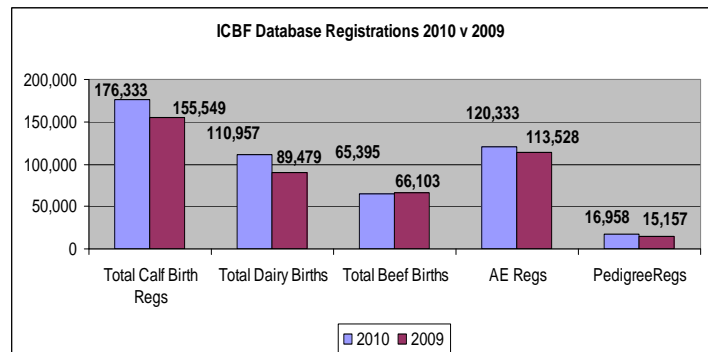
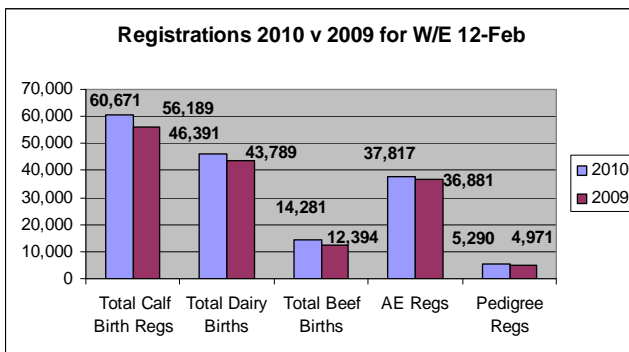


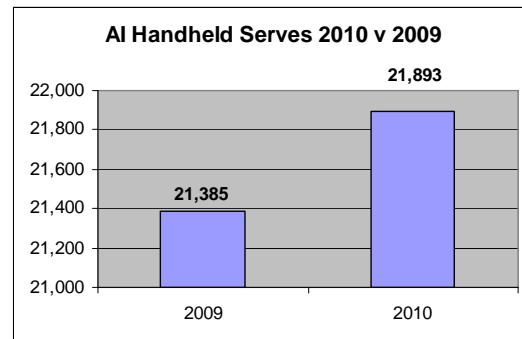
1. Important Dates

- ✚ **ICBF Board Meeting** – Thursday 25th February 2010, **10:00 to 14:00** – Maldron Hotel, Portlaoise.
- ✚ **Sheep Ireland Board Meeting** – Thursday 25th February 2010, **14:00 to 16:30** – Maldron Hotel, Portlaoise.
- ✚ **Interbull Breeding Industry Workshop** – Friday 5th March, Paris. This meeting is open to the cattle breeding industry. To get further details and to register follow the *Interbull* link on the International Representation page of our website (www.icbf.com).
- ✚ **Tully Bull Sale** - Saturday 1st May 2010 **11:00 to 16:00** – Tully Performance Test Centre, Tully.

2. Database



- ✚ In the Suckler scheme, the number of 2009 born calves with meal introduced is 591,807 with the number of animals weaned at 496,366.
- ✚ Around 80% of Suckler Herds have had their Animal Events Notebooks and envelopes posted out. The process will be completed next week. A complimentary Herdplus Beef Calving Report is being included for all suckler participants.
- ✚ All four milk recording organisations continue to work well on the new Milk Recording system. The final release of changes was implemented last weekend.
- ✚ The changes to facilitate the migration to the new Beef Linear evaluations continue to be worked on. Some further updates to the catalogue are continuing. Some updates to the on-line herdbook will also begin this week, and will be finalised next week.
- ✚ The generation of the spring EBI reports and data for discussion group reports etc will be completed next week.
- ✚ The graph shows Inseminations recorded on AI Handhelds in 2010 compared with 2009.



3. GENRELAND®

Beef

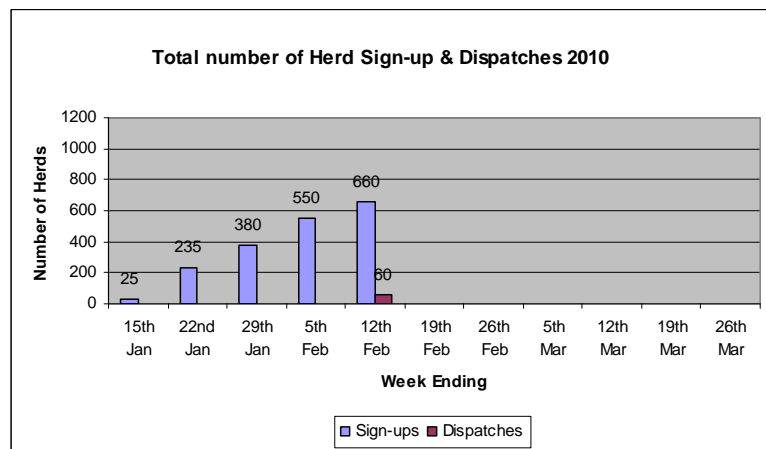
- ✚ Sign ups are going well with 141 herds taking part so far.
- ✚ VHC and FL29 reached the 700 straws mark this week.

- ✚ Total bulls tested on Gene Ireland is now 31.
- ✚ Work continuing on identifying bulls for inclusion on the Spring panel.
- ✚ Total straws sent out per bull currently on the panel are in the table below.

BREED	SI	BB	SA	AA	SH	HE
CODE	HSY	EVG	BHU	RWB	CZB	AGI
STRAWS	400	665	370	670	570	235

Dairy

- ✚ ICBF have to date recruited 650 dairy farmers for the Spring 2010 program, taking some 30,357 straws between them.
- ✚ At this stage we have made a decision to suspend recruitment as the supply of bulls for testing is slower than expected. When these issues have been resolved recruitment will recommence.
- ✚ Meantime we arranged for first semen of 2010 program to be sent this week, with 60 farmers getting dispatches.
- ✚ For the same week last year (2009) we were at 420 farmers signed up with 8 farmer dispatches, so we are some 50% ahead of where we were last year re sign ups. This gives us a little breathing space for the bull supply issues to be alleviated.



4. Tully

This week

- ✚ Bulls received a mineral supplementation where it was deemed necessary.
- ✚ Fresh woodchip was applied to all outdoor pens.
- ✚ Haltered training started, which will help prepare bulls for sale time.
- ✚ Bull owners were notified with a letter, outlining the details of the up-coming sale for the current crop of bulls at Tully.
- ✚ All up to date feed intake data and live-weights have being inputted into the ICBF database.
- ✚ All ancestry on Angus bulls at Tully has being inputted to correspond with the animals pedigree cert, where the information was missing.

Last week

- ✚ A meeting of the Tully Advisory Committee took place on Wednesday of last week, 3rd February at Tully Bull performance Test Centre. Key out comes of Tully Advisory Committee Meeting included:

1. ICBF are to hold a high health status sale for the 105 bulls at Tully on Saturday, 1st of May.

Other matters relating to the sale are as follows:

- The sale would be held at Tully.
- The sale is to start at 11.00 am and finish by 4.00 pm.
- Liaise with Animal Health Ireland in promoting “Health Status” of bulls and ensure that appropriate measures to maintain highest standards are carried out.
- AI companies are to purchase bulls prior to the sale, once all performance test information is available.
- Bulls are due to finish their performance test on the 4th of April.
- A Catalogue will be available on the web by the 9th of April and sent to printers by the 16th of April.
- Order of sale
 - A draw took place at the meeting and the order of breeds into the sale ring is as follows:
 - Belgium Blue, Hereford, Speckle Park, Aubrac, Saler, Angus, Limousin, Charolais and Simmental.

2. Agreed to have a ‘Top Tully Bull’ award based on visual (1/3) test performance (1/3) and index figures (1/3), the relevant bulls would then be photographed in the IFJ.

- There will be a champion bull within each breed and no reserve champion.
- No overall champion across breeds.
- Basil Bothwell will judge all the breeds.
- Bull must be in the top 20% of all three traits judged (i.e. visual, test performance and indexes)
- Any bull with an obvious physical defect will not be considered.

3. A number of changes were made in relation to the GROW rules for linear scoring of Tully Bulls:

- No more Linear scoring in Tully.
- All bulls have to be scored and weighed on farm at the time of inspection.
 - Group of 5.
 - Between 150 to 300 days of age.
- ICBF cover majority of scoring cost.

4. A proposition was made by Andrew Cromie, outlining the potential of genetic gain in a breed development program. Further details in relation to the proposition outlined by Andrew, will be discussed at a meeting on the 17th of February, which will be held at the Heritage Hotel in Portlaoise.

5. There is to be a review of the diet of the Tully bulls and also, protocol in relation to on-farm health testing to be carried out. This is to be done in consultation with those who have expertise in the relevant areas.

5. Sheep Ireland

- ✚ ‘Sheep 2010’ has been confirmed as an event that will be held in Lyons Estate, UCD on the 26th of June 2010. This will be a major sheep event, organised by Sheep Ireland, Teagasc, UCD, The Irish Farmers Journal and Bord Bia. The event will mainly focus on Technical issues. However, a number of breed societies are holding their national championships on the day also.
- ✚ CPT & MALP farmers were met on Wednesday to discuss and develop improvements to the Sheep Ireland program further.
- ✚ A public Sheep Ireland information evening was also held that evening in the Abbeyleix Manor. There was a good attendance by both commercial farmers and pedigree breeders. Copies of the presentations will into the publications section of www.sheep.ie.

- ✚ Breeders are continuing to input Lambing data.
- ✚ The Galway Sheep Society AGM is on Thursday the 18th of February, a presentation will be made to breeders informing them of the LambPlus scheme.

6. Genetic Evaluations

- ✚ A genomic run has just been completed and the final animals are being uploaded to the database. New files for the website will be generated once completed.
- ✚ The active bull list is currently being compiled and we expect to have a draft list sent out next week. Official publication is Monday 22nd February.

Carcass Data

- ✚ The genetic parameter estimation for carcass cut weights continues; datafiles of 40,000 steers and 17,000 heifers are currently been used in this process.

7. GENÉIRÉLAND Review

ICBF are currently undertaking a review of the GENÉIRÉLAND[®] Breeding Programs. The review is being undertaken with the objective of maximising long-term genetic gain within our dairy and beef industries. To-date a number of meetings have taken place with various stakeholders, with additional meetings being planned over coming weeks.

As part of the review a number of areas are being examined. These include;

- ✚ **The future role of genomics.** This work is being undertaken in conjunction with Noirin McHugh, Teagasc, Moorepark. The objective of the work is to examine and evaluate various options for utilising genomics within our National breeding programs. Key questions include; (i) the level of genotyping required (elite females and young calves), (ii) the number of bulls progeny tested, (iii) the number of bulls returned into active AI and (iv) the cost:benefits of the various options.
- ✚ **Maintaining genetic diversity.** One of the downs-sides of genetic gain is that related animals tend to be selected (as sires of sons and bull mothers) within each generation. Unless this problem is managed, inbreeding will result with deleterious effects on overall profit in the longer term. Whilst not currently an issue within Ireland, it has the potential to become a problem – especially within our National dairy herd, where one bull (Oman or OJI) continues to dominate the ICBF dairy bull listings. This is causing real concern amongst farmers and the wider industry. As a result ICBF and Teagasc (Dr. Sinead McParland) have initiated a piece of research to identify “out-cross” sires of sons and bull mothers within our National herd, and suggest matings to these herd-owners. It is anticipated that the resultant male calves (to be born in 2011) will either be picked up as young progeny test sires for GENÉIRÉLAND[®] or sold as stock bulls to commercial users. In this way, genetic diversity and long-term genetic gain, will be managed for our farmers and wider industry.
- ✚ **Scale of progeny testing.** Work by Theo Meuwissen in 2002 has identified that for Ireland to achieve its optimal level in terms of genetic gain then we should have a target of progeny testing 100 dairy bulls and 100 beef bulls each year. However, these figures have not yet materialised with 60 dairy bulls and 20 beef bulls tested in 2009 (the dairy program commenced in 2005, whilst the beef program commenced in 2007). The problem is particularly acute within our National beef herd, where we currently only have 6 beef bulls on the GENÉIRÉLAND[®] program, despite the fact that there are sufficient herds for progeny testing. Unless we can find ways of ensuring higher numbers of high quality young bulls for the GENÉIRÉLAND[®] breeding program, then overall genetic gain and profit for the industry will be compromised.

This is a major piece of work for ICBF, Teagasc, AI companies, herdbooks and the wider industry stakeholders. To-date we have had excellent contributions from all involved. We look forward to bring the work to a positive conclusion over the course of the coming months.

8. Threats or Opportunities

- ✦ In these extremely challenging times, ICBF, like many innovative organisations, is facing a wide range of threats. There is a temptation to feel overwhelmed and not recognise that threats are also opportunities. Over the last few weeks I have been surprised by the number of opportunities that have arisen and which we are currently following up. While it is not appropriate, at this early stage, to go into any detail on many of these it is useful to reflect on the nature of some of them.
- ✦ There are the technology opportunities. The fields of computing and communications are continuing to witness dramatic technology leaps. I am constantly amazed by the types of things we can easily do today that were impossible, or very expensive, in the recent past. A good example is the Handheld computer which is being developed for the CPT (central progeny test) and MALP (maternal lamb producers) flocks. These devices remove the need for paper recording, improve the accuracy of recording and save farmer time. This combination makes it possible to contemplate a large increase in the levels of performance recording in commercial and pedigree sheep flocks.
- ✦ There are partnership opportunities. ICBF has created a cattle breeding capability which is envied by many organisations and countries. With this leadership position comes an interest from national and international organisations wishing to collaborate with us in a variety of ways. We need to evaluate these opportunities carefully before deciding whether they contribute to the ICBF mission. A good example is Interbeef. This is providing an opportunity for ICBF to improve its beef breeding services while giving our partners a similar opportunity.
- ✦ The opportunity to improve the efficiency of beef and dairy breeding schemes is being actively explored in a project led by Andrew Cromie (see above). This project has the potential to increase the profit of dairy and beef farms by many hundreds of millions of Euro per year in the future. To deliver these future benefits we must address the inefficiencies in our current breeding schemes and implement new and improved systems.
- ✦ So, while we are facing tough times, we are also looking at unprecedented opportunities. Our challenge is to pick the best of these and thus deliver better and more valuable services to our many customers.

9. Milk Recording

National Milk Recording Results by County - 10 day Period 02/02/10 to 12/02/10								
	No. Herds Recorded	No. Cows Recorded	Average Herd Size	Average 24hr Milk kg/Cow	Average Fat %	Average Protein %	Average F + P kg	Average SCC
CARLOW	13	643	49	25.2	4.38	3.35	1.95	451
CAVAN	27	904	33	23.7	4.00	3.23	1.71	370
CLARE	1	65	65	37.8	3.92	3.19	2.69	318
CORK STH	128	5,773	45	24.3	4.20	3.36	1.84	409
CORK NTH	62	3,257	53	22.9	4.31	3.33	1.75	381
DONEGAL	6	262	44	20.9	4.25	3.39	1.60	442
DUBLIN	4	181	45	27.5	3.91	3.25	1.97	450
GALWAY	17	808	48	22.8	3.99	3.32	1.67	411
KERRY	35	1,604	46	20.3	4.09	3.28	1.50	457
KILDARE	18	1,022	57	24.2	4.21	3.33	1.82	783
KILKENNY	16	940	59	23.1	4.12	3.43	1.74	416
LAOIS	16	778	49	19.3	4.69	3.50	1.58	360
LEITRIM	4	126	32	25.9	4.06	3.25	1.89	425
LIMERICK	25	983	39	23.4	4.08	3.36	1.74	342

LONGFORD	4	267	67	19.8	4.46	3.42	1.56	589
LOUTH	20	1,567	78	26.5	3.92	3.44	1.95	543
MAYO	20	845	42	19.4	4.14	3.54	1.49	564
MEATH	50	2,991	60	22.6	4.06	3.34	1.67	466
MONAGHAN	20	700	35	23.7	4.09	3.40	1.78	452
OFFALY	10	588	59	21.3	4.16	3.28	1.58	463
ROSCOMMON	1	18	18	17.9	3.80	3.60	1.32	842
SLIGO	5	198	40	21.8	3.77	3.15	1.51	420
TIPPERARY NTH	9	267	30	21.7	4.18	3.37	1.64	516
TIPPERARY STH	5	420	84	17.5	4.02	3.47	1.31	435
WATERFORD	17	1,267	75	24.2	4.43	3.30	1.87	372
WESTMEATH	13	699	54	25.4	4.51	3.32	1.99	457
WEXFORD	17	866	51	18.4	3.67	3.47	1.31	539
WICKLOW E	8	477	60	22.6	4.03	3.28	1.65	358
WICKLOW W	16	1,354	85	26.6	3.97	3.23	1.92	423
	<i>No. Herds Recorded</i>	<i>No. Cows Recorded</i>	<i>Average Herd Size</i>	<i>Average 24hr Milk kg/Cow</i>	<i>Average Fat %</i>	<i>Average Protein %</i>	<i>Average F + P kg</i>	<i>Average SCC</i>
National	587	29,870	52	23.1	4.12	3.35	1.73	464

National Milk Recording Averages by Province - 10 day Period 02/02/10 to 12/02/10

Provincial	<i>No. Herds Recorded</i>	<i>No. Cows Recorded</i>	<i>Average Herd Size</i>	<i>Average 24hr Milk kg/Cow</i>	<i>Average Fat %</i>	<i>Average Protein %</i>	<i>Average F + P kg</i>	<i>Average SCC</i>
Munster	286	14,068	49	24.0	4.15	3.33	1.80	396
Leinster	205	12,373	60	23.3	4.16	3.36	1.75	484
Connacht	51	2,064	40	21.6	3.95	3.37	1.58	552
Ulster	53	1,866	35	22.8	4.11	3.34	1.70	421

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