

1. Important Dates

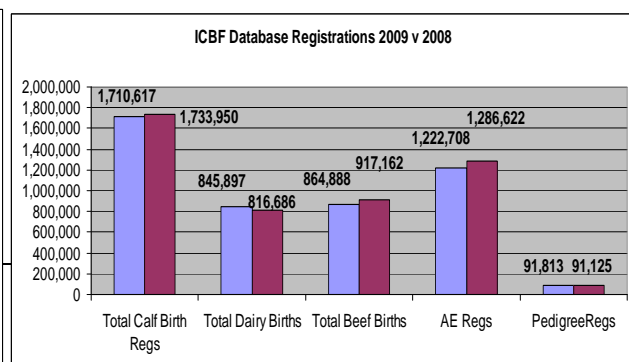
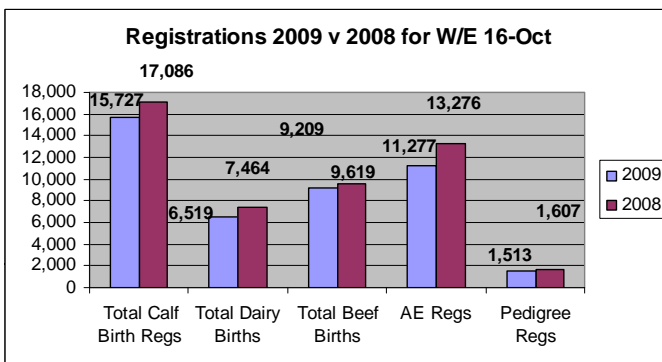
- ✚ **ICBF & Sheep Ireland Board Meetings** – Thursday 22nd October, Portlaoise.
- ✚ **GENÉIRELAND[®] Dairy Conference** – Monday 7th December (**please note: changed from 29th Oct**), Corrin Mart, Rathcormac, Co. Cork.

2. EADGENE – Genomics & Animal Health

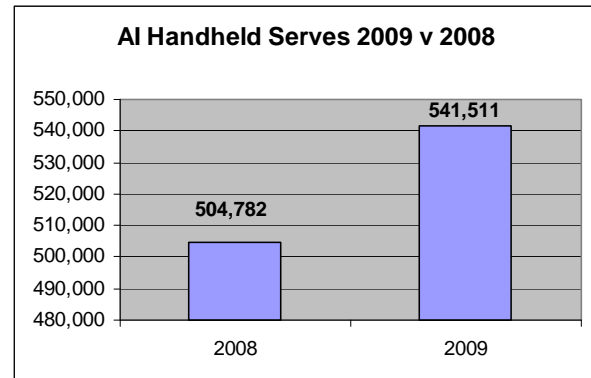
This week I spent two days attending a workshop on using genomics to help breed animals for disease resistance. Here is a brief summary of my observations.

- ✚ ICBF is a member of EFFAB (European Federation of Farm Animal Breeders - www.effab.info) and through this link we were invited to participate in the final EADGENE (European Animal Disease Genomics Network of Excellence for Animal Health and Food Safety - www.eadgene.info) Workshop. The research effort covers a range of species (fish, pigs, poultry, sheep, and cattle) and has built a series of collaborative networks between European research groups. Key points include:
 - ✚ The genetic technologies available by the end of the five year project are much more powerful than were envisaged at the start.
 - ✚ There is a lot of genetic variation in the organisms causing disease(s) in farm animals. This variation has given rise to strains of bacteria and viruses that are able to adapt to a wide range of farming systems and thus cause serious losses.
 - ✚ Farm animals (of all species) contain a lot of genetic variation in their ability to remain productive when exposed to a wide range of diseases. There are a number of examples (in poultry, fish, sheep, cattle) where selection has given rise to strains of disease resistant animals.
 - ✚ Molecular genetic tools (genomics, DNA sequencing, ...) with associated improvements in computing power are giving rise to a greatly improved understanding of how diseases work and what can be done to reduce their impact on animal production.
 - ✚ It will be many years, if ever, before there is enough understanding to enable the "engineering" of animals that will be disease resistant.
 - ✚ In the meantime, the strategy that works is to select those animals that perform well when exposed to disease in commercial production environments. This strategy takes a lot of time, can be expensive and involves collecting disease data on large numbers of animals. However, it is a strategy that works.
 - ✚ As cattle (and sheep) breeders we need to find ways of integrating disease data with the animal breeding data we routinely collect. With this data we can facilitate some of the required research, identify genetically resistant strains of animals and make progress on commercial farms.
 - ✚ Animal breeders and veterinarians by working much more closely together can help farmers achieve higher economic returns through improving herd health.

3. Database



- ✚ All suckler scheme herds with a calving in 2009 have now received their first pre-weaning form. The number of 2009 born calves with meal introduced is 375,000, with the number of animals weaned at 98,000.
- ✚ Three of the four milk recording organisations are now fully live on the new Milk Recording system. Munster will go live next week.
- ✚ Work is continuing on updating the Sales Catalogue template for beef animals based on feedback received during the recent industry meeting.
- ✚ Munster AI took a new batch of 14 technicians live on AI handhelds this week in the Clare and Galway regions.
- ✚ The graph shows Inseminations recoded on AI Handhelds in 2009 compared with 2008. There are more technicians using the handhelds in 2009 than there were in 2008.



4. GENEIRLAND®

Dairy

- ✚ Insemination data is still coming in from the Spring programme and is currently at 66% of straws dispatched.
- ✚ Payments for Milk Recording from the Spring 2006 programme will be processed next week.
- ✚ Currently there are 60 herds signed up to the Autumn 2009 programme.

Beef

- ✚ Sign ups are going well with 104 herds taking part so far.
- ✚ Total straws sent out per bull currently on the panel are in the table below.

BREED	CH	CH	LM	LM	SI	AA	AA	BA	PT	SA	SH	HE
CODE	VHC	CWB	RHF	FL29	RWV	RWB	FPG	WOA	KCP	BHU	CZB	AGI
STRAWS	90	256	590	110	400	335	190	560	420	55	315	25

5. Tully

- ✚ The Tully Open Day was a great success last week (pictures below), with between 1100 – 1200 pedigree and commercial beef farmers attending the event. The overall concept of the event was about giving farmers information that would help them make better breeding decisions, in order to increase profit, and to promote Tully and GENEIRLAND® in time for the next intake in November.
- ✚ The event certainly fulfilled that purpose, as over 250 applications from pedigree breeders wanting to get their bull into Tully, have being received for the next intake. Also, the GENEIRLAND® program has signed up a number of breeders this week, that attended the open day.
- ✚ A survey was carried out at the event on 228 farmers, with results being very positive. A high percentage of breeders found the information to be very useful for their herd. For example, of the 228 farmers surveyed,

130 found the herd health advice to be very or extremely useful. The full results of the survey can be seen in the Publications and Tully sections of the ICBF website.

- ✚ A big thanks to everyone who helped in the preparation or participated at the event, which helped make the day a success for all.
- ✚ There was also a lot of interest in the bulls on show at the event, with over half of the 32 being sold to either pedigree or commercial breeders. Also, 7 bulls were purchased prior to the event and these animals had their pictures and information displayed on the day. Six of these bulls were purchased by AI companies and one was purchased by a pedigree breeder in Galway. In total, eleven Tully bulls were purchased by AI companies in 2009, which is the highest ever in any one year. The six bulls destined for AI are currently in isolation, awaiting results from bloods taken. Once the blood results come back clear, the bulls will then be transported to the AI companies
- ✚ In relations to the next intake 258 applications have being received, with the deadline for applications closing yesterday. These bulls that have being applied for by breeders will be inspected on-farm, over the next two weeks.





6. Genetic Dairy & Beef Evaluations

Work continues on developments of the genetic evaluations of dairy and beef cattle.

- ✚ Work over the next number of weeks will be focused on implementing and testing a new model for calving interval and survival and calving performance with a view to publishing new proofs for the spring AI season.
- ✚ The work on calving interval and survival is using insemination data and extending the number of parities used in the evaluation.
- ✚ An evaluation using both heifer calving and calving in later parities is being looked at for calving performance. In addition new genetic parameters have been estimated for the calving performance traits.

7. Lambplus Update

CPT

- ✚ The CPT (Central Progeny Test) Program is now fully operational.
- ✚ A full report will be given in next weeks update which will give details on what has happened to-date.

MALP

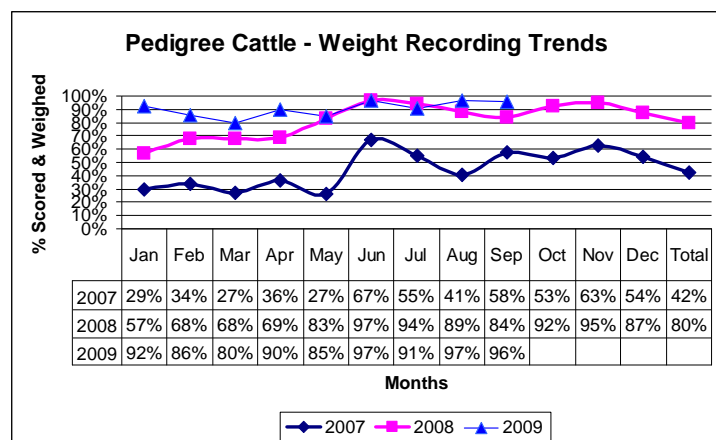
- Considerable progress has been made with the building of the dataset for the genetic evaluation of the rams in the MALP Flocks.

Lambplus

- Development work has started on the improved Lambplus Web Screens.
- The overall objective of this work is to make the screens more user friendly.
- Before any more Flockowners are signed up to Lambplus it is essential that this work is completed.

8. GROW[®] Update

- The % of pedigree animals scored that are also weighed for August & September is ahead of the figures for the same time last year.
- It is the 4th month in a row that the weighing % has been over the 90% mark.
- The weight recording % has not dipped under 80% in 2009.
- The weights recorded on beef pedigree and commercial cattle is a valuable source of data. It is the one aspect of the GROW[®] Service that makes it unique in that individual weights are obtained on weanlings close to them being weaned off the cow – such data is not always available in marts with animals sold in groups.
- The new GROW[®] rules brought in last year (weighed in a group of 5 & 150-300 days old) has meant that certain herds are no longer eligible for scoring and so the numbers of animals being scored has fallen.
- The data that was being collected in these herds could not be used in the Genetic Evaluations as the numbers of animals involved was too small.
- The number of commercial cattle scored & weighed has increased over the last 3 years.
- The new Sales Catalogue template got a very positive reaction at the Tully Open Day. In particular, the Linear Score section of the template which shows how a Bull breeds for different traits drew a lot of interest. These traits, for which scores have always been recorded, were previously never displayed. They were just used in the formulation of the BLUP Sub Indexes – Muscle, Skeletal etc.
- On the 15th of October 2009 ‘GROW’ received its Certificate of Trademark Registration.



Total Scored and Weighed Statistics		
Year	Scored	Weighed
2007	10,201	4,814
2008	11,767	9,536
2009 (to date)	9,885	9,284

9. Milk Recording

National Milk Recording Results by County - 10 day Period 06/10/09 to 16/10/09.

	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	21	1,144	54	18.2	4.33	3.65	1.45	339
CAVAN	39	1,788	46	17.9	4.01	3.75	1.39	367
CLARE	37	1,920	52	15.2	4.34	3.84	1.24	345
CORK STH	248	16,126	65	17.4	4.16	3.78	1.38	329
CORK NTH	270	18,615	69	16.6	4.27	3.87	1.35	299
DONEGAL	11	651	59	16.4	4.13	3.60	1.27	285
DUBLIN	4	200	50	24.6	3.77	3.63	1.82	367
GALWAY	21	1,404	67	16.9	4.43	3.86	1.40	496
KERRY	96	6,007	63	16.3	4.10	3.72	1.27	328
KILDARE	18	1,451	81	21.0	4.01	3.59	1.60	321
KILKENNY	64	4,348	68	15.5	4.32	3.82	1.26	344
LAOIS	30	2,053	68	15.3	4.29	3.81	1.24	287
LEITRIM	8	369	46	17.8	3.97	3.44	1.32	291
LIMERICK	111	6,701	60	16.6	4.10	3.73	1.30	334
LONGFORD	12	738	62	15.8	4.13	3.72	1.24	396
LOUTH	15	1,152	77	18.9	3.60	3.61	1.36	283
MAYO	11	773	70	18.8	4.04	3.63	1.44	385
MEATH	55	4,543	83	19.4	3.98	3.65	1.48	320
MONAGHAN	48	2,332	49	18.5	3.95	3.56	1.39	317
OFFALY	34	2,181	64	16.0	4.21	3.81	1.28	310
ROSCOMMON	2	147	74	20.0	3.82	3.45	1.45	477
SLIGO	6	190	32	18.4	4.06	3.73	1.43	325
TIPPERARY NTH	42	3,449	82	16.8	4.33	3.88	1.38	340
TIPPERARY STH	79	5,738	73	15.1	4.34	3.82	1.23	314
WATERFORD	61	5,161	85	16.3	4.22	3.84	1.31	265
WESTMEATH	33	2,409	73	16.0	4.53	3.79	1.33	276
WEXFORD	60	4,360	73	15.2	3.98	3.73	1.17	350
WICKLOW E	17	1,167	69	17.9	3.82	3.59	1.33	267
WICKLOW W	13	936	72	20.2	3.63	3.28	1.40	335
	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	1,466	98,053	65	17.6	4.10	3.70	1.37	334

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

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	944	63,717	67	16.3	4.23	3.81	1.31	319
Leinster	376	26,682	71	18.0	4.05	3.67	1.39	323
Connacht	48	2,883	60	18.4	4.06	3.62	1.41	395
Ulster	98	4,771	49	17.6	4.03	3.64	1.35	323

National Milk Recording Statistics - Herds, Cows & EDIY 16/10/09

Milk Recording Organisation	Total Herds Recorded YTD 16/10/09	No. EDIY Herds YTD 16/10/09	% Herds EDIY	Total No. Cows Recorded YTD 16/10/09	No. EDIY Cows YTD 16/10/09	% Cows EDIY
Progressive	2,076	847	41%	177,401	72,007	41%
Dairygold	1,508	567	38%	116,915	46,160	39%
Kerry	891	66	7%	62,416	4,244	7%
SWS	857	114	13%	61,794	8,924	14%
Tipperary	136	56	41%	11,122	4,991	45%
Arrabawn	141	116	82%	11,868	10,112	85%
Connacht	142	51	36%	9,671	3,508	36%
Donegal	33	33	100%	3,917	3,917	100%
Total	5,784	1,850	32%	455,104	153,863	34%

Recorded Cows by Milk Recording Organisation - Year on Year Comparison

Milk Recording Organisation	YTD 2008 Cows Recorded 01/01/08 - 16/10/08	YTD 2009 Cows Recorded 01/01/09 - 16/10/09	2009 vs 2008 Year on Year Difference (%)
Progressive	181,648	177,401	-2.4%
Dairygold	125,519	116,915	-7.4%
Kerry	79,037	62,416	-26.6%
SWS	61,727	61,794	0.1%
Tipperary	13,074	11,122	-17.6%
Arrabawn	12,811	11,868	-7.9%
Connacht	10,541	9,671	-9.0%
Donegal	4,781	3,917	-22.1%
Total	489,138	455,104	-7.5%

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