



UPDATE – for period 13th – 19th October 2007

1 Important Dates

- ✚ **October 20th.** National Dairy Show, Millstreet. ICBF has a stand which will feature HerdPlus, Genetic Evaluations and GENÉIRÉLAND. ICBF is sponsoring the highest EBI cow competition.
- ✚ **October 25th.** ICBF Board Meeting.

2 ICBF Board Meeting

The Board meets on Thursday next week. The main items on the agenda are:

- ✚ Review of progress with Breed Associations.
- ✚ Financial report.
- ✚ An examination of strategic priorities for 2008. Once agreed these will be used to determine the budget for 2008.
- ✚ Consideration of a proposal to provide a range sheep breeding services.

3 Dairy Genetic Evaluation Consultation Meeting

A meeting with the dairy industry was held in Moorepark on Thursday 18th October. This meeting was given an update on work that was prioritised at the previous meeting (2nd August 2007). The following is a summary for each of the key topics:

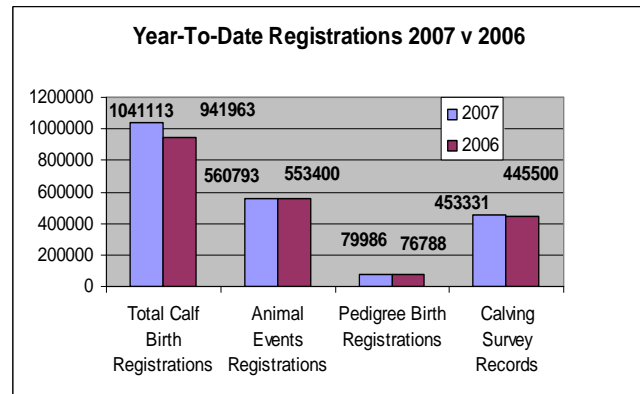
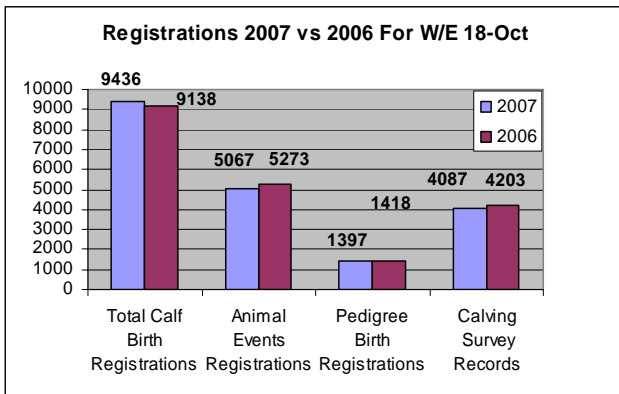
- ✚ **Review the economic values in the EBI.** Scenarios looking at 26c/l, 28c/l, and 30c/l for milk price, and a concentrate price of €250/ton were presented. Regardless of the milk price chosen the correlations for bulls were very high (>0.99). A definitive decision will be taken at the next meeting when more information will be available. The value of cull cow in the index was revised as a result of the increased cost of concentrate. The proposed new value is -€0.5/kg weight compared to the current value of €0.04/kg weight.
- ✚ **Genetic Evaluation of Female Fertility in Ireland.** This work centres on assessing age at first calving and the use of AI handheld data in genetic evaluations as an early predictor of female fertility. Initial results suggest that it is possible to include age at first calving in the EBI but more data is required for traits such as non-return rate, calving to service interval and number of inseminations. The economic value of age at first calving needs some more work. A further update on this will be presented in November before any decision is made.
- ✚ **Calving Performance.** Work on moving to new software and an animal model is well under way. Also research looking at first versus later lactations has commenced. The new software offers many operational and technical advantages. A full update and recommendations will be available at the next meeting.
- ✚ **Linear Type traits.** A new definition of overall type was discussed. The main changes are reduced emphasis on angularity and body depth and more weighting on feet and legs. It is anticipated the overall changes will be small. New traits such as body condition score, locomotion, milking speed and temperament are all subject to Interbull pilot studies at the moment and should be available routinely in the next year or two. A new Irish base and scale for type is also under investigation.
- ✚ **Managing inbreeding.** Sire advice and AI Handhelds will provide services to farmers who wish to avoid inbreeding. In the long term inbreeding will be controlled at the breeding programme level.
- ✚ **Improve accuracy of across breed evaluations.** Work was presented on some of the challenges associated with missing ancestry in the evaluation. This mainly impacts the estimation of heterosis



and recombination for animals and may subsequently affect an animal's proof. A concerted effort must be made to get as much accurate ancestry information as possible. It is most important that the ancestry information accurately reflect all the breeds that are present in the ancestry. Ways of dealing with crosses between different breeds are also currently being assessed.

- ✚ **Calf quality.** Use of price information on young calves (up to 6 weeks of age) from the dairy herd in place of carcass information has been investigated. Breed differences in young calves would suggest little difference between breeds when compared to carcass information; however more data is required before firm conclusions can be drawn.
- ✚ Work on the culling index and male fertility evaluations are currently on hold.

4 Database Update



- ✚ 353,923 inseminations have been received from the AI handhelds so far in 2007, compared with 155,936 in 2006 for the same period.
- ✚ Refinements of the Euro-Star reports have been completed, in preparation for the issue of a further batch of reports to those herds who have not yet received them.
- ✚ Progress continues on the redesign of the Animal Events file processing which will be completed over the coming months.
- ✚ Preparations are continuing in order to be ready for the commencement of the Suckler Cow Welfare Scheme, which will have a significant impact in terms of data volumes coming into the database, with Animal Events being the means of data recording.
- ✚ Work is continuing on the Sire Advice module for the new season.
- ✚ The implementation of the new hardware solution and database upgrade is on-going. This will take another 4-6 weeks of work. The main impact will be increased storage capacity, and more timely updates of genetic evaluations to the production database.

5 HerdPlus

- ✚ We did a feature on the GENÉIRÉLAND BEEF program in this weeks Irish Farmers Journal - see page 23.
- ✚ Final Fertility Reports were sent to HerdPlus Dairy clients this week. These are generated each weekend for herds that recorded pregnancy diagnosis on the web or through his Animal Events sheet.
- ✚ October 07 EBI Reports are being compiled this weekend and will be on web and in post by Mon 22nd Oct.
- ✚ HerdPlus and GENÉIRÉLAND staff will be attending the National Dairy Show in Millstreet this Sat 20th Oct - do drop in and see us on our stand.



6 Tully

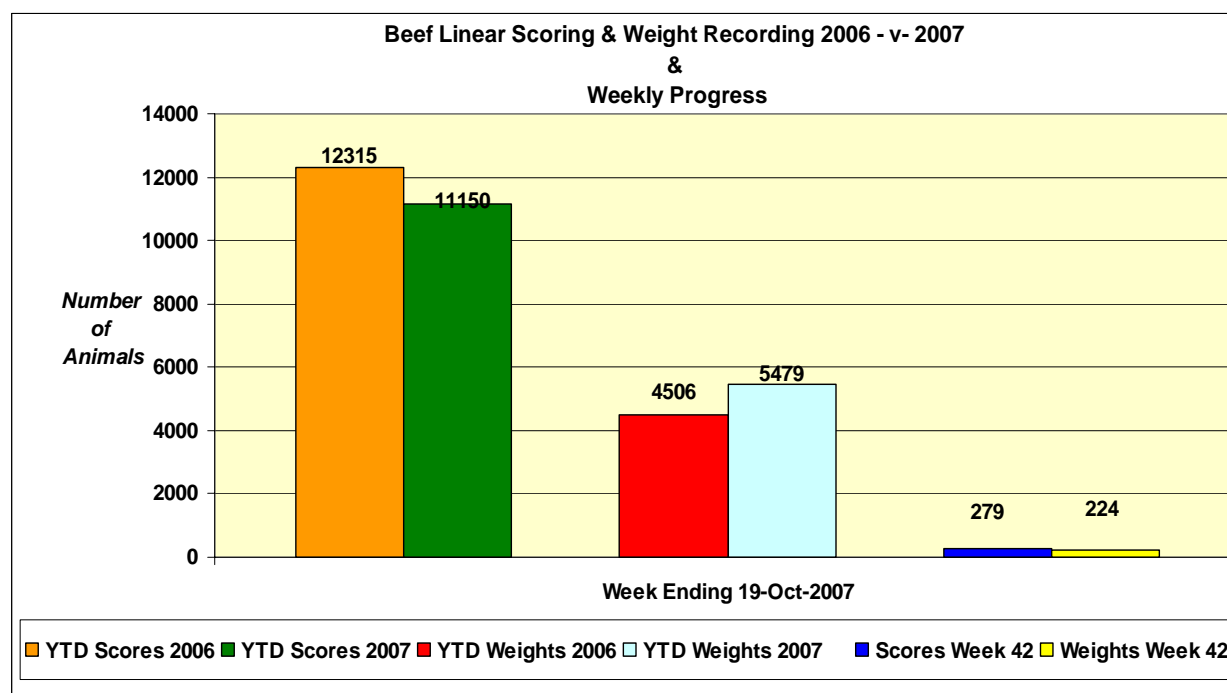
- # A total of 255 applications have been received for the next intake to Tully.
- # Inspections will start from 19th October and will finish on the 25th October.
- # Health testing letters will be sent out to breeders from 30th October.

7 GENEIRELAND

AUTUMN 2007 PROGRAM:

- # Recruiting herds for the autumn 2007 programme continues. There are currently 71 herds signed up, taking a total of 2,734 straws, enough to test four bulls.
- # Dispatch of straws commenced during the week, with semen for some 20 herds being packed. The majority of these are due to start AI in the coming 3-4 weeks.
- # At this point in time we are only working with 6 of the 7 bulls in the panel. We are hoping to get confirmation on semen availability on the remaining bull in the coming week.

8 Beef Linear Scoring & Weight Recording





9 Milk Recording Processing – this week and year to date

National Milk Recording Statistics - Herds, Cows & EDIY 19/10/07						
Milk Recording Organisation	Total Herds Recorded YTD 19/10/07	No. EDIY Herds YTD 19/10/07	% Herds EDIY	Total No. Cows Recorded YTD 19/10/07	No. EDIY Cows YTD 19/10/07	% Cows EDIY
Progressive	2,134	667	31%	166,372	50,943	31%
Dairygold	1,591	554	35%	111,162	40,326	36%
Kerry	1,033	70	7%	71,697	5,673	8%
SWS	932	109	12%	60,564	7,098	12%
Tipperary	170	71	42%	12,289	5,244	43%
Arrabawn	168	127	76%	11,960	9,140	76%
Connacht	154	68	44%	10,059	4,303	43%
Donegal	43	43	100%	3,901	3,901	100%
Total	6,225	1,709	27%	448,004	126,628	28%

Recorded Cows by Milk Recording Organisation - Year on Year Comparison				
Milk Recording Organisation	YTD 2005 Cows Recorded 01/01/05 - 19/10/05	YTD 2006 Cows Recorded 01/01/06 - 19/10/06	YTD 2007 Cows Recorded 01/01/07 - 19/10/07	2007 vs 2006 Year on Year Difference (%)
Progressive	149,615	156,849	166,372	5.7%
Dairygold	97,541	103,361	111,162	7.0%
Kerry	67,091	70,044	71,697	2.3%
SWS	54,622	59,307	60,564	2.1%
Tipperary	9,333	11,793	12,289	4.0%
Arrabawn	7,147	11,017	11,960	7.9%
Connacht	7,334	9,012	10,059	10.4%
Donegal	3,606	5,269	3,901	-35.1%
Total	396,289	426,652	448,004	4.8%

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