



UPDATE – for period 13th September – 19th September 2008

1 Important Dates

- ✚ **23rd to 25th September** – Ploughing Championships, Kilkenny.
- ✚ **9th to 11th October** – World Holstein Friesian Conference hosted by Ireland at Killarney & Millstreet. For details see www.ihfa.ie.
- ✚ **11th and 12th October** – International Beef Expo being hosted in Ireland at Kilkenny Mart. For details see www.beefexpoireland.ie.

2 ICBF Board Meeting – Thursday 18th Sept

Beef Genetic Evaluations – Changes Endorsed.

The changes made to the beef genetic evaluations following the consultation meeting was held on Tuesday 26th August were endorsed by the Board. These changes included:

- Economic values updated (see table 1).
- Foreign breeding values for direct and maternal weaning weight were incorporated using evaluations from France for all French beef breeds and from the UK for Simmental.
- Evaluations for direct and maternal weaning weight were computed using the MIX99 software.

Consideration was given to the incorporation of docility and horns (vs polled) in the beef economic indexes. It was agreed that a decision on this would be deferred pending the availability of trait breeding values acceptable to the wider industry.

The implementation of across breed evaluations for linear traits, including docility, has been deferred pending the availability and incorporation of foreign evaluations (mainly from France). Current expectations are that this work will be completed in October and the results will be presented at a further consultation meeting scheduled for 29th October after which a decision on implementation will be taken.

Table 1. Old and new economic values in beef indexes.

<u>Indexes</u>	Old EV's	New EV's
<u>Beef Calving</u>		
Calv Diff %	-€2.18	-€2.46
Gest Length Days	-€1.58	-€2.37
Mortality %	-€5.22	-€5.34
<u>Weanling Export</u>		
Wean Wt Direct kg	€1.55	€1.55
Calf Quality (cts/kg)	€2.58	€2.58
<u>Beef Carcass</u>		
Wean Wt Direct kg	€1.04	€1.55
Dry Matter Intake kg dm	-€0.03	-€0.10
Carcass Weight kg	€2.34	€2.50
Carc Conf Score pt	€10.74	€11.45
Carc Fat Score pt	-€6.08	-€6.49
<u>Replacement - Milk & fertility</u>		
Survival %	€16.60	€17.43
CI Days	-€6.32	-€7.51
Age at first calving	-€1.38	-€1.38
Calv Diff Maternal %	-€8.62	-€9.98
Wean Wt Maternal	€6.60	€9.90
Cull cow carcass weight	€0.42	-€1.90
<u>Replacement - Calf Value</u>		
Calving Difficulty %	-€8.16	-€9.22
Gestation length days	-€5.92	-€8.86
Calf mortality %	-€19.52	-€19.96
Weaning wt direct kg	€4.20	€6.30
Dry matter intake	€0.07	-€0.24
Carcass weight kg	€5.76	€6.14
Carcass conf score	€26.42	€28.18
Carcass fat score	-€14.98	-€15.98
<u>Overall SBV</u>		
	Weight	Weight
Calving	0.770	0.771
Export	0.150	0.157
Beef Carcass	0.620	0.614
Replacement (M+F)	0.230	0.229



Genomic Selection

Further to the adoption of ICBF's strategy on genomic at the Board meeting on 17th July 2008 the Chief Executive reported:

- He had met with Gerry Boyle and Seamus Crosse of TEAGASC and outlined ICBF strategy. TEAGASC see genomics being a very important research area with considerable potential to deliver benefits to the cattle (and sheep) industries. TEAGASC have a range of research plans for genomics. TEAGASC will play a major role in providing leadership for Genomic Selection research.
- ICBF has made contact with several countries seeking access to semen and or genotypes from bulls of mutual interest. One country has agreed to provide genotypes from some 90 bulls and others have responded favourably. Discussions are on-going.
- Donagh Berry, the scientist leading the research in TEAGASC, is making good progress with genotyping of dairy bulls and testing software systems for the statistical analysis. TEAGASC have committed substantial funding to the genotyping. Initial research results are expected later in 2008.
- ICBF is in the process of evaluating storage and laboratory partners.
- Research to evaluate the optimal breeding scheme design for the dairy and beef industries when using genomic selection has been commissioned. Initial results for the dairy industry are expected by mid October 2008. Beef industry results are expected in 2009.

GENE IRELAND[®]

Following notification from DAFF that GENE IRELAND[®] NDP funding for the 2009 program had been severely reduced the following actions have been taken:

- A review of the optimal breeding scheme design has been commissioned (see above) and the results will be used in planning the GENE IRELAND[®] 2009 program.
- Consultation with the breeding industry on plans for 2009 GENE IRELAND[®] matings are on-going.

Profit with AI Partnership

Key points arising from a review of the Partnership include:

- Over the three years that the Partnership has been working, with support from DAFF, dairy replacements by AI sires has increased from 35% to 50%. This is a major achievement as it comes after a period of sustained declines in the usage of AI to breed dairy replacements.
- DAFF funding will not be available for 2009.
- Consideration should be given to including other partners in any future program. Possible other partners include Milk Recording and Breed Associations.
- A letter is to be sent to the Minister of Agriculture providing the results for the last three years and expression appreciation for the support provided by DAFF.

A meeting to consider plans for 2009 has been scheduled for Monday 20th October.

Herd Health Initiative

Further to discussions at the last Board meeting:

- A proposal for a Herd Health Initiative has been developed jointly by the Pedigree Cattle Breeders Council and ICBF with input from experts in DAFF and UCD.



- Meetings have been held with TEAGASC & UCD to review research plans and the Herd Health Initiative proposal. The ICBF database is now a powerful tool for use in research on a wide range of animal health issues. It also has great potential value in supporting herd health services by providing data storage and providing information for diagnosing problems, monitoring progress and providing national statistics.
- The Herd Health Initiative is focused on delivering benefits to farmers including:
 - a. to identify the health status of animals they are considering for purchase,
 - b. to demonstrate the health status animals they are selling,
 - c. to supply milk and meat which meets the standards required by processors and the end market of cattle products, and
 - d. to reduce production costs associated with poor animal health.
- DAFF have appointed a person to develop the Herd Health initiative further.

3 Interim Sheep Board – Meeting Thursday 18th September

Report of Strategy Project Team

The following recommendations of the Strategy Project Team were adopted:

No.	Title	The project team recommends that:
1	<i>Animal identification - The system</i>	the current NSIS sheep identification system be modified to include double tagging, the issue of an identical replacement for lost tags and no tagging on movement between flocks, to closely reflect the current successful cattle model; however this would only be a requirement for performance-recording breeders and producers, and not a mandated requirement across the industry.
2	<i>Animal identification - Establishment of a Sheep Database</i>	a central database (the Sheep Database) is established.
3	<i>Data recording - Electronic Identification (EID)</i>	performance-recorded flocks move as quickly as possible to use of EID animal identification subject to cost and practicality.
4	<i>Data recording - Trait recording</i>	performance recording protocols be adjusted to accommodate earlier, later, and more regular recording of lamb live weights, recording of lamb mortality, lambing difficulty, feet problems, faecal egg counts, dag scores, and mature ewe weights.
5	<i>Data recording - Minimum recording of criteria</i>	the genetic evaluation system makes use of all recorded data that helps improve the accuracy of the evaluations.
6	<i>Data recording - Recording systems</i>	that data recording systems be developed to minimise costs and minimise disruption to normal management, and the costs of all performance recording should initially be primed through Government support and move to a user-pays basis over time in a way that maintains and enhances participation in performance recording in response to demand for trait improvements by commercial producers.



No.	Title	The project team recommends that:
7	<i>Data recording - Data capture</i>	a range of data capture options be provided to performance recording flocks, with a view that over time these will migrate to widespread use of EID systems for performance recording.
8	<i>Data recording - Provision for new genomics technologies</i>	blood samples be taken from selected animals (all sires of lambs recorded in the central progeny test and all lambs born in the central progeny test) and high-quality DNA extracted and stored.
9	<i>Genetic evaluation - Timing of evaluations</i>	evaluations be conducted on at least a weekly basis all year round.
10	<i>Genetic evaluation - Reporting of results</i>	a draft version of the breeding objective be prepared as soon as possible for further industry consultation and that the breeding objective be used to report sub-indexes for trait groups, along with overall indexes such as a Flock Replacement Index and a Terminal Index.
11	<i>Breeding (and demonstration) schemes - the Central Progeny Test</i>	the Central Progeny Test (CPT) is established as outlined in this report to start with mating in 2009.
12	<i>Breeding (and demonstration) schemes - the Maternal Lamb Producer group (MALP) scheme</i>	the MALP is established to start with mating in 2008.
13	<i>Breeding (and demonstration) schemes - CPT& MALP - emphasis on traits</i>	that the emphasis within both the CPT and the MALP is on traits, not breed
14	<i>Breeding (and demonstration) schemes - CPT location</i>	the CPT is spread over geographically diverse locations wherever possible.
15	<i>Breeding (and demonstration) schemes - operations of the MALP</i>	the Interim Sheep Board urgently commits to the MALP scheme recognising that the investment reflects its critical role in the dissemination of knowledge and understanding of the value of genetic improvement to breeders and producers.
16	<i>Potential impact of the proposed genetic evaluation scheme</i>	the Interim Sheep Board commissions a cost-benefit analysis of the proposed genetic evaluation scheme.
18	<i>Structure - Participation by processors</i>	the sheep breeding objective be developed to reflect future industry benefits from improved carcase characteristics under close consultation with the sheep processing sector.



No.	Title	The project team recommends that:
19	Structure - Participation by performance recording pedigree breeders	the data of current PSBIP breeders needs to be migrated across to a new sheep database as a priority, and existing, improved and expanded services delivered to these breeders as soon as possible.
20	Structure - Participation by breed societies	over time the Sheep Database should offer new systems and capability to facilitate highly cost effective delivery of services offered by breed societies to their members.

Logo

This logo has been established for sheep breeding activities. The website www.sheep.ie will be operational in the next few weeks.



Permanent Structure

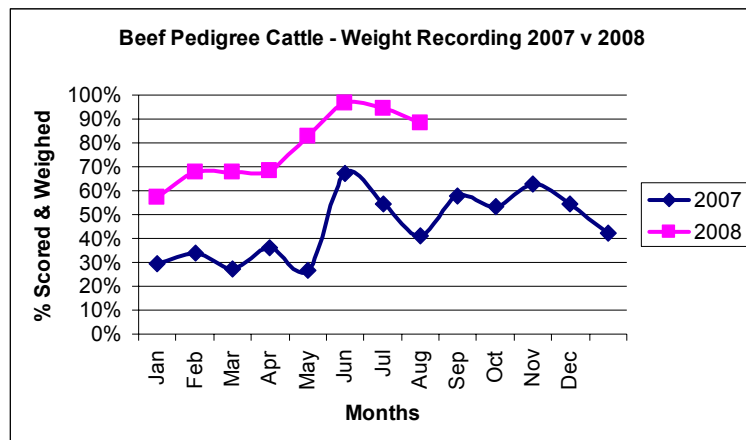
A company is to be established to own and operate, through a contract with ICBF, the provision of Sheep Ireland services to the Irish Sheep industry.

4 Genetic Evaluations

- ✚ Work is nearing completion on assembling genetic evaluation supplementary information for the new beef and dairy bull search.
- ✚ Research has also commenced on implementation of a statistical sampling tool for ongoing assessment of breed information in genetic evaluations and its consequences for accuracy of EBVs. This work was the basis of John Hickey's PhD work and is being conducted by Sinead McParland in association with ICBF geneticists.
- ✚ Lists of potential young bulls for the next Tully intake are being processed for distribution to each of the relevant herdbooks next week.
- ✚ ICBF Herdplus and Genetics staff are engaged in on-going assistance with Teagasc advisors and ACA consultants in relation to sourcing suitable beef animals for the Animal Welfare, Recording and Breeding Scheme farmer training events.

5 GROW

- ✚ This graph shows that the percentage of pedigree animals being weight recorded for July and August has kept up with the high levels reached earlier in the year.
- ✚ The new GROW scoring report will be on display on the ICBF stand at the ploughing championships and will be released to pedigree and commercial beef farmers that partake in the service shortly afterwards.
- ✚ Each Scorer will receive a refresher course in October/November in the use of the GROW website screens. These screens have proved crucial in the rollout of the new GROW service.



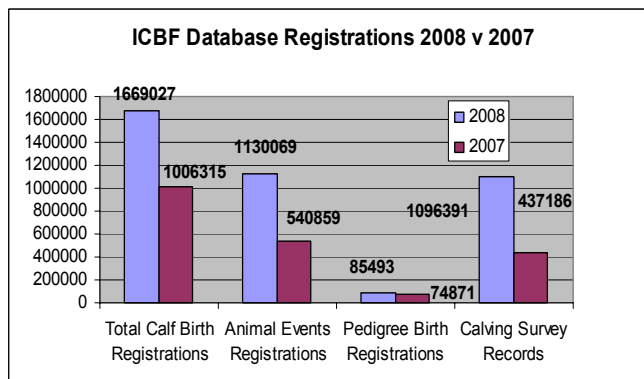
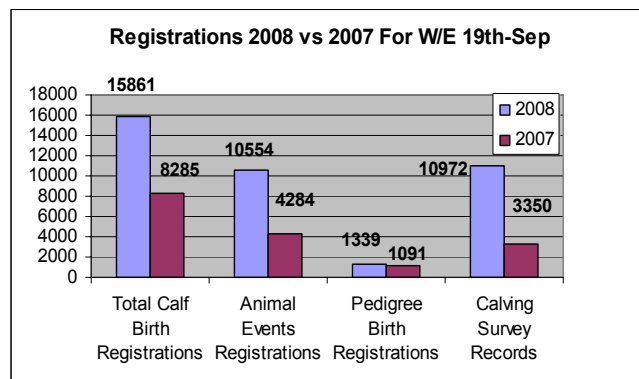


- New GROW jackets for the Scorers to wear in the field have been designed and will be ready for the Scorers by the end of November.
- The following tables show the uptake of the GROW service in 2008 and for 2007 by comparison. More animals are being scored in the 150-300 day age range and weighing is now almost universal.

Pedigrees - 2007			
Month	Scored	Weighed	% Cattle Weighed
Jan	1850	544	29%
Feb	1494	504	34%
Mar	1333	363	27%
Apr	744	268	36%
May	380	101	27%
Jun	287	193	67%
Jul	642	351	55%
Aug	929	380	41%
Sep	718	413	58%
Oct	1314	699	53%
Nov	839	528	63%
Dec	345	187	54%
Total	10,875	4531	42%

Pedigrees - 2008			
Month	Scored	Weighed	% Cattle Weighed
Jan	1354	773	57%
Feb	1437	974	68%
Mar	1320	893	68%
Apr	941	645	69%
May	778	646	83%
Jun	943	914	97%
Jul	1274	1200	94%
Aug	524	464	89%
Sep			
Oct			
Nov			
Dec			
Total			

6 Database



- 499,467 inseminations have been received so far in 2008, compared with 348,244 in 2007 for the same period.
- Over 50,000 suckler herds have had at least one calving in 2008. The number of calves with a meal feeding introduction recorded has increased to 310,000. Approximately 28,500 pre-weaning and 2,500 post-weaning forms have been received.
- The Beef Euro-star and Dairy EBI Reports for the current evaluations were completed this week and will be available online from next week.
- The revamp of the Milk Recording system is underway. A significant amount of 'back-end' work will need to be completed before we engage with the milk recording organisations in terms of how screens/functionality etc will need to be updated to take account of their needs.
- Work on enhancing the Teagasc Discussion Group reports has continued.



- ✦ Dry Off Reports will be generated this weekend and issued next week. It is vital that farmers complete and return these in order to receive a Milk Recording Annual Report.
- ✦ The new look Dairy Bull Search is in its final stages of development.

7 Milk Recording

National Milk Recording Results by County - 10 day Period 09/09/08 to 19/09/08.

	<i>No. Herds Recorded</i>	<i>No. Cows Recorded</i>	<i>Average Herd Size</i>	<i>Average 24hr Milk kg/Cow</i>	<i>Average Fat %</i>	<i>Average Protein %</i>	<i>Average F + P kg</i>	<i>Average SCC</i>
CARLOW	13	705	54	17.0	4.23	3.69	1.35	284
CAVAN	44	2,460	56	19.1	4.19	3.55	1.48	316
CLARE	39	2,067	53	18.4	4.08	3.59	1.41	276
CORK STH	231	13,850	60	18.1	4.15	3.71	1.42	255
CORK NTH	230	15,667	68	18.3	4.27	3.69	1.46	271
DONEGAL	13	761	59	19.7	4.07	3.64	1.52	229
DUBLIN	6	286	48	23.6	3.65	3.55	1.70	370
GALWAY	38	2,295	60	19.6	4.12	3.47	1.49	395
KERRY	107	6,748	63	18.2	4.03	3.51	1.37	330
KILDARE	15	1,008	67	20.0	4.00	3.54	1.51	252
KILKENNY	52	3,434	66	17.2	4.22	3.63	1.35	252
LAOIS	38	2,428	64	17.3	4.22	3.62	1.36	296
LEITRIM	4	199	50	20.6	3.81	3.48	1.50	332
LIMERICK	115	7,593	66	19.3	4.00	3.56	1.46	308
LONGFORD	9	555	62	18.1	4.28	3.61	1.43	355
LOUTH	23	1,519	66	20.1	3.85	3.47	1.47	308
MAYO	31	1,830	59	21.2	3.67	3.53	1.53	419
MEATH	56	4,522	81	18.5	4.29	3.60	1.46	357
MONAGHAN	45	2,366	53	19.7	4.06	3.50	1.49	304
OFFALY	19	1,427	75	18.0	4.23	3.59	1.41	301
ROSCOMMON	1	52	52	21.2	4.00	3.68	1.63	493
SLIGO	2	77	39	15.1	4.16	3.69	1.19	412
TIPPERARY NTH	36	2,422	67	17.0	4.19	3.64	1.33	271
TIPPERARY STH	51	3,431	67	16.6	4.26	3.61	1.31	298
WATERFORD	35	2,728	78	16.8	4.47	3.69	1.37	282
WESTMEATH	26	1,593	61	20.1	3.98	3.51	1.51	278
WEXFORD	59	3,756	64	18.3	4.13	3.65	1.42	324
WICKLOW E	16	890	56	17.5	3.72	3.51	1.27	321
WICKLOW W	8	661	83	21.3	4.00	3.54	1.61	309
	<i>No. Herds Recorded</i>	<i>No. Cows Recorded</i>	<i>Average Herd Size</i>	<i>Average 24hr Milk kg/Cow</i>	<i>Average Fat %</i>	<i>Average Protein %</i>	<i>Average F + P kg</i>	<i>Average SCC</i>
National	1,362	87,330	62	18.8	4.08	3.59	1.44	317



National Milk Recording Averages by Province - 10 day Period 09/09/08 to 12/09/08.

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	844	54,506	65	17.8	4.18	3.63	1.39	286
Leinster	340	22,784	67	19.0	4.06	3.58	1.45	308
Connacht	76	4,453	59	19.5	3.95	3.57	1.47	410
Ulster	102	5,587	55	19.5	4.11	3.56	1.50	283

National Milk Recording Statistics - Herds, Cows & EDIY 19/09/08

Milk Recording Organisation	Total Herds Recorded YTD 19/09/08	No. EDIY Herds YTD 19/09/08	% Herds EDIY	Total No. Cows Recorded YTD 19/09/08	No. EDIY Cows YTD 19/09/08	% Cows EDIY
Progressive	2,228	904	41%	178,522	70,371	39%
Dairygold	1,683	630	37%	122,709	47,780	39%
Kerry	1,159	247	21%	78,729	16,191	21%
SWS	913	132	14%	61,382	9,452	15%
Tipperary	171	72	42%	12,962	5,737	73%
Arrabawn	165	137	83%	12,769	10,766	84%
Connacht	159	69	43%	10,229	4,278	42%
Donegal	49	49	100%	4,751	4,751	100%
Total	6,527	2,240	34%	482,053	169,326	35%

Recorded Cows by Milk Recording Organisation - Year on Year Comparison

Milk Recording Organisation	YTD 2006 Cows Recorded 01/01/06 - 19/09/06	YTD 2007 Cows Recorded 01/01/07 - 19/09/07	YTD 2008 Cows Recorded 01/01/08 - 19/09/08	2008 vs 2007 Year on Year Difference (%)
Progressive	154,236	164,017	178,522	13.6%
Dairygold	102,770	110,334	122,709	10.1%
Kerry	69,739	71,328	78,729	11.4%
SWS	58,684	60,133	61,382	2.0%
Tipperary	11,752	12,224	12,962	5.7%
Arrabawn	10,963	11,818	12,769	7.4%
Connacht	8,994	9,937	10,229	2.9%
Donegal	5,156	3,876	4,751	18.4%
Total	422,294	443,667	482,053	8.0%



8 GENE IRELAND®



Dairy

- ✚ Payments for inseminations were made to the Spring 2008 participants earlier this week. A second round of payments will be carried out in a months time, picking up any additional inseminations that have been added to the database since.
- ✚ 30,618 GENE IRELAND® inseminations have be received to date - 63% of straws dispatched.
- ✚ Final stages of development work to enable payments for GENE IRELAND® progeny is almost complete. Hoping to make these payments in the next couple of weeks.

Beef

- ✚ Payments for 2,068 beef inseminations are currently being processed for the Spring 2008 programme. These will be made by direct credit and cheque next week.

9 Tully

- ✚ A meeting took place of the Tully Health Advisory Committee and the following changes to the on farm health testing regime were agreed.

IBR

The animals to be tested for IBR will now be the candidate bull, his dam and the five calves born at each side of the candidate bull and their dams.

Eg bull for Tully IE 12 12345 6 1234, his dam, and the following calves IE 12 12345 6 1229, IE 12 12345 6 1230, IE 12 12345 6 1231, IE 12 12345 6 1232, IE 12 12345 6 1233, IE 12 12345 6 1235, IE 12 12345 6 1236, IE 12 12345 6 1237, IE 12 12345 6 1238, IE 12 12345 6 1239 and their dams- a maximum of 20 samples.

TB

As regards the TB testing, the requirement for the contiguous herds been free has been removed, however the candidate bull must have resided in a herd that was not restricted during its lifetime.
The bull will be TB tested while in isolation.

JOHNES

It is no longer necessary for the herdowner to get the DVO to sign the health form, as the contiguous herd issue is removed, and the Johnes declaration is now made by the herdowner and his veterinary practitioner.
The dam of the bull and the dam's of the comtempories will be tested for Johnes.

COST

ICBF will cover the cost of the IBR and Johnes testing of the comtempories and their dams.

- ✚ This results in a quicker turnaround time as the contiguous herds do not have to be checked, less animals to be assembled for testing and the need to get the DVO to sign the health form is no longer required.

Brian Wickham Ph.D. Chief Executive Irish Cattle Breeding Federation Soc. Ltd, Highfield House, Shinagh, Bandon, Co. Cork, Ireland, Phone office +353 (0)23 20222, mobile +353 (0)86 826 9911 Fax office +353 (0)23 20229 E-Mail bwickham@icbf.com ICBF Web site www.icbf.com Assistant: Mary Madden.