



**UPDATE – for period 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2007 - 4<sup>th</sup> January 2008**

**1 Important Dates**

- ✦ **Tuesday 8th January 2008.** 14:30 to 17:00. Moorepark Conference Centre. **Discussion Group EBI award** presentations.
- ✦ **Thursday 31st January 2008.** 10:30 to 13:00. **Board Meeting.** Comfort Inn, Portlaoise.
- ✦ **Friday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2008.** Publication of **updated dairy and beef genetic evaluations.**

**2 Priorities for 2008**

With the start of a new year it is opportune to look forward and to identify the things we want to achieve. As part of ICBF's annual planning cycle the Board agreed 2008 priorities in late 2007. Our priorities for 2008 include:

<b>1. Genetic evaluations</b>	
<b>Common to beef and dairy</b>	Update all evaluations at least three times according to timetable. Substantially reduce time taken for evaluations. Enhance calving trait evaluations - animal model, consideration of parity and greatly increased volumes of data from the suckler scheme. Enhance handling of data from cross-bred animals. Implement MIX99 (genetic evaluation software) in-house - faster computation, better models, and easier support. Review computation of parent averages on all animals - to help reduce turnaround time without loss of useful information. Incorporate insemination data in fertility evaluations as research is completed. Research international beef evaluation as part of Interbull project. Gather data suitable for research and genetic evaluation of lameness in collaboration with FRS and TEAGASC. Evaluate value of carcass image data in breeding program.
<b>Dairy</b>	Update EBI - changes in milk prices and feed costs, incorporation of age at first calving. Implement conversion equations for numerically small breeds (Jersey, Normonde, Montbeliarde).
<b>Beef</b>	Complete roll-out of Euro-Star indexes.
<b>Knowledge &amp; information</b>	Review and update the genetic evaluation information available through the ICBF website to breeding organizations (Breed Assns, AI Companies, Field Service providers) and the general public. Provide training and support to TEAGASC and breeding organizations so that they effectively provide genetic evaluation knowledge to cattle farmers.
<b>Service quality</b>	Review customer expectations. Establish procedures for assessing customer satisfaction. Establish and implement procedures for assessing data quality. Implement quality improvement as routine element of genetic evaluation services.
<b>Suckler Scheme</b>	Roll-out modified animal events. Provide rapid turnaround of reports. Ensure DAF requirements are fully met.
<b>2. Increase participation and substantially reduce unit cost of cattle breeding services to farmers.</b>	
<b>Milk Recording Services</b>	Review milk recording services provided by ICBF with the objective of improving service quality (web based processing, electronic reports), and improving the marketing of the milk recording service. Work with milk recording service providers in national campaign to promote use of milk recording.
<b>AI Services</b>	Complete roll-out of AI handhelds in Kerry, SWS and PG areas. Review customer satisfaction with AI information services. Review database information services for AI companies (active bulls, AI codes, Gene Ireland ...). Lead 2008 AI promotion campaign in Profit with AI Partnership.
<b>Herd Book Services</b>	Complete migration to web based herd book processing service. Develop breed improvement program establishment service. Provide technical support for handhelds used



	for dairy LIFT and Classification by IHFA.
<b>HerdPlus Service</b>	Expand HerdPlus service to 4,500 herds. Enhance sire advice service to cover all dairy and beef breeds. Maximize use of electronic animal event recording and provision of reports electronically. Complete roll-out of GROW service to beef herds. Establish metrics for determining customer satisfaction.
<b>Farm Advisor &amp; Discussion Group service</b>	Link service support to HerdPlus team. Roll-out to all TEAGASC dairy and beef advisors. Enhance service through provision of reports that save advisor time. Provide training to advisors.
<b>Health and disease service</b>	Support initiatives to establish whole herd health scheme(s) in Ireland.
<b>3. Ensure cattle breeding industry delivers optimal economic returns for Irish cattle farmers from genetic improvement.</b>	
<b>Gene Ireland Procurement Service</b>	Develop and implement web based information service for Breed Associations and AI Companies participating in Gene Ireland procurement.
<b>Gene Ireland Progeny Test Service</b>	Progeny test 80 dairy and 40 beef bulls in 2008 Gene Ireland scheme. Operate 2008 phase of 2005, 2006 and 2007 Gene Ireland progeny test schemes.
<b>Gene Ireland - Tully</b>	Ensure best practice is followed to minimize risk of bulls failing health criteria for entry to AI.
<b>Genomic Selection</b>	Establish DNA sample collection and storage scheme for progeny test and potential bull mother herds. Facilitate research to determine optimal use of genomic selection in dairy and beef breeding schemes. Lead in the introduction of genomic selection if research demonstrates the technology can significantly improve profitability of cattle farming in Ireland.
<b>4. Service development and other services</b>	
<b>Cattle trading information services</b>	Evaluate information service opportunities associated with cattle sales and purchases in collaboration with members and Marts.
<b>Research and technical services</b>	Contribute expertise and support to Ovultest, Eureca, Sheep Breeding and National Genetic Conservation projects.
<b>Key performance indicators</b>	Evaluate information service opportunities associated with KPIs for dairy and beef farms.

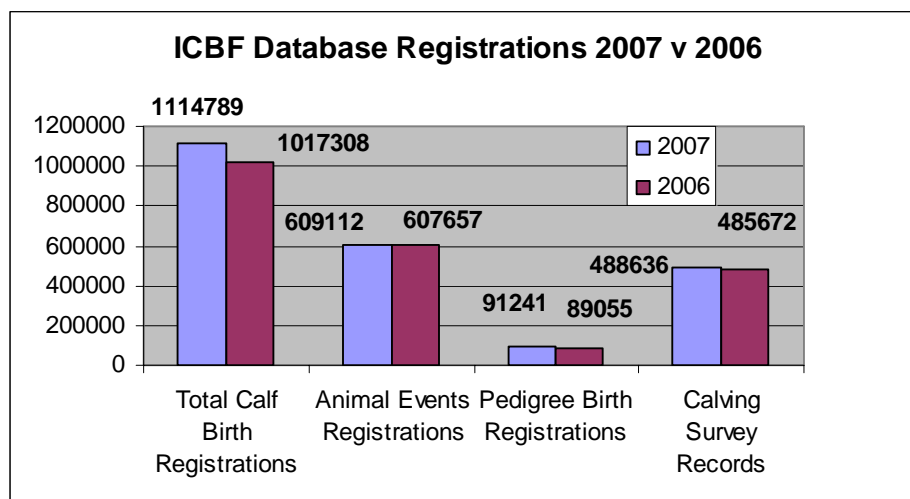
This is an ambitious plan covering a wide range of activities. Irish cattle farmers face many challenges and it is our role to ensure that cattle breeding delivers the greatest possible contribution to improving farm profitability in the future. Our priorities for 2008 are designed to build on the progress made in the past and to use our limited resources to the best possible effect.

### 3 Tully

- ✚ The final IBR test was carried out on the bulls in pre entry isolation and all were negative and will enter Tully to day.
- ✚ The performance test will start on the 7-1-08 .Weights and IBR testing results will be sent out to breeders and breed societies before the 10-1-08.
- ✚ A bio security audit will take place the week starting the 14-1-08.



## 4 Database Update



- ✦ Next week will see the first graphs for 2008 registrations on the ICBF database – above is the final graph of 2007.
- ✦ 1,741 inseminations have been received so far in 2008 from the AI Handhelds, compared with 1,233 in 2007 for the same period.
- ✦ There is some on-going work being done in relation to the hardware upgrade, specifically around automating the back-up procedures. Some minor down-time may need to be scheduled. Advance notice will be given.
- ✦ Application forms for the Suckler Scheme have been issued by DAF, and the first of the Animal Events books have been issued to herds.
- ✦ A significant amount of development work is still on-going in relation to the Suckler Scheme.
- ✦ The design and implementation of some updates to the Gene Ireland application began this week in advance of the Spring AI season.
- ✦ The first of the Annual Milk Recording annual reports are being generated from the database this week.

## 5 Genetic Evaluations

- ✦ Genetic evaluations for the next routine release of proofs (8<sup>th</sup> February 2008) are well underway. There will be a full update of proofs for all traits in both the dairy EBI and beef SBV indexes.

Brian Wickham Ph.D. Chief Executive Irish Cattle Breeding Federation Soc. Ltd, Highfield House, Shinagh, Bandon, Co. Cork, Ireland, Phone office +353 (0)23 20222, mobile +353 (0)86 826 9911 Fax office +353 (0)23 20229 E-Mail [bwickham@icbf.com](mailto:bwickham@icbf.com) ICBF Web site [www.icbf.com](http://www.icbf.com) Assistant: Mary Madden.