



UPDATE – for period 9th – 15th June 2007

1 Important Dates

- ✚ **Thursday 21st June, Moorepark Open Day.**
- ✚ **Tuesday 3rd July, Irish Grasslands Assn.** Abbeyleix Manor Hotel. Beef farm walk and conference. Farm walk on property of Robin Talbot.
- ✚ **Thursday 5th July, ICBF Beef Breeding Industry Consultation Meeting, Horse & Jockey.**
- ✚ **Thursday 12th July, ICBF Board Meeting, Comfort Inn Portlaoise.**
- ✚ **August 24th to 30th.** Interbull and EAAP Annual Meetings, UCD, Dublin.
- ✚ **September 25th to 27th.** Ploughing Championships, Tullamore.

2 Irish Grassland Association Summer Farm Walk.

- ✚ The Irish Grassland Association held its summer farm tour on the farms of Seamus Quigley (Portumna) & Patrick & John Hickey (Athlone) on Tuesday this week. The theme of the tour was “Dairy Farm Expansion” with contrasting approaches (leasing versus purchase) examined on both farms.
- ✚ Some 350 farmers attended the events, with much of the discussion focusing on the type of cow needed for expansion. The large group were left in no doubt; compact calving (to reduce costs) and with high volumes of milk solids (to maximise milk price), were the key requirements outlined.
- ✚ ICBF HerdPlus data was to the fore during the day, with the value of the various reports, most notably the EBI & compact calving reports, being highlighted by both farmers.
- ✚ All in all, an excellent event organised by the Irish Grassland Association. Congratulations to all concerned. We look forward to participating in a similar Irish Grassland event (the beef summer tour) in a few weeks time on the farm of Robin Talbot, Portlaois (Tuesday 3rd July).

3 Beef Service Development

- ✚ This week further progress was made in the review of ICBF’s beef breeding services.
- ✚ A workshop meeting with Linear Scorers on Tuesday examined the draft proposals and identified further issues to be addressed. The essence of proposal is that ICBF’s Linear Scoring & Weight recording service will be put on a fully professional basis.
- ✚ Discussions are ongoing with experts in the field of disease control to establish protocols that will enable Tully to be reopened. Our focus in on ensuring best practice is adopted to minimize the risk of a recurrence of the IBR outbreak.
- ✚ Detailed proposals are being developed for the extension of HerdPlus services to beef herds.

4 Genetic Evaluations

Dairy Genetic evaluations

- ✚ Work continues on the transfer of the dairy calving interval and survival evaluation to a new software system capable of handling larger volumes of data.
- ✚ Work has commenced on potential enhancements to the dairy EBI including work on more sophisticated ways of accounting for heterosis and recombination. Other research work being undertaken in conjunction with Moorepark includes the evaluation of age at first calving as a trait for incorporation into the EBI.



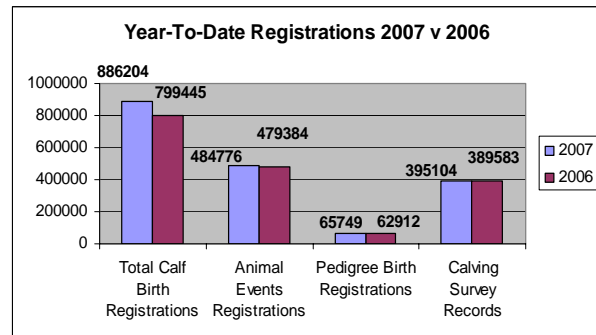
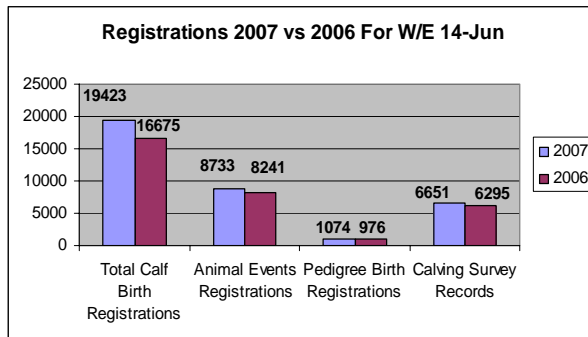
Beef Genetic Evaluations

- New mart data is currently being collected and loaded to the database and will be used for the next beef run.
- ICBF geneticists met with the ICBF linear scoring team on Tuesday 12th in Tully to discuss new proposals for linear scoring.

International Evaluations

- Improvements and additions to the conversion formulae used to convert foreign proofs to Irish proofs for foreign bulls are being explored.
- The main work for the Limousine and Charolais breeds is complete and the results incorporated in the recently completed beef evaluations. This represents a major step forward for these two breed as full use is now being made of available French evaluations for them.
- The Blonde d'Aquitane breed is the next most advanced and we are currently awaiting a meeting with the Irish Society to provide an update and to obtain their feedback.
- The Saler, Parthenaise and Aubrac breeds are at the stage of establishing international identifications for the French ancestors of Irish animals. This is the essential first step in all international evaluation work. It has not yet commenced for the Simmental and Angus breeds as it depends on an agreement to co-operate from the herd books in the countries exporting animals to Ireland.

5 Database Update



- 260,399 inseminations have recorded on the AI handhelds so far in 2007, compared with 101,993 in 2006 for the same period.
- The new Herdbook front end continues to be enhanced and with new modules. Usage is increasing, with three beef breeds now using it for routine processing.
- A review of the web interface for farmers is on-going and some very useful work-shops were held this week.
- The nightly batch jobs processing data from the Dept of Agriculture are being reviewed with a view to a redesign which would reduce the processing time on the ICBF database significantly.
- The 'six-week' fertility reports continue to be generated on a daily basis, and are being issued to HerdPlus members.
- The procurement process for new hardware (i.e. the main database server) is on-going. The existing server is coming out of warranty and will be replaced over the coming months.



6 HerdPlus

In conjunction with the Moorepark open day, we sent 5,000 letters offering a €20 discount from HerdPlus direct debit sign-up for all herds joining on the day.

7 ICAR Workshop

Ireland was represented at the annual ICAR meeting by Martin Burke of ICBF and Mary O'Keefe of Dairygold. This years meeting included a one day technical meeting. A copy of the paper presented by Martin & Mary and a link to all the other papers is in the publications section of the ICBF website (<http://www.icbf.com/publications/index.php>).

8 Tully

- ✚ Maintenance of feed boxes and gates is underway.
- ✚ A meeting will take place on the 20-6-07 to further discuss the health testing procedure for bulls entering Tully.
- ✚ Two companies will visit Tully during the week to provide a quotation for an automatic out door feeding system.

9 Milk Recording Processing this week

| Milk Recording Organisation | YTD 2005 Cows Recorded 01/01/05 - 15/06/05 | YTD 2006 Cows Recorded 01/01/06 - 15/06/06 | YTD 2007 Cows Recorded 01/01/07 - 15/06/07 | 2007 vs 2006 Year on Year Difference (%) |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Progressive | 138,553 | 142,701 | 152,304 | 6.3% |
| Dairygold | 88,552 | 94,718 | 101,067 | 6.3% |
| Kerry | 63,031 | 65,329 | 66,934 | 2.4% |
| SWS | 51,678 | 54,997 | 56,539 | 2.7% |
| Tipperary | 8,626 | 10,813 | 11,306 | 4.4% |
| Arrabawn | 6,556 | 10,095 | 10,961 | 7.9% |
| Connacht | 6,812 | 7,197 | 8,667 | 17.0% |
| Donegal | 2,460 | 4,376 | 3,208 | -36.4% |
| Total | 366,268 | 390,226 | 410,986 | 5.1% |

| Milk Recording Organisation | 2007 Herds Recorded Week 08/06/07 - 15/06/07 |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Progressive | 420 |
| Dairygold | 256 |
| Kerry | 216 |
| SWS | 127 |
| Arrabawn | 24 |
| Connacht | 23 |
| Tipperary | 19 |
| Total | 1,066 |

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