



UPDATE – for period 13th - 20th July 2007

1 Important Dates

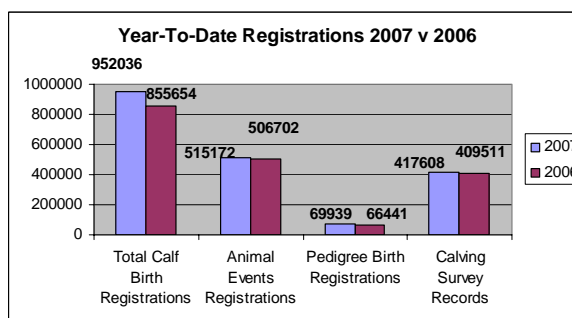
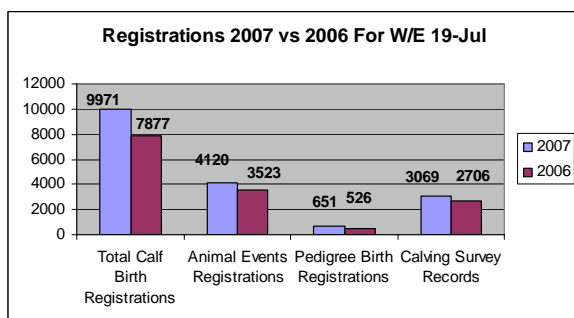
- ✚ **Tuesday 24th July.** Moorepark. EBI €100 awards.
- ✚ **Tuesday 31st July.** First meeting of Tully Advisory Committee. 10:30 – 14:00 at Tully.
- ✚ **Thursday 2nd August, 11:00 – 13:00.** Dairy Genetic Evaluation Consultation meeting. Room 1, Moorepark Conference Centre.
- ✚ **Thursday 2nd August, 14:00 – 16:00.** Profit with AI Partnership Meeting. Room 1, Moorepark Conference Centre.
- ✚ **August 24th to 30th.** Interbull and EAAP Annual Meetings, UCD, Dublin.
- ✚ **Wednesday, August 29th.** EAAP Field Trip – Cattle Breeding in Ireland. Visit a beef & dairy farm.
- ✚ **Tuesday, September 11th.** EBI €100 Open Day
- ✚ **September 25th to 27th.** Ploughing Championships, Tullamore.

2 Meeting Customer Needs

Over the next few weeks we will be involved in a number of activities where the primary focus is to ensure we understand the needs of our farmer and other customers. This will enable us to provide services of greater value to farmers in the future. These activities include:

- ✚ Farmer surveys for GEN€IR€LAND[®] and the Beef Linear Scoring & Weight Recording service. The objective of these surveys is to collect quantitative data on farmers' opinions so that when these services are launched later this year they will deliver the greatest possible value to herd owners.
- ✚ Meetings with focus groups looking at our Sire Advice and HerdPlus beef information services. Each focus group includes farmers and a range of others with expert knowledge. Our objective is to capture the energy and enthusiasm of leading farmers in the design of our services.
- ✚ A review of the bull acquisition part of our GEN€IR€LAND[®] service. Our objective is to ensure that co-operating Breed Associations and AI Companies have access to the information they need for each breed to locate the best possible bulls for subsequent progeny testing.

3 Database Update



- ✚ 312,666 inseminations have been received so far in 2007 from AI handhelds, compared with 130,379 in 2006 for the same period.
- ✚ Further modules have been released for the Herdbook application, and training for some small herdbooks took place last Tuesday.



- # The work on redesigning the loading processes of files received from the Department of Agriculture is continuing. This is with a view to (a) speeding the processes up and (b) having better tracking of errors.
- # Further work on HerdPlus modules is on-going, focusing around the data recording aspects.
- # Next Monday (July 23rd), a Sire Advice meeting will be held which will discuss changes to the programme for the 2007/2008 season.

4 Genetic Evaluations

Developments in Dairy Evaluations

- # Calf price/quality data has been extracted from a number of mart systems. This data will be used to identify the beef & dairy bulls that are producing higher value “drop” calves at marts. It is anticipated that a new breeding value will be provided for this trait and, depending on its impact on dairy farm profit, included in the updated dairy EBI (for selecting dairy sires) and the new dairy beef Euro-Star index (which is being developed to help farmers identify beef bulls for use in the dairy herd).
- # New genetic evaluations for dairy animals have commenced (calving performance initially). Other traits will be completed over the coming weeks ahead of the release of the next set of Interbull proofs, due in mid-August.

Developments in Beef Evaluations

- # New calving performance evaluations have been computed using the Animal Model procedure, new software and including additional data. These are currently being examined with a view to releasing them to the industry for comment & feedback in the coming weeks.
- # New beef evaluations have also been computed using the new models and software. Of particular interest is maternal weaning weight which is a trait of high economic value, but with relatively low levels of data. Initial results look positive suggesting that the results are now more in line with expectations regarding this trait. That is, breed comparisons and ranking with international data.

5 Milk Recording Processing this week

Milk Recording Organisation	YTD 2005 Cows Recorded 01/01/05 - 20/07/05	YTD 2006 Cows Recorded 01/01/06 - 20/07/06	YTD 2007 Cows Recorded 01/01/07 - 20/07/07	2007 vs 2006 Year on Year Difference (%)
Progressive	143,656	150,265	160,310	6.3%
Dairygold	94,221	100,795	108,220	6.9%
Kerry	65,729	68,514	69,896	2.0%
SWS	53,246	57,340	59,241	3.2%
Tipperary	9,169	11,585	12,038	3.8%
Arrabawn	6,932	10,712	11,596	7.6%
Connacht	7,114	8,450	9,329	9.4%
Donegal	3,227	4,868	3,587	-35.7%
Total	383,294	412,529	434,217	5.0%

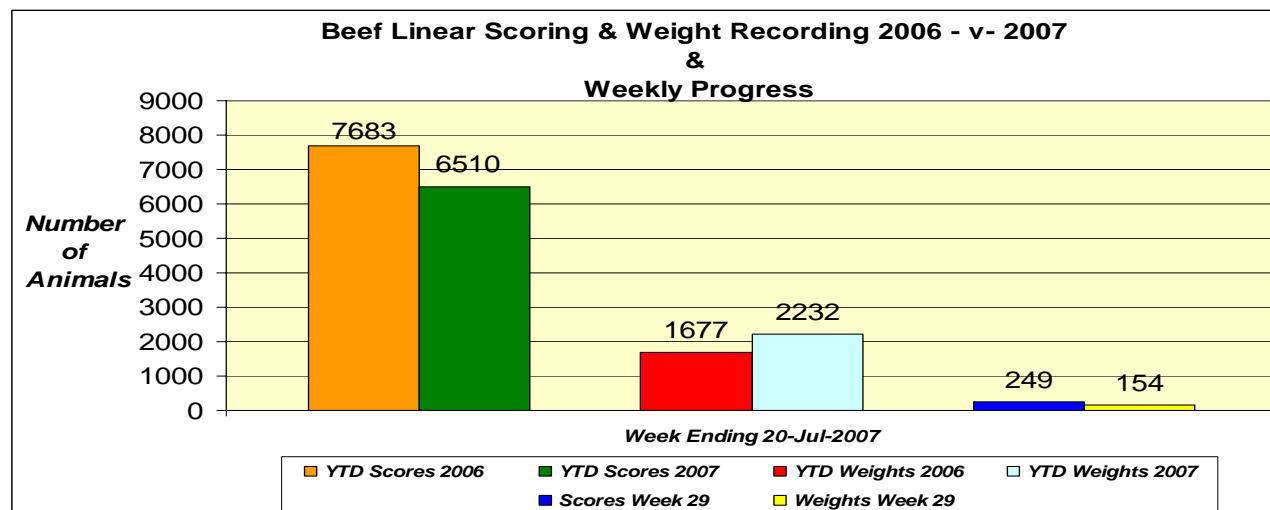


Milk Recording Organisation	2007 Herds Recorded Week 13/07/07 - 20/07/07
Progressive	389
Dairygold	213
Kerry	181
SWS	145
Connacht	23
Arrabawn	16
Donegal	12
Tipperary	10
Total	989

6 Tully

- The sourcing of pre entry isolation units is continuing with one suitable unit found so far.
- Maintenance of safety barriers in pens has commenced.
- The establishment of bio security protocols for Tully is continuing.

7 Beef Linear Scoring & Weight Recording



8 ICAR Newsletter – July 2007

The latest ICAR newsletter is now available through the ICAR Website – follow the ICAR link from the ICBF website (http://www.icbf.com/aboutus/int_representation.php).

9 Questions & Answers in Dutch Parliament

The following is a report of a recent question and answer session the Dutch Parliament. The material was provided to us through our membership of EFFAB (see link on our website - http://www.icbf.com/aboutus/int_representation.php) and illustrates the importance of using the very best scientific principles in monitoring cattle breeding activities nationally and internationally.



The Chair of the Dutch Second Chambers (equivalent to British House of Representatives, German Abgeordnetenhaus, French Chambre des Représentants)

18 June 2007 - Questions from the Delegate Thieme (Party for the Animals) about sexed bull semen

Dear Chair,

I herewith send you the answers to the questions of the delegate Thieme (Party for the Animals) about sexed bull semen.

1. Are you familiar with the article 'Breeding organisation comes out with sexed semen'¹?

Yes

2. Is it true that sexed bull semen will come on the Dutch market this year?

The marketing manager of the breeding organisation Alta announces in this article that the first sexed Alta bulls will become available before the end of this year for the Dutch market. Sexed semen has been on the market for a number of years. A number of breeding organizations are (internationally) active in this area.

3. Do you share the opinion that bringing onto the market of sexed semen by one organisation, can lead to a further narrowing down of the genetic variability in breeding animals? If so, are you prepared to take measures to prevent this narrowing down and which measures are you going to take? If not, why not?

The putting on the market of sexed semen has no direct influence on the loss of, or preservation of, genetic variation of the Dutch cattle breeding population. Loss of genetic variation is more related to decisions that breeding organizations take regarding the choice of parent animals for the next generation of bulls (variation in bull mothers and bull fathers), than whether sexed semen is being put on the market or not.

4. Can you indicate which guarantees there are that the effective and responsible population size is being respected by the supplying services, considering that one bull can produce 1 million offspring or more?

I consider it the primary responsibility of the breeding organizations involved to ensure the responsible development of the genetic diversity in the cattle breeds with which they currently breeding, and that this should be the basis for breeding in the future. Breeding organizations in general recognize the importance of genetic variation to enable them to react to changes in market and production circumstances. There is ample, scientifically supported knowledge available, on the basis of which the organizations involved can control the inbreeding rate in a responsible way. I know that breeding organizations use methods/programmes to help to limit inbreeding in the choice of their bull mothers and bull fathers.

5. Do you share the concern about increased concentration in the industry for genetic material of animals and the risk of a smaller genetic base that could therefore occur? If so, in which way do you want to prevent further limitation of the genetic base? If not, why not?

I share your concern about the possible risks of available breeding possibilities, that could lead to a decrease of the genetic base and have so led. But also the breeding world is very knowledgeable and aware of these risks. I consider them capable and professionally equipped

¹ <http://www.zibb.nl/landentuinbouw/veehouderij/nieuwsbericht/asp/artnr/1401919/versie/1/index.html>, d.d. 14 May 2007



to deal with this in their breeding strategy in a responsible way. Breeding organizations monitor the development of the inbreeding rate in the Dutch and international dairy cattle populations, on the basis of which these organizations can adapt their breeding policy.

The European breeding industry (joined in EFFAB) has voluntarily agreed a Code of Good Breeding Practice, which contributes to transparency and self regulation of the sector.

With regard to the maintenance of genetic diversity in commercial dairy cattle breeds, a snapshot of the breeding population is being preserved in the gene bank, that is being managed by the Centre for Genetic Resources in the Netherlands of Wageningen UR.

6. Is it true that the market for Artificial Insemination is being dominated by only a few industries like ABS Global, Alta Genetics, Semex Alliance and Dansire International A/S? If so, are you prepared to take measures to prevent further concentration? If not, can you indicate how the concentrations can be prevented and in which way governments have a responsibility in this respect?

In the area of dairy cattle breeding there are indeed only a few large breeding organizations working globally, particularly because of the dissemination possibilities of semen, eggs and embryos. Added to this there are a large number of, often nationally, operating breeding organizations and herd books. Breeding organizations or herd books are, as far as the area of the European Union is concerned, covered by Community zootechnical legislation. There is no Community and/or national legislation in which the size or working area of breeding organizations is covered. There is no need for this either, as there is still ample competition on this global market for dairy cattle breeding products.

7. Can you guarantee that semen coming from abroad can not be the product of genetically modified animals? If so, in which way? If not, why not?

Based on regulation 2001/18/EC concerning the intentional introduction of genetically modified organisms in the environment, it is possible to access genetically modified bull semen onto the EU market if it is considered to be safe for humans and the environment. Until now no requests for the introduction of genetically modified bull semen into the EU market have been submitted.

8. Are you prepared to legislate further to prevent further narrowing down of the genetic variability of farm animals? If so, how and when? If not, why not?

The development of new legislation to prevent further narrowing down of the genetic base of farm animals, additionally to the existing European zootechnical legislation, is not necessary. The current legislation offers enough possibilities to monitor the genetic variation in breeding populations and moreover the playing field of internationally operating breeding organizations is larger than Europe, so in that case global legislation would be required.

In 2007 FAO will hold the first international technical conference on animal genetic resources in Interlaken from 1-7 September. At this conference countries will settle a Global Action Plan for the preservation and sustainable use of genetic diversity in farm animals.

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD QUALITY, G. Verburg

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.