



UPDATE – for period 7th - 14th December 2007

1 Fertility for Expansion

Fertility for Expansion was the theme of three large meetings (Cork, Limerick and Dundalk) attended by dairy farmers, Veterinarians, AI Technicians and breeding industry personal. These meeting this week were a joint initiative involving Intervet, ICBF, TEAGASC, Veterinary Ireland, UCD, Progressive Genetics, Munster Cattle Breeding Society, and Eurogene. Speakers included Stephen Butler (TEAGASC, Moorepark), Scott McDougall (New Zealand veterinary researcher), Mark Crowe (UCD), George Ramsbottom (TEAGASC Advisory), Finbar Mulligan (UCD), Michael Diskin (TEAGASC Athenry), Doreen Corridan (Veterinarian) and John Mee (TEAGASC Moorepark).

The key steps to achieving fertility for expansion are:

- **Measure your performance** – use HerdPlus or one of the farm packages (Kingswood or IFC) to measure the reproductive performance of your herd.
- **Plan corrective actions** – work with your advisors (TEAGASC, Veterinarian, ...) to decide what actions you will take to correct the problems in your herd.
- **Act** – implement your plan.
- **Monitor** – use your records to determine if your actions achieved the result you were looking for.

High levels of reproductive performance – **calves per cow per year** - can be achieved in herds at all levels of production. However, there are a number of links in this chain – if any one is broken then a low level of reproductive performance results. The links include:

- Genetics
- Heat Detection
- Disease, and
- Nutrition

We will be reviewing this collaborative effort and deciding how to build on experiences from these meetings to address the dairy cow fertility problem that is so widespread.

2 Tully

- ✚ The next IBR test of the bulls in Tully and pre entry isolation will take place on the 18-12-07.
- ✚ A final list of bulls that entered Tully and their indexes will be sent out to all Breed Associations by 19th of December.
- ✚ All bio security changes at Tully will be finished before the 21-12-07.
- ✚ A bio security audit of Tully and the pre entry isolation units took place on Monday the 7th of December. - 12-07.

3 GENÉIRÉLAND – Spring 2008

- ✚ Preparation for the coming Spring programme continues.
- ✚ We are aiming to start sending letters to targeted herds the week beginning 7th January.

4 Genetic Evaluations

- ✚ The new calving evaluation has been completed and is currently being processed for uploading to the database. This is the first evaluation using the new MIX99 software which facilitates an Animal Model. All previous evaluations were Sire-Maternal-Grandsire models which only gave breeding values on sires. Cow breeding values were calculated by parental averaging. With the new software all animals in the evaluation, both males and females, will get their own breeding value and reliability. Hence there will be a general



increase in reliabilities for both bull and cow proofs. Correlations with the old and new calving proofs for AI sires with >70% reliability in the previous evaluation was 0.95.

- ✚ The final collection of mart data has been completed and this information will be uploaded to the database. Similarly, a new extract of slaughter data has been received from the Department of Agriculture which will be loaded in the coming days. Once this data is loaded and linked to the animals on the ICBF database an extract will be done for the next genetic evaluation of beef performance for both dairy and beef.

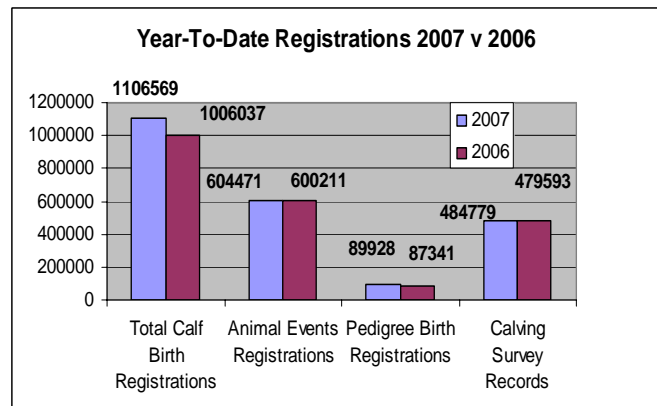
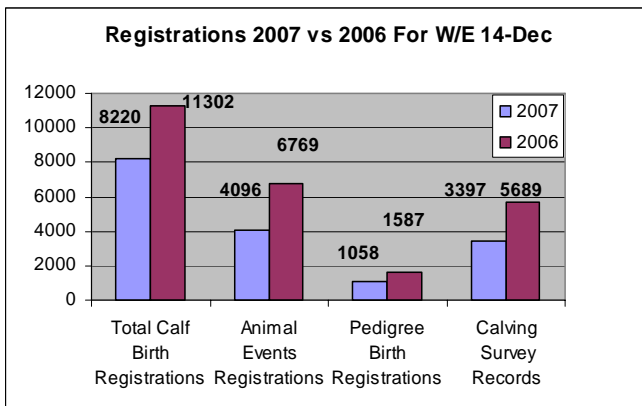
International

- ✚ Work continues on the carcass cuts from Pettitts: the first results show medium to strong heritabilities (0.40 to 0.70) especially for the high value parts of the animal (sirloin, striploin, fillet and rump). First correlations have been established between these cuts and the carcass weight – the work on correlation will shortly include the EUROP grading of conformation and fat. A presentation of this work will be made at the Agricultural Research Forum in March 2008 at Tullamore.

Foreign conversions

- ✚ Contact was made with the French Normande Society (Normande), Animal Evaluation Unit in New Zealand (Jersey), BBB Belgian Blue genetic evaluation personnel in Belgium (Belgian Blue) and the Italian Piemontese Society (Piemontese) regarding collaboration and access to information on common sires for development of conversion equations on foreign sires. It is hoped that some foreign information from these contacts can be integrated into the genetic evaluations for these breeds.

5 Database Update



- ✚ 371,066 inseminations have been received so far in 2007 from AI handhelds, compared with 167,579 in 2006 for the same period.
- ✚ The upgrade of the new hardware and database has not gone as well as planned. We have experienced intermittent problems whereby the network connection is being dropped between the user sites and the database when using IRIS. All available resources are being utilised to fix the issue as soon as possible.
- ✚ Preparations are continuing in order to be ready for the commencement of the Suckler Cow Welfare Scheme. Developments and changes to a number of screens and forms are underway.
- ✚ Production of the personalised farmer notebooks for the 2008 season from the database are continuing, with the further batches going to farmers this week.
- ✚ Further work took place this week on the Sire Advice solution in advance of the spring breeding season.



6 Milk Recording Processing – this week and year to date

National Milk Recording Statistics - Herds, Cows & EDIY 14/12/07						
Milk Recording Organisation	Total Herds Recorded YTD 14/12/07	No. EDIY Herds YTD 14/12/07	% Herds EDIY	Total No. Cows Recorded YTD 14/12/07	No. EDIY Cows YTD 14/12/07	% Cows EDIY
Progressive	2,147	697	32%	171,809	53,784	31%
Dairygold	1,595	555	35%	112,531	40,628	36%
Kerry	1,034	70	7%	72,403	5,690	8%
SWS	933	114	12%	61,585	7,571	12%
Tipperary	170	71	42%	12,349	5,245	42%
Arrabawn	169	128	76%	12,086	9,250	77%
Connacht	154	68	44%	10,313	4,476	43%
Donegal	43	43	100%	3,920	3,920	100%
Total	6,245	1,746	28%	456,996	130,564	29%

Recorded Cows by Milk Recording Organisation - Year on Year Comparison				
Milk Recording Organisation	YTD 2005 Cows Recorded 01/01/05 - 14/12/05	YTD 2006 Cows Recorded 01/01/06 - 14/12/06	YTD 2007 Cows Recorded 01/01/07 - 14/12/07	2007 vs 2006 Year on Year Difference (%)
Progressive	155,050	162,537	171,809	5.4%
Dairygold	98,891	104,621	112,531	7.0%
Kerry	68,033	70,855	72,403	2.1%
SWS	55,980	60,585	61,585	1.6%
Tipperary	9,473	11,888	12,349	3.7%
Arrabawn	7,222	11,120	12,086	8.0%
Connacht	7,496	9,390	10,313	8.9%
Donegal	4,747	5,281	3,920	-34.7%
Total	406,892	436,277	456,996	4.5%

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