



UPDATE – for period 4th–10th February 2006

1 Important Dates

- ✚ **Saturday 18th February.** Tully Open Day 11.30am – 2.30pm. *On show will be the bulls for sale on the 4th March 2006 and the 6th May 2006.*
- ✚ **Saturday 4th March Tully Sale.** Show at 11.00am, sale commences at 12.00pm.
- ✚ **Thursday 30th March Board Meeting.**
- ✚ **Saturday 6th May Tully Sale.** Show at 11.00am, sale commences at 12.00pm.

2 Wednesday 8th February AI Industry meeting

- ✚ The first part of this meeting consisted of an interim report from Laurence Shalloo of TEAGASC on the results of a survey of dairy farmers on AI and milk recording. The main conclusions so far are:
 - Large proportion (>85%) of dairy farmers use AI.
 - 55% of cows and 39% of heifers in dairy herds are bred to AI.
 - 38% of cows and 23% of heifers are bred to AI for replacement purposes.
 - Labour, ability to detect heat and inconvenience are the most important reasons why more AI isn't used.
 - 59% of farmers are using heat detection aids with tail paint the most common.
 - Cows are heat detected on average 1.5 times per day outside of milking.
 - Average length of AI usage is 5.9 weeks.
 - Dairy AI sires are mainly selected on EBI, milk constituents and milk production.
 - Milk recording is higher in larger herds and herds that use more AI.
 - Breed and calving ease are the most important traits for selecting beef bulls for the dairy herd
- ✚ The second part of the meeting was chaired by Ignatius Byrne of DAF and focused on the development of a campaign for spring 2006 to increase the uptake of AI. Most sectors and organisations in the cattle breeding industry were represented at this part of the meeting. The outcome was the establishment of a working group comprising representatives of AI organisations, TEAGASC, ICBF and Farm Organisations who were charged with the responsibility of developing a detailed campaign focused on helping farmers breed more profitable animals through the use of high EBI AI sires. The working group met immediately following the meeting and has adopted a draft plan comprising four main elements as follows:
 - An advertising and extension campaign that clearly communicates the benefits of breeding quality cattle using AI.
 - Building the skills and knowledge of technicians and sales staff on the EBI and mating management.
 - A series of pilot scale direct contact campaigns comprising targeted mailings and phone contact. The purpose being to establish the most effective means of helping farmers make best use of the available breeding information.
 - A phone survey to establish the effectiveness of the 2006 campaign.

3 Genetic Evaluations – Beef & Dairy

- ✚ International proofs for dairy production traits have been returned from Interbull and are currently being loaded to the cattle breeding database. In addition domestic (and international) proofs for Calving Interval/Survival, calving performance and beef performance are being processed. All proofs will be loaded to the database over the next number of days with a target of having new EBI proofs released to the dairy industry by **Monday 20th February.**



- ✚ New beef linear types are currently being processed for release to the AI industry and beef herdbooks. The new proofs are a major step forward for pedigree beef breeders. Key features of the new evaluations include;
 - Evaluations for 14 traits (as opposed to just 4 in the current evaluations).
 - Evaluations for all beef breeds (as opposed to just 3 in the current evaluations).
 - Inclusion of data from commercial/cross-bred cattle.
 - Proofs expressed on an across breed basis.
- ✚ An updated Charolais pedigree file was forwarded to INRA for the international evaluation of weaning weight. A similar file is currently being prepared for Limousins.
- ✚ New “commercial beef weanling” reports were sent to 395 herds this week. Some 4,800 animals were linear scored and weight recorded as part of this project. The objective of this project was 2-fold; (i) to improve the accuracy of weanling data for the purpose of genetic evaluations, and (ii) to provide commercial beef farmers with more meaningful management information. We would like to thank all of the herd-owners that participated in this important project.

4 Database Update

- ✚ 339 new herds added to the database last week. This week, the majority were Dairygold AI customers.

- ✚ The training of the AI technicians from Dairygold and Dovea continued this week. The first of the training sessions for PG technicians are planned for the week of Feb 20th.

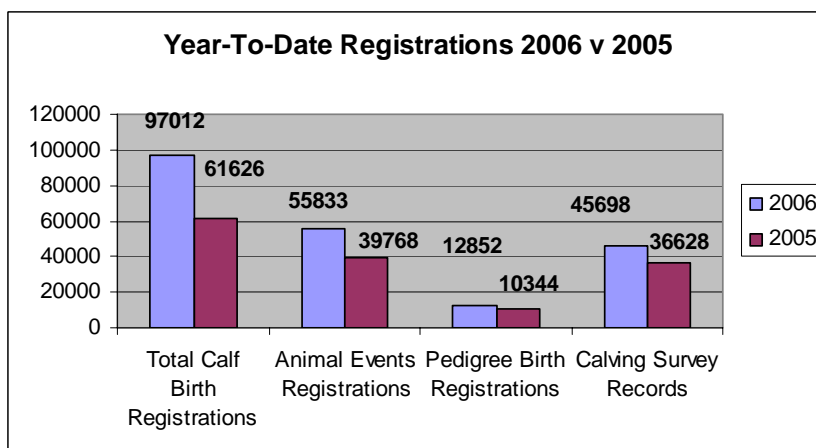
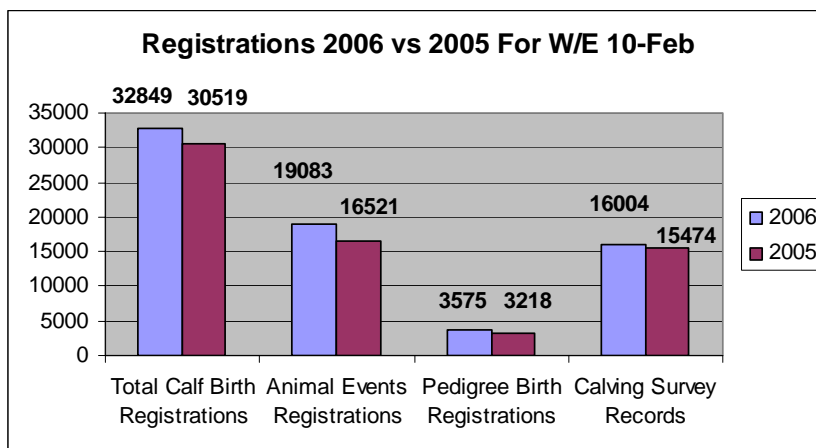
- ✚ Programming of the herd-book rule changes were being tested this week and will be finalised at the end of next week.

- ✚ New updates of the linear scoring handhelds are in process – this involves the updating of animals and herds as well as some reallocation of scoring areas to scorers, and this has been finished this week. The data and printed schedules will be available to technicians next week.

- ✚ The first steps in the loading of the new bull proofs to the database will begin this weekend.

- ✚ The redesign of the internet bull search function is continuing, with a view to having it completed prior to the issue of the Feb ‘06 proofs.

- ✚ The development of intranet reports to support the AI organisations in the roll-out of the AI handhelds is continuing, and will do so for a number of weeks.





- ✚ Updates have been made to the Herd-book catalogue function to allow the inclusion of the new indexes on the catalogues.

5 Milk Recording Update

Status of €DIY Cells

- ✚ Three new €DIY Milk Recording cells were launched this week. These three cells bring the total number currently operating to eight. We plan to add a further three in the next two weeks, so by the end of February 2006 we will have eleven €DIY cells on the ground.

- ✚ Planned coverage for the 11 €DIY cells by Milk Recording Organisations is as follows;

New this week:

- Kerry Cell operating out of North Kerry.
- SWS Cell operating out of Bandon area.
- Progressive Cell operating in Westmeath/Longford area.

Existing cells covering:

- Dairygold with three cells operating out of Kilmallock, Mallow and Waterford (Cappagh).
- Progressive with one cell operating in Wexford (Enniscorthy).
- Donegal Creameries with one cell operating out of St Johnston (East Donegal).

Further 3 cells to come on line in the next two weeks:

- Progressive Genetics operating out of Kilkenny
- Tipperary/Nenagh Coop (shared cell) operating out of Ballinaclough (Mid Tipperary)
- Connacht Gold operating out of East Mayo/Sligo.



Kerry and PG vans with Pat Hayes of Kerry ready to take delivery.



Inside of van showing a row of meters charging.

- ✚ Each van is customised and kitted out to make the technician totally self sufficient to serve up to 150 farmers. It's stocked with 72 Tru-Test Electronic Milk Meters, seven Data Handlers, 3,000 barcoded bottles, mobile phone and a laptop computer for downloading Farm Settings and uploading Farm Results to and from the ICBF database.
- ✚ Our collective challenge for the spring is to maximise the utilisation of the equipment and get as many farmers as we can trained up and on the system!



Calibration

ICBF will ensure each meter on the ground is checked and calibrated each annually. ICBF Technician Brian Coughlan is currently being trained in NZ on the test equipment. This test equipment will be shipped over to Ireland in March. Brian will be back on Feb 18th and straight into training and support to get the new technicians and cells up and running.

6 Tully

- ✚ The final weighing of the bulls for sale on the 4th March will take place on the 13th February. Final EBI figures will be available by the 21st February. The FBD prize winners will be judged on the 24th February.
- ✚ The final catalogue for the sale on the 4th March will be printed on the 21st February and will be available from the 27th February.
- ✚ A group of 10 beef farmers from Longford will visit Tully on the 15th Feb.
- ✚ An open day will be held at Tully on the 18th February. On show will be the bulls for sale on the 4-3-06 and the 6-5-06. This will give buyers a chance to see the bulls before the sale.

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](tel:+3532320222), [mobile +353 \(0\)86 826 9911](tel:+3530868269911) [Fax office +353 \(0\)23 20229](tel:+3532320229) [E-Mail bwickham@icbf.com](mailto:bwickham@icbf.com) ICBF Web site www.icbf.com Assistant: Mary Madden. © Irish Cattle Breeding Federation Society Limited 2005.