1. Important Dates

- **Wednesday 21st January 2009.** Dairy Genetic Evaluation Consultation Meeting, Radisson Hotel, Cork Airport, 11:00 – 14:00. This meeting will focus on the use of genomic information in the 2009 evaluations.
- **Wednesday 21st January 2009.** Dairy G€N€ IR€LAND® 2009 review with participating AI organisations, Radisson Hotel, Cork Airport, 14:00 – 16:00.
- **Thursday 22nd January 2009.** ICBF Board Meeting, Portlaoise. 10.30 – 14:00.
- **Thursday 22nd January 2009.** Sheep Ireland Board Meeting, Portlaoise. 14:00 – 16:30.

2. Board Meetings – 22nd January

ICBF

The meeting next week of the ICBF Board will consider:

- Recommendations arising from the Dairy Genetic Evaluation Consultation meeting and in particular the incorporation of genomic data in genetic evaluations.
- A proposal for promoting ***Best Practice in Cattle Breeding for Increasing farm Profits***.
- Plans for G€N€ IR€LAND® Beef in 2009 and future years.

Sheep Ireland

- This will be the first meeting of the Board of Sheep Database Ltd and it replaces the Interim Sheep Board.
- The Board will receive a progress report from the Sheep Ireland team leader, Pat Donnellan.

3. EBI €100 Discussion Group Competition

Copies of the two main presentations given at the awards ceremony for the EBI €100 Discussion Group Competition are now in the publications section of the ICBF website (www.icbf.com). These presentations by Andrew Cromie and George Ramsbottom illustrate the wide range of useful information now routinely available to dairy farmers and Discussion Groups through HerdPlus®. They also show the exceptional performance of the herds of the winning Discussion Groups. All dairy farmers can learn a lot from the winners.

4. Genetic Evaluations

International

In the past Foreign bulls received parent average proofs for calving traits until such time that had progeny born and scored at birth in Ireland. As we do not yet participate in Interbull for calving traits, conversion formula have been derived to provide a more accurate representation of a bulls breeding value for ***calving difficulty*** based on country of origin proofs. Conversions formulae have been established for the direct calving traits between Ireland and Canada, France, Germany, The Netherlands, New Zealand, and USA. The number of common bulls used for these conversions ranged from 34 (Germany) to 123 (USA). The estimated genetic correlation varied from 66% (New Zealand) to 82% (Canada), indicating that we can do a good job of predicting a bulls Irish calving difficulty figure from his country of origin proof. A total of 80,374 bulls across the 6 countries of origin have a converted proof and reliability for direct calving as a result.

Dairy

All evaluations have now been completed and are currently being uploaded to the database. A couple of enhancements have been made to some of the traits. A full report on these items will be given at the dairy genetic evaluation consultation meeting next Wednesday.

Interbull Update

Interbull is now routinely calculating international breeding values for Locomotion and Body Condition score. While these have been evaluated domestically for a number of years, international values will be published where available. This will impact mainly Foreign AI bulls with no daughters scored in Ireland or the UK.

Overall Type

Previously the Overall type figure obtained from Interbull was published for foreign bulls. We are now calculating Overall Type from the individual linear traits (e.g., statue, chest width, body depth etc) provided by Interbull. This is consistent with the publication of Overall Type provided by HUK. Therefore the formula for overall type is Overall Type = (0.0562*STA + 0.0106*CW - 0.0612*BD - 0.0314*ANG - 0.0096*RA - 0.0193*RW + 0.393*LAF + 0.792 * MAM). This will impact Foreign AI bulls with no daughters scored in Ireland or the UK.

Publication

- A provisional list of the new EBIs will be made available to the industry for AI bulls early next week.
- Official new evaluations for ***proven*** AI bulls will be available on Monday 26th January in the Bull search and in files on the website.
- Official evaluations for Genomically Selected Bulls and all other animals will be available on Monday 16th February.

Beef

A new beef evaluation run been completed and the proofs are currently being loaded to the database. New information on all the traits in the SBV has been incorporated. As a result the number of records in the beef performance evaluation has now reached 2,657,910 on 891,106 animals. A couple of enhancements have been made to some of the traits, specifically:

- ***Inclusion of Foreign data*** An extra step in the use of foreign EBV data has been performed to adjust for parental average EBV. Testing showed this had a very minor effect on the eventual proofs but is nonetheless an improvement.
- ***Data validation*** The results of a database validation study were also implemented in the current evaluation. ICBF received a file calf registration data late in 2008 from the Department of Agriculture which facilitated a series of checks on ancestry details in the ICBF database through the crosschecking of Breed of Sire from calf reg with the Breed of Sire of the AI codes recorded. This resulted in the exclusion of 35,000 animals from the current evaluation due to suspect pedigree details. This will result in the changing of proofs for some AI sires where errors were detected.

5. Tully

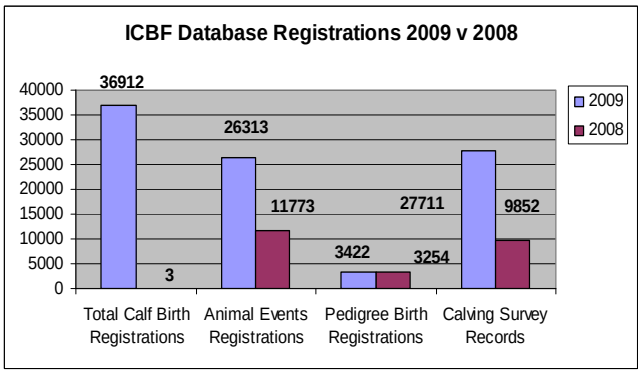
- Bull owners and breed societies have been sent a letter containing the latest live-weights along with the average daily gain of bulls within Tully to date.
- Preparation is starting for the next intake (i.e. May intake) with a list of bulls been prepared in order to identify superior bulls. The criteria for the next intake require that bulls be born between the 1st of July and

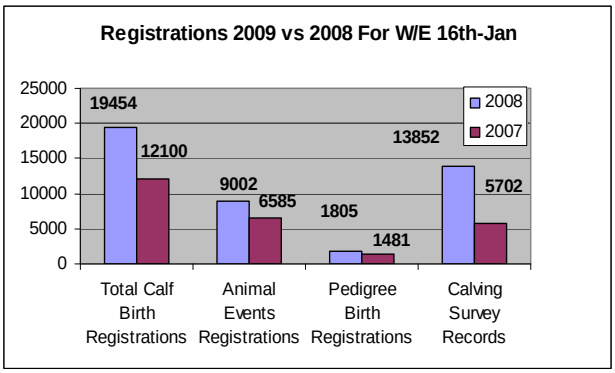
1st December of the previous year. They must have a five star Suckler Beef Value rating and a minimum of 3 stars for Milk and Fertility.

6. G€N€ IR€LAND®

- Details for the Spring 2009 programme are being collated. This information and sign-up forms will be initially posted to past participants next week. The revised flyer outlining changes to the scheme is attached.
- Payments for Milk Recorded progeny test heifers from the Spring 2005 programme are currently being processed.
- Development work on new herdowner screens for G€N€ IR€LAND participants is nearing completion.

7. Database





- 7,029 inseminations have been received so far in 2009, compared with 7,977in 2008 for the same period.
- The AI 2009 software migration has begun, and the Munster AI group has been migrated this week. Dovea and Eurogene are next, beginning at the end of next week.
- There continues to be a lot of activity in the Suckler Scheme. The number of calves with a meal feeding introduction has increased to 721,000, with just over 605,000 of these having been weaned. The focus will now begin to switch to the registration of 2009 births, and Animal Events notebooks will be distributed, which will begin next week.
- The revamp of the Milk Recording system continues. The specifications have been completed, with a final review to happen with PG prior to the beginning of programming.
- This week, work has continued on the Sheep application, specifically around further testing of the lambing recording screens.

8. Milk Recording

National Milk Recording Statistics - Herds, Cows & EDIY 16/01/09						
Milk Recording Organisation	Total Herds Recorded YTD 16/01/09	No. EDIY Herds YTD 16/01/09	% Herds EDIY	Total No. Cows Recorded YTD 16/01/09	No. EDIY Cows YTD 16/01/09	% Cows EDIY
Progressive	237	22	9%	13,943	1,273	9%
Dairygold	74	4	5%	4,069	257	6%
Kerry	59	1	2%	2,916	132	5%
SWS	90	1	1%	4,306	276	6%
Tipperary	8	0	0%	403	0	0%
Arrabawn	0	0	0%	0	0	0%
Connacht	28	0	0%	1,302	0	0%
Donegal	0	0	0%	0	0	0%
Total	**496**	**28**	**6%**	**26,939**	**1,938**	**7%**

Recorded Cows by Milk Recording Organisation - Year on Year Comparison			
Milk Recording Organisation	YTD 2008 Cows Recorded 01/01/08 - 16/01/08	YTD 2009 Cows Recorded 01/01/09 - 16/01/09	2009 vs 2008 Year on Year Difference (%)
Progressive	19,959	13,943	-43.1%
Dairygold	2,458	4,069	39.6%
Kerry	2,520	2,916	13.6%
SWS	3,997	4,306	7.2%
Tipperary	121	403	70.0%
Arrabawn	132	0	0.0%
Connacht	1,160	1,302	10.9%
Donegal	0	0	0.0%
Total	**30,347**	**26,939**	**-12.7%**

National Milk Recording Results by County - 10 day Period 06/01/09 to 16/01/09								
	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	5	268	54	25.7	4.36	3.58	2.04	320
CAVAN	26	1,018	39	20.5	4.03	3.41	1.53	320
CLARE	2	72	36	17.3	4.13	3.69	1.35	279
CORK STH	103	4,897	48	21.7	4.13	3.43	1.64	337
CORK NTH	37	2,040	55	22.0	4.24	3.43	1.69	293
DONEGAL	1	29	29	19.8	4.12	3.16	1.44	205
DUBLIN	2	90	45	20.2	3.98	3.44	1.50	499
GALWAY	13	599	46	25.2	4.08	3.31	1.86	345
KERRY	24	1,234	51	21.0	4.00	3.39	1.55	435
KILDARE	19	877	46	21.0	3.98	3.55	1.58	351
KILKENNY	3	121	40	15.1	4.43	3.66	1.22	296
LAOIS	9	426	47	25.5	3.92	3.50	1.89	322

LEITRIM	2	82	41	28.8	3.84	3.29	2.05	271
LIMERICK	23	1,326	58	24.1	4.05	3.36	1.79	382
LONGFORD	2	58	29	17.2	3.99	3.36	1.26	229
LOUTH	11	563	51	21.2	3.80	3.37	1.52	448
MAYO	24	1,138	47	17.3	3.82	3.53	1.27	306
MEATH	35	3,167	90	22.0	4.13	3.55	1.69	422
MONAGHAN	17	583	34	21.7	4.12	3.44	1.64	300
OFFALY	7	348	50	18.1	4.33	3.48	1.41	297
SLIGO	4	164	41	23.3	3.66	3.40	1.64	396
TIPPERARY NTH	4	197	49	15.3	4.19	3.46	1.17	216
TIPPERARY STH	7	403	58	22.7	4.49	3.46	1.80	271
WATERFORD	8	395	49	23.9	3.98	3.20	1.72	300
WESTMEATH	7	390	56	21.1	4.36	3.49	1.66	200
WEXFORD	15	922	61	22.6	4.01	3.33	1.66	298
WICKLOW E	7	409	58	27.3	3.90	3.35	1.98	244
WICKLOW W	15	1,139	76	25.5	4.18	3.43	1.94	244
	No. Herds Recorded	***No. Cows Recorded***	***Average Herd Size***	***Average 24hr Milk kg/Cow***	***Average Fat %***	***Average Protein %***	***Average F + P kg***	***Average SCC***
National	**432**	**22,955**	**50**	**21.7**	**4.08**	**3.43**	**1.63**	**315**

National Milk Recording Averages by Province - 10 day Period 06/01/09 to 16/01/09

Provincial	***No. Herds Recorded***	***No. Cows Recorded***	***Average Herd Size***	***Average 24hr Milk kg/Cow***	***Average Fat %***	***Average Protein %***	***Average F + P kg***	***Average SCC***
Munster	208	10,564	51	21.0	4.14	3.43	1.59	314
Leinster	137	8,778	64	21.7	4.01	3.47	1.63	321
Connacht	39	1,983	51	23.7	4.05	3.38	1.76	330
Ulster	44	1,630	37	20.7	3.99	3.34	1.51	275

9. Change in our phone numbers

The ICBF phone numbers have changed. Our new numbers have "**88**" added to them after the area code (023). Please amend your files as soon as possible. The old numbers will continue to work until May of 2009.

Old Number (example)	**New Number (**example)
Phone: 023 20222	023 **88** 20222
Fax: 023 20229	023 **88** 20229

Brian Wickham Ph.D. Chief Executive Irish Cattle Breeding Federation Soc. Ltd, Highfield House, Shinagh, Bandon, Co. Cork, Ireland, Phone office +353 (0)23 882 0222, mobile +353 (0)86 826 9911 Fax office +353 (0)23 882 0229 E-Mail *bwickham@icbf.com* ICBF Web site www.icbf.com

A joint initiative involving ICBF, DAF, FBD and participating AI Companies.

Programme Co-ordinator and Sponsors

ICBF.com

HerdPlus
Profit through Science

NDP
NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS

FBD TRUST

Participating AI Companies

NATIONAL CATTLE BREEDING CENTRE

PROGRESSIVE GENETICS

munster cattle breeding group

eurogene aiservices

ABS Ireland

DOVEA GENETICS
THE HOME OF GOOD BREEDING

Farmer opinion...

Padraig Walshe, Durrow, Co. Laois. *'I have been involved in the G€N€ IR€LAND® programme since it first started in 2005. Each year the standard of the programme has improved, which is a positive. However, we need greater farmer and industry support. Our futures depend on a successful progeny test programme.'*

Kevin Twomey, Ballyhooley, Co. Cork. *'There are many positives to being involved in the G€N€ IR€LAND® dairy programme; the fact that you know you are contributing to an "industry" initiative the EBI of the bulls and the financial the use of genomic selection. Combined, these provide a compelling reason for supporting the programme.'*

Eamon Fagan, Glasson, Westmeath. *'Farmers want a new top bull each year. However, the only way we can get a new top bull is to expand the G€N€ IR€LAND® progeny test programme. That means more farmers being involved in the testing of bulls through the programme. I would urge all farmers to get involved.'*

Winners of the top data recording herds at the recent G€N€ IR€LAND user conference

Sign Up to G€N€ IR€LAND®

Contact ICBF on:
023 8820454 or 023 8820458

Text the words 'BULL DAIRY'
To 51101

Or contact your local Breeding Adviser.

G€N€ IR€LAND®
Breeding future Profits

DAIRY PROGENY TEST PROGRAMME

- High EBI Young sires
- Use of Genomic Data
- Excellent Value for Money

Driving future Profits for the Irish Dairy Industry!

Overview

The G€N€ IR€LAND® dairy programme was first launched in Spring 2005 with 21 Holstein Friesian bulls tested. Since then the scale, EBI and efficiency of the program has improved each year (see Table 1), with 90 bulls due to be tested in Spring 2009 at a target EBI of €150.

Table 1. Summary of G€N€ IR€LAND® dairy programmes 2005-2008*

Year of Program	Scale; Number Bulls Tested	EBI; Average EBI of Bull Team	Efficiency; Recorded inseminations per heifer calf.
2005	21	€102	9.4
2006	45	€120	7.5
2007	44	€125	6.8
2008	72	€142	*Not yet available.*

** Spring programs only.*

Proven Results

Results from the first year of the program (2005) have demonstrated that the science behind the program is correct and that the program is now delivering for the industry. For example, the average EBI of the 21 bulls from the 2005 program was €102, based on parent average data. All of these bulls have now received official EBI proofs (Nov 2008), with the average EBI of the team of bulls being €100 in the latest proof run (based on daughter performance). These results confirm that the science behind the program is sound and that farmers can have confidence in using the G€N€ IR€LAND young bull teams.

Genomic Selection

One added advantage to this year's program (2009) is the use of additional genomic data in the bull selection process. As a result farmers can expect to see higher EBI's (due to more intense selection), higher reliabilities (an increase of some 5-10% on an individual bull basis) and more genetic progress (+50% in the longer term), as a result of this exciting and new development.

Benefits to the Farmer

There are a number of benefits to being involved in the G€N€ IR€LAND program. These include;

- High EBI young bulls (target €150 in 2009).
- Use of genomic data in the selection process.
- The opportunity to be involved in a program that is delivering real benefits for the industry.
- Excellent value for money (high EBI bulls at €5/straw).
- Access to FBD awards for "Top data recording herds" (see enclosed photo).
- Complimentary linear scoring of test bull daughters and contemporaries.
- Excellent customer support including inbreeding reports for your herd, test bull information sheet & on-line G€N€ IR€LAND reports and profiles.

Test Bull Groups

BREEDS

There are currently a number of breed pack options available to farmers, including:

- Holstein/Friesian (HF)
- Pure Friesian (FR)
- Crossbred pack (HF, JE, HFxJE)
- Mixed breed pack (all dairy breeds, including red breeds)

Availability and content of these packs is dependent on the bulls put forward by the participating AI companies.

COST

- €5 per straw, charged directly by AI service provider. Herd-owners using the technician service will still incur the cost of the 'arm service' and visit fee

PACKS

- Minimum pack size is 35 straws (5 bulls x 7 straws). 25 straw pack available to herds signed up with a Discussion Group (5x5).
- Also available in quantities of 49, 70 & 105 doses (mulitiples of 7 straws/bull).
- Packs represent a range of sires.

Requirements of a Progeny Test Herd

The following are the requirements for becoming a Progeny Test Herd:

- Test straws must be used in the assigned breeding season.
  - Spring: 1st March - 31st August
  - Autumn: 1st September - 28th February
- Full participation in Animal Events
  - recorded inseminations
  - calving performance
- Participation in approved Milk Recording
  - minimum of 4 sets

G€N€ IR€LAND®
Sign-up Form

Herd No: _____

Name: _____

Mobile: _____

PROGRAMME DETAILS

(where appropriate, tick relevant box)

Season: Spring

Breed Pack: (tick breed and number of straws required)

Number of Straws	25#	35	49	70	105	105+
Holstein/Friesian	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Pure Friesian	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
HOFR + Pure FR mix	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Crossbred*	☐	☐	☐	☐	n/a	n/a
Mixed breed*	☐	☐	☐	☐	n/a	n/a

* see opposite page for description of breed packs

only available to herd involved in a Discussion Group

AI DETAILS

Service Provider: _____

DIY ☐ **Technician** ☐

Name Sales Rep / Technician: _____

AI start date: _____

General:
I agree to the G€N€ IR€LAND® terms and conditions (available on the ICBF website). I understand that they apply to this order and I agree to be bound by them.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

To be returned to:
ICBF, Highfield House, Bandon, Co Cork.
Any questions you may have, please call ICBF on 023 8820454