Books are now using the new Web Front end as the main means of completing Herd Book administration activities. As any issues arise, these are being fed back to the development team.
- ✚ The CMMS and I&R 'white card' loading process have now been redesigned and implemented. There has been a significant improvement in the efficiency of the process. The Animal Events files have an extensive amount of work to be done, which will be completed over the coming months.
- ✚ Further work on HerdPlus modules is on-going, focusing around the data recording aspects, and the new 'look and feel' to the farmer interface.
- ✚ Feedback has been received on the revisions proposed in relation to the Sire Advice program and these are being incorporated in the work which is now beginning.

5 Genetic Evaluations

Genetic evaluations

Files have been sent to INTERBULL for the upcoming August routine evaluation. These included milk production files (Holstein, Montbeliarde), Udder Health - Somatic cells (Holstein, Montbeliarde), longevity (Holstein) and fertility (Holstein)

Beef:

- ✚ New extracts are in progress and testing on proposed enhancements to the beef performance and calving evaluations as discussed at the last industry meeting will commence next week.
- ✚ A member of the ICBF genetic evaluation team met with a representative groups from the Blonde Aquitaine, Saler, Belgian Blue, Aubrac, Partenaïse and Piemontese societies on Wednesday evening to outline a strategy for genetic improvement in these breeds.

6 HerdPlus

Beef Linear Scoring & Weighing –

Our current priority is to improve the Service.

As part of the improvement process a questionnaire (copy attached) has been sent to some 640 farmers who have used the service in the past. The objective of the questionnaire is twofold:

- ✚ To obtain farmers opinions on the current service.
- ✚ To obtain farmers views on the relative importance of the traits in the service.

When the results of the survey have been collated they will be discussed with interested groups.

We would like to thank the AI organisations that have generously sponsored prizes for a draw for completed surveys.

7 Tully

Tully Advisory Committee

The first meeting of the Tully Advisory Committee was held on Tuesday 31st August. The main points from the meeting included the following recommendations to the Board of ICBF:

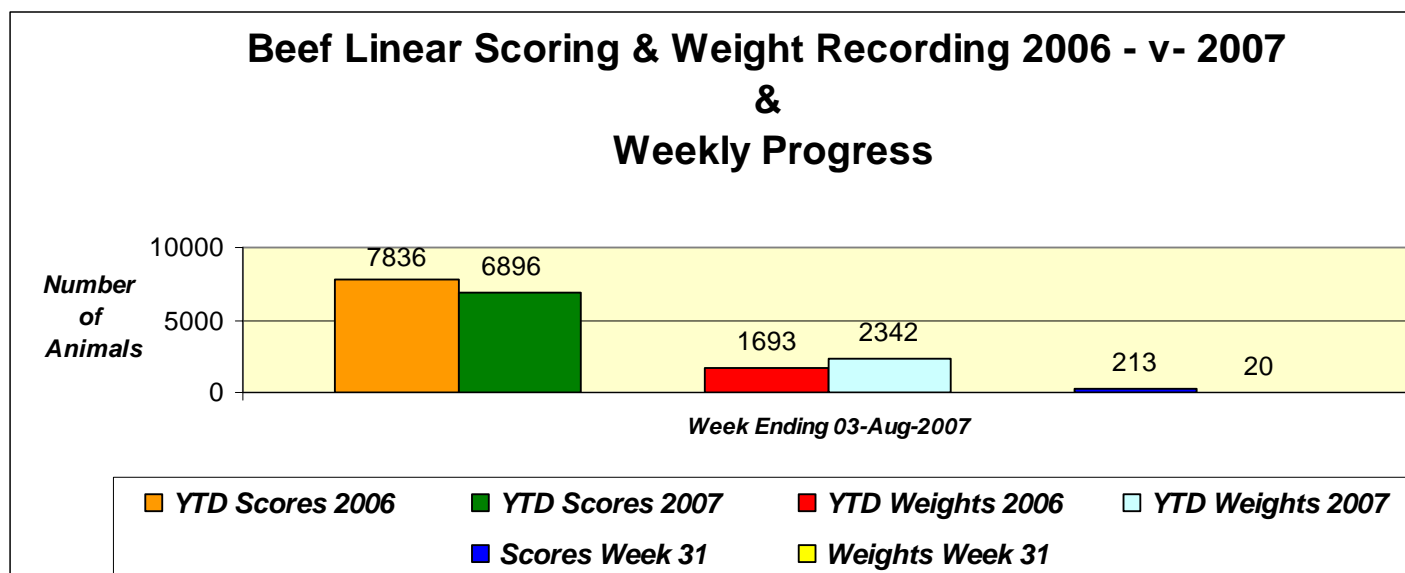


- ✚ Draft health protocol be approved subject to minor modifications.
- ✚ ICBF are to meet with Breed Society breed development committees before the end of August to decide on selection criteria.
- ✚ Applications for January, February & March born bulls will be sent out to breeders in early September.
- ✚ Inspections to take place in mid September.
- ✚ Health testing to take place in mid September.
- ✚ Bulls to enter pre entry isolation in early November.
- ✚ Bulls to enter Tully in December.

Biosecurity

The draft bio-security protocol has been distributed the Animal Health expert group for comment and approval.

8 Beef Linear Scoring & Weight Recording



9 Milk Recording Processing – this week and year to date

Milk Recording Organisation	2007 Herds Recorded Week 27/07/07 - 03/08/07
Progressive	238
Dairygold	200
Kerry	141
SWS	132
Tipperary	32
Arrabawn	27
Connacht	20
Donegal	2
Total	792



Milk Recording Organisation	YTD 2005 Cows Recorded 01/01/05 - 03/08/05	YTD 2006 Cows Recorded 01/01/06 - 03/08/06	YTD 2007 Cows Recorded 01/01/07 - 03/08/07	2007 vs 2006 Year on Year Difference (%)
Progressive	144,774	151,428	161,484	6.2%
Dairygold	95,359	101,573	109,013	6.8%
Kerry	66,105	68,970	70,370	2.0%
SWS	53,528	58,120	59,551	2.4%
Tipperary	9,212	11,654	12,106	3.7%
Arrabawn	6,970	10,836	11,679	7.2%
Connacht	7,124	8,685	9,698	10.4%
Donegal	3,297	5,008	3,840	-30.4%
Total	386,369	416,274	437,741	4.9%

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August 2007

Re: Beef Performance Recording Questionnaire

Dear Herdowner,

Your herd has been selected at random from the ICBF database to take part in a short questionnaire about Beef Performance Recording in Ireland. The questionnaire is mainly focused on Linear Scoring however there are some other areas of the Beef Recording Service that we would like to get your views on.

We would appreciate it if you could take the time to complete the enclosed Questionnaire and post it back in the enclosed envelope by **Friday the 17th August**.

Everyone who returns a completed questionnaire by the above date will be entered into 5 draws for:
€100 worth of Beef Semen from each of the following AI Companies:



If you have any queries regarding the questionnaire please contact us at 1850-600-900.

We look forward to receiving your views.

Yours sincerely,

Brian Wickham (PhD)

Chief Executive

Questionnaire (Please tick a box for each question below)

1. How important do you think Linear Scoring is?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1	2	3	4	5
No Importance	Little Importance	Important	Very Important	Extremely Important

2. How important do you think Weight Recording is?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1	2	3	4	5
No Importance	Little Importance	Important	Very Important	Extremely Important

3. Why do you partake in Linear Scoring & Weight Recording? (More than one box may be ticked)

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improve BLUPs	Identify Weak Traits	Identify Females Breeding Superior Stock	Identify Superior Sires
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identify Defects	Contribute to Breed Improvement	Get Cattle Weight Recorded	Not Sure

4. ICBF is considering launching a **DIY Weanling Recording Service for Beef farmers. 3 pieces of data could be recorded by the farmer and sent to ICBF for inclusion in Weanling Performance reports:**

- a. Weight b. Calf Quality (1-10) c. Docility (1-10)**

How valuable do you think Beef Farmers would find such a service?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1	2	3	4	5
No Value	Little Value	Valuable	Very Valuable	Extremely Valuable

5. Are you satisfied with the current Linear Scoring & Weight Recording Service?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1	2	3	4	5
Very Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Extremely Satisfied

6. Have you any suggestions as to how the current Scoring & Weighing System could be improved?

Linear Scoring – Core Traits

Rank each Trait in terms of how important you think it is.

1

No
Importance

2

Little
Importance

3

Important

4

Very
Important

5

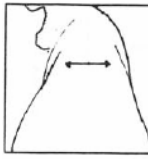
Extremely
Important

A. Width at Withers



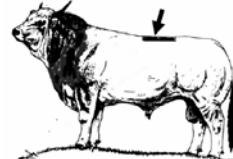
Rank (1-5)

B. Width Behind Withers



Rank (1-5)

C. Loin Development



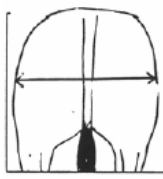
Rank (1-5)

D. Hindquarter Development



Rank (1-5)

E. Thigh Width



Rank (1-5)

F. Inner Thigh Development



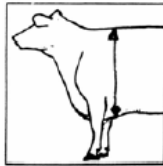
Rank (1-5)

G. Width of Chest



Rank (1-5)

H. Depth of Chest



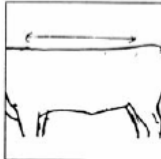
Rank (1-5)

I. Height at Withers



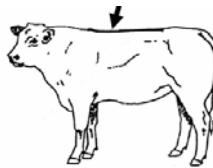
Rank (1-5)

J. Length of Back



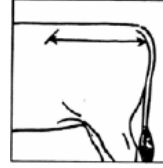
Rank (1-5)

K. Level of Back



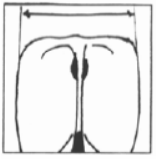
Rank (1-5)

L. Pelvic Length



Rank (1-5)

M. Width at Hips



Rank (1-5)

N. Width at Pins



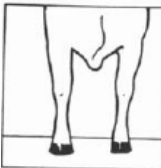
Rank (1-5)

O. Thickness of Bone



Rank (1-5)

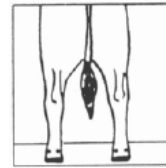
P. Fore Legs – Front View



Q. Hind Legs – Side View



R. Hind Legs – Rear View



Linear Scoring – Extra Traits

Please read down through the following list of traits and rank any extra trait(s) that you find important (1-5).

1	2	3	4	5
No	Little	Important	Very	Extremely
Importance	Importance		Important	Important

	Trait	Definition	Rank (1-5)
1	Docility	The degree of tameness shown by the animal	
2	Condition Score	The overall level of fleshing on the animal	
3	Locomotion	The level of correctness when animal walks	
4	Width of Muzzle	Width of the mouth area of the animal	
5	Type of Head	Degree to which 'type of head' conforms to breed description	
6	Colour of Head	Degree to which 'colour of head' conforms to breed description	
7	Colour of Coat	Degree to which 'colour of coat' conforms to breed description	
8	Colour of Tail	Degree to which 'Tail colour' conforms to breed description	
9	Girth	The circumference of the animal behind the front legs	
10	Rib	The development of the rib from flat to round	
11	Plates	The angle of the plates above the hind legs	
12	Width of Pelvis	Width at the pelvic bones	
13	Depth of Rump	Distance between the top and bottom of the rump above the hocks	
14	Tail Set	Prominence of the tail head	
15	Depth of Hoof	Depth of the animals hoof	
16	Scrotal Circumference	The circumference of the scrotum	
17	Hair Type	Degree to which 'hair type' conforms to breed description	
18	Thickness of Skin	Degree of Thickness of animals skin	
19	Harmony	Degree to which animal conforms to breed description	
20	Shoulder Muscle	Development of Shoulder Muscling	
21	Top Muscle	Development of Top Muscling	
22	White Patches	Presence of White Patches	