



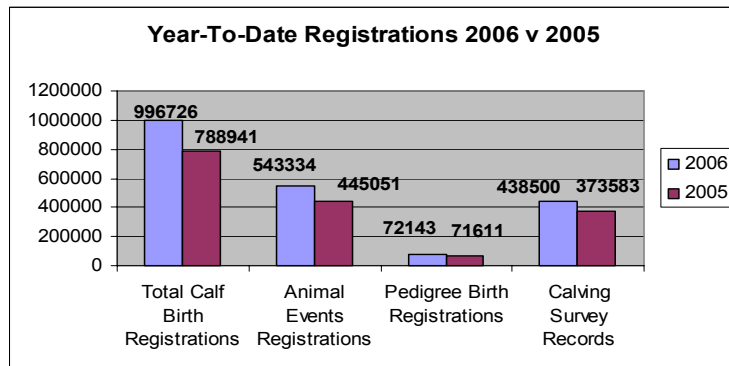
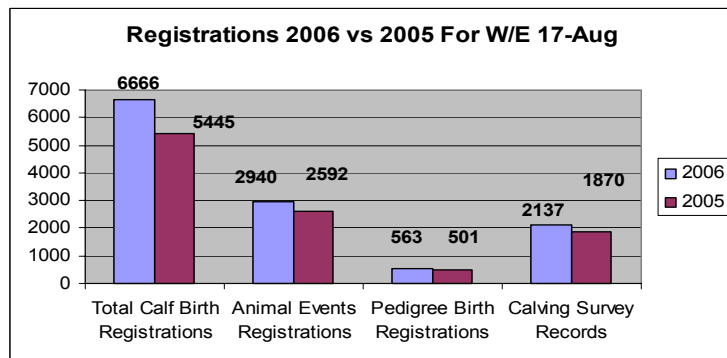
Update for period 12th-18th August 2006

1 Important Dates

- **Tuesday 12th September** – TEAGASC Grange Open Day.
- **Wednesday 13th September** – EBI €100 Open Day – near Birr.
- **Thursday 14th September** – ICBF Board meeting, Heritage Hotel Portlaoise.
- **September 27th to 30th. Ploughing.** The new breeding information service will be the main focus of the ICBF stand.
- **Wednesday 4th October** – **Beef Breeding Consultation meeting**, **Abbeyleix Manor Hotel.**

2 Database Update

- 12 new herds added to the database last week.
- Over 145000 inseminations have now been recorded on the AI handhelds.
- The loading of the latest Dairy Genetic Evaluation is almost complete. The preliminary bull search and top bull files are now available on the website.
- The latest dairy calving reports are now also available to farmers online.
- The redesign of the EBI report has been completed and testing of the new report has started.
- The new release of Linear Scoring hand-held software is being tested.
- Data from 5 more marts has been received and loaded to the database.
- Cleanup of Norwegian Red data was undertaken this week.
- Work is progressing on the new herdbook front end to IRIS.

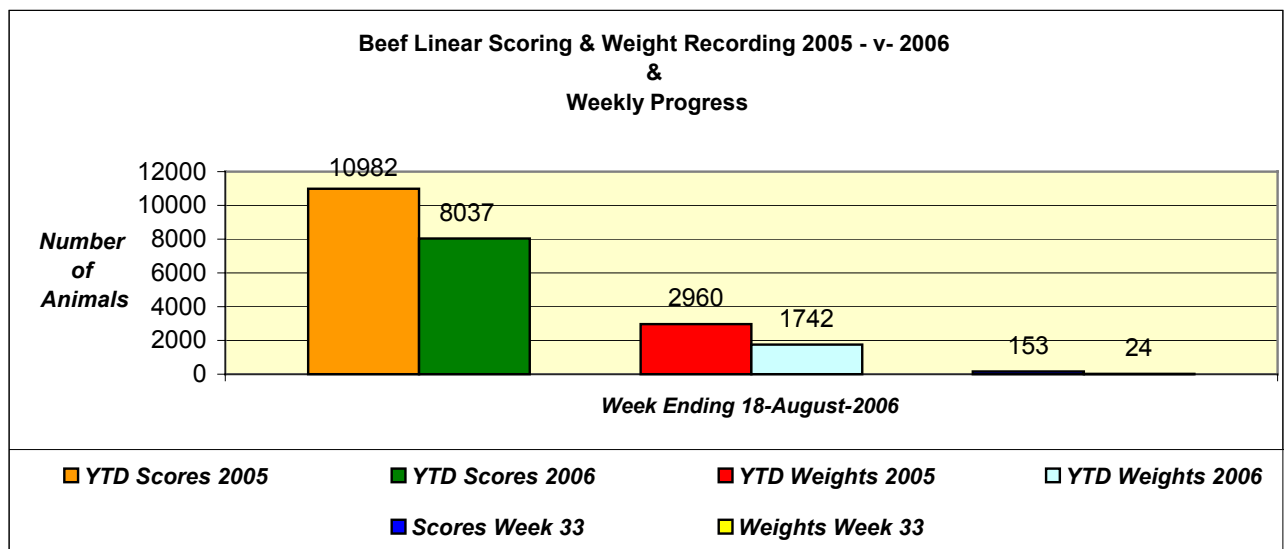




3 Tully

- Applications for the September intake have closed. A total of 385 applications were received and inspections will begin on the 19-8-06.
- Applications for the November intake to Tully will be sent out to breeders before the end of August. This intake is bulls born from the 20-1-06 to the 20-4-06.
- A group of pedigree breeders from England and Wales visited Tully on the 12-8-06.

4 Beef Linear Scoring



5 Milk Recording Update

Milk Recording Herds and Cows Year To date 2006 versus Year to date 2005

Milk Recording Organisation	YTD 2005 Herds Recorded 01/01/05 - 18/08/05	YTD 2006 Herds Recorded 01/01/06 - 18/08/06	Year on Year Herds Difference(%)	YTD 2005 Cows Recorded 01/01/05 - 18/08/05	YTD 2006 Cows Recorded 01/01/06 - 18/08/06	Year on Year Cows Difference(%)
Progressive	2,074	2,086	1%	145,541	152,190	5%
Dairygold	1,520	1,547	2%	95,937	101,910	6%
Kerry	1,064	1,074	1%	66,435	69,191	4%
SWS	934	958	3%	53,758	58,337	9%
Tipperary	141	168	19%	9,258	11,693	26%
Arrabawn	108	157	45%	7,037	10,879	55%
Connacht	110	136	24%	7,182	8,847	23%
Donegal	32	56	75%	3,359	5,105	52%
Total	5,983	6,182	3%	388,507	418,152	8%



Milk Recording Stats week ending 18/08/06

Milk Recording Organisation	2006 Herds Recorded Week 11/08/06 - 18/08/06
Progressive	284
Dairygold	179
Kerry	132
SWS	107
Arrabawn	15
Tipperary	13
Connacht	20
Donegal	3
Total	753

6 Genetic Evaluations

- A provisional list of Dairy AI bulls was from the August run was released to the industry and made available on the website this week. This list will be updated when the parent averaging steps are completed. EBI for bulls with progeny information in the Irish evaluation for all traits will not change. Proofs for sires on whom some of the sub-indexes are based on parent average information may change slightly.
- Preparation of fertility (Holstein-Friesian), calving (Holstein-Friesian) and production files (Jersey) for the September test run are currently being undertaken.

7 International Beef Evaluations

- Work on the guidelines for INTERBEEF which describe the steps to follow when a country wishes to join the international genetic evaluation: the different files to create (cross reference file, pedigrees file, performances files) and their process by INTERBEEF. This guidelines will be hosted by the INTERBULL website.
- Work on the Limousine (extended files sent to France for evaluation) and Hereford (more traits).

8 World Congress on Genetics Applied to Livestock Production

This week ICBF is being represented at the World Congress on Genetics Applied to Livestock Production (WCGALP) in Belo Horizonte, Brazil by Andrew Cromie and Brian Wickham. Held every four years, WCGALP covers cattle, sheep, pigs, poultry and other species of commercial interest with a particular focus on scientific developments relevant to genetic improvement.

The meeting is running for five days (Monday to Friday) and is being attended by 1,200 scientists, University faculty and breeding industry people from around the world. The program of papers and posters runs to 96 pages.



Some observations from the first four days include:

Recently the USDA modified its economic index for Holstein's so that the weighting on milk production is now below 50%. This has been done by increasing the emphasis placed on fertility and other traits including a negative emphasis on liveweight.

Recent US research has shown crossbreeding of Scandinavian breeds with Holsteins has resulted in cows that are both much more fertile, and survive longer than Holsteins milked in the same environment. The lower level of milk production in the crosses being more than offset by their fertility and survival attributes.

The level of inbreeding in the world populations of Holsteins is increasing at a faster rate than is considered desirable. This has come about mainly due to AI companies concentrating on the use of a small number of sire families. There have been a number of tools developed to help AI companies and breeders to identify strains and strategies for minimizing the build up of inbreeding. Farmers have indicated that they would like to know the inbreeding level of their animals and the progeny from using different bulls to breed replacements.

The application of DNA technologies to animal breeding is the subject of a vast research effort in many countries and species. A development creating a lot of interest is genomic selection. This has the potential to enable rates of genetic gain to be increased significantly especially if coupled with reproductive technologies that shorten generation intervals. Many cattle breeding organisations are closely monitoring these developments.

The World Hereford funded research project to research international genetic evaluations is making good progress with data being contributed by all countries with significant populations of Herefords. Ireland is participating in this project and the research is being conducted by AGBU (the Animal Genetics & Breeding Unit at the University of New England in Armidale).

France is currently conducting a research project to determine methods for incorporating eating quality into their breeding programs for the main beef breeds. Initial results show some potential but the cost of collecting taste panel data is very high and results are quite variable.

A method for measuring the connectedness between beef herds has been applied in France. A survey of breeders found they placed a high value on knowing how accurately the genetic merit of animal in their herds could be compared with animals in other herds. This is a tool that Irish beef (and dairy) breeders might find valuable.

Across breed beef genetic evaluations are developing in the USA. However progress is being limited by a lack of arrangements for sharing data from different recording organisations.

A decision support tool for beef breeders has been developed at Colorado State University. Accessed by the internet this tool enables a herd owner to identify those bulls that best suit their production system. While this has been developed specifically for beef breeders it has application in dairy breeding. We should look closely at the value of such a tool to Irish herd owners.

In addition to the formal papers and presentation there are a lot of informal discussions and meetings during this conference. This provides the opportunity to learn about developments, to identify potential opportunities for Irish cattle breeding and to plan future work.

We will come away from the conference proud of the progress Ireland has made over the last few years towards establishing a world class breeding scheme for both dairy and beef. Further, our links nationally and



internationally enable us to both participate in research and to apply the results in a way that provides the maximum benefit to Irish farmers.

9 Commercial Linear Scoring Project

- Preparation has begun for the forthcoming Commercial Linear Scoring Project.
- This project will have 3 main functions.
 - Linear Score all available weanlings (commercial & pedigree)
 - Weight record all available weanlings (commercial & pedigree)
 - Fill in missing ancestry details on all weanlings and dams.
- A Commercial Suckler Herd was visited on Thursday 17th as a trial run. 30 Commercial Suckler Weanlings and 4 pedigree animals were linear scored and weighed. Missing Sires were also identified from the Farmers on-farm records and have now been added to the database.
Accurate weights were recorded on all animals yesterday together with linear scores on the economically important traits. Each animal took approx 3 mins to weigh & score. All of the weanlings were out of AI Sires & following yesterday, we now have as much ancestry & performance information extracted from that herd in a 2 hour visit as was possible.

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