



UPDATE – for period 16th – 22nd December 2006



***Best Wishes for Christmas and the New Year from all
at Irish Cattle Breeding Federation***

1 Important Dates

- **Thursday 25th January.** 10:30 to 13:00. Board Meeting. Comfort Inn, Portlaoise.
- **Thursday 1st February.** 10:30 to 13:00. Board Meeting. Comfort Inn, Portlaoise.

2 Reflections on 2006 – Brian Wickham

As the year draws to an end it is time to reflect on what we achieved in 2006. Here is a reminder of some of our major achievements this past year.

Milk Recording increased by 7% as a result of a substantial expansion in the electronic do-it-yourself (EDIY) milk recording service. With eight new cells coming on stream in 2006, giving a total of 12, the EDIY option is now available through all milk recording service providers who between them cover all parts of the country. It has proven popular with herds that were not milk recording previously with some 50% of herds on EDIY being new to milk recording in 2006. In June we took delivery of the calibration equipment that gives ICBF the capability to conduct routine testing and repair of the electronic meters. This equipment is located at a laboratory that has been provided by TEAGASC at Moorepark. The EDIY milk recording service is a tool of which ICBF and milk recording service providers can be justifiably proud. It gives milk recording a brighter future.

The decline in AI usage was halted. In the spring ICBF provided the leadership and a large amount of technical support for an initiative to halt the decline in AI. We teamed up with TEAGASC, AI service providers and the wider industry for three activities; to conduct workshops for technicians and field staff, to run an advertising campaign and to hold a series of Mart events that featured the sale of high EBI dairy calves and heifers. DAF provided much appreciated financial support for the campaign. The success of the campaign can be attributed to a combination of growing recognition of the EBI as a tool for breeding profitable dairy cows and the ready availability of good quality AI services.

AI Handhelds now in use by technicians. ICBF completed the development of a system for eliminating the paper work from recording inseminations carried out by AI technicians. The success of this system is due to a team effort involving AI technicians, the ICBF implementation team and a development that makes good use of the latest technology in combination with the power of the ICBF database.

Beef Genetic Evaluations include Maternal Traits. In the last month our research team came through with the new beef evaluation system that now includes a range of important maternal traits. This is the culmination of several years work and represents an important milestone in ICBF's development. The key to success in this development has been a team effort using the best knowledge and skills available world-wide, plus ready access to performance data, albeit in limited quantities, from commercial beef cattle in Ireland.

Across Breed Genetic Evaluations for Dairy. The dairy EBI, and all component trait evaluations, has been extended to cover all dairy breeds with sufficient data. This development provides farmers with much improved information for making breeding choices where two or more breeds are involved. Key to success has been the database that provides large quantities of performance data and the expertise and skill of our development team.

Launch of HerdPlus. In order to give ICBF better control over its costs while at the same time providing services that farmers want, ICBF launched the user pays information service HerdPlus in September. Farmer uptake of the service has been ahead of forecasts. The HerdPlus team are to be congratulated for taking on this challenge and achieving a successful launch.

G€N€ IRELAND Growth. G€N€ IRELAND dairy has completed a successful second year. The numbers of dairy bulls progeny tested has increased substantially and the research to identify the optimal scheme for





beef has been completed. GENE IRELAND is unique world-wide in that it enables competing AI organisations to have their bulls accurately progeny tested in a very efficient manner.

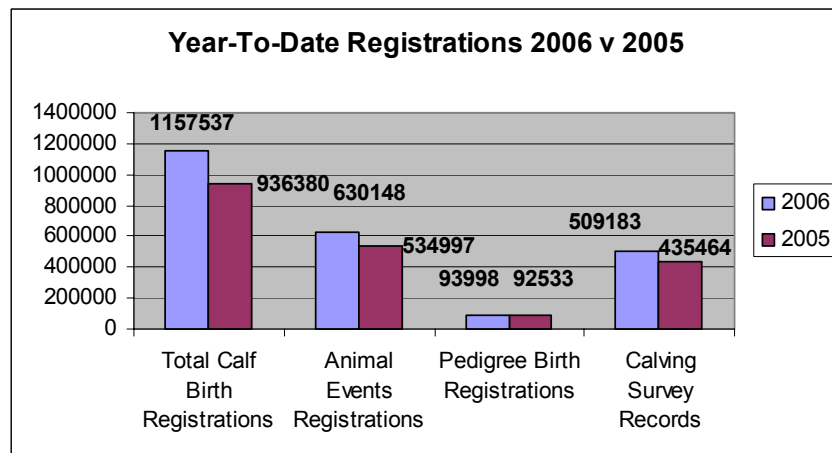
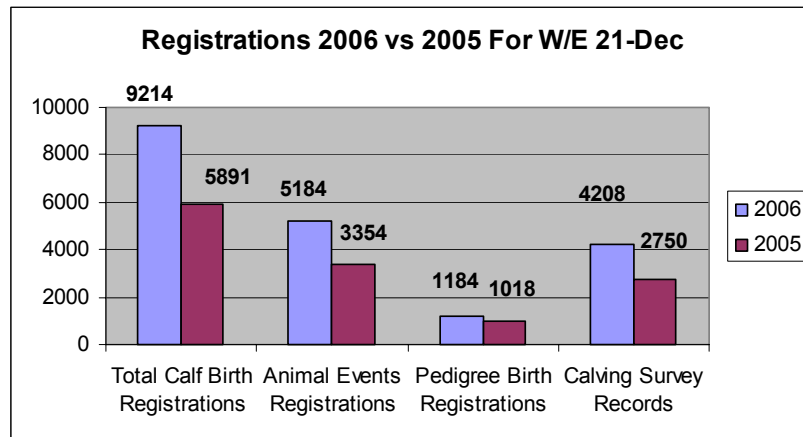
Review of Cost & Structure Completed and acted on. In early December the Board of ICBF adopted the report presented by the Deloitte consultants. It has already acted on a number of the recommendations in the report and will meet again in the early New Year to consider the remainder.

ICBF is a small organisation. That so much has been achieved in 2006 is a reflection of the skills, knowledge and commitment of our team. It is also a reflection of the unique and special partnership that exists between ICBF, its service providers, DAF, TEAGASC, Irish cattle farmers and the wider industry. By working together we are able to deliver much more value than any one group can on their own. Have a very happy Christmas and best wishes for the New Year.



3 Database Update

- 18 new herds added to the database last week.
- 170,918 inseminations have now been recorded on the AI handhelds.
- Dry-off sheets are still coming in at a good rate and are currently being keyed. The first of the Milk Recording Annual Reports have been issued this week.
- The final fertility reports continue to be issued based on insemination data and pregnancy diagnosis information in the database. These will be run on a weekly basis incorporating the latest data available on the database.
- Production of the personalised Animal Events notebook for farmers has begun this week and the first notebooks will be issued to farmers early in the New Year.
- Work on finalising the new Herdbook front end is continuing – we expect to complete Herdbook consultation early in the New Year and release the product before the end of January.
- The Sire Advice working group met this week, and a very constructive meeting was had. Feedback from the meeting is being taken on board and updates to the programme will take place in the weeks after Christmas with a view to having the first release in January.





4 Genetic Evaluations (Dairy)

- Preparations are being made for the next routine dairy evaluation run.

5 Genetic Evaluations (Beef)

- An article describing the new beef indexes will be included in the pedigree section of the farmers Journal in early January.
- Work on including calf quality data from the marts into the beef evaluation is continuing.
- Work continues on development of the beef linear evaluation.



6 Tully

- The October intake of bulls will be TB tested on the 4th January '07 and sold at Tully on the 3rd March '07.
- A total of 94 bulls have entered Tully for the December intake and will start their performance test on the 22-12-06.

7 Milk Recording

Weekly Processing



Milk Recording Organisation	2006 Herds Recorded Week 15/12/06 - 22/12/06
Progressive	275
SWS	145
Dairygold	112
Kerry	76
Tipperary	7
Arrabawn	6
Connacht	5
Donegal	2
Total	628

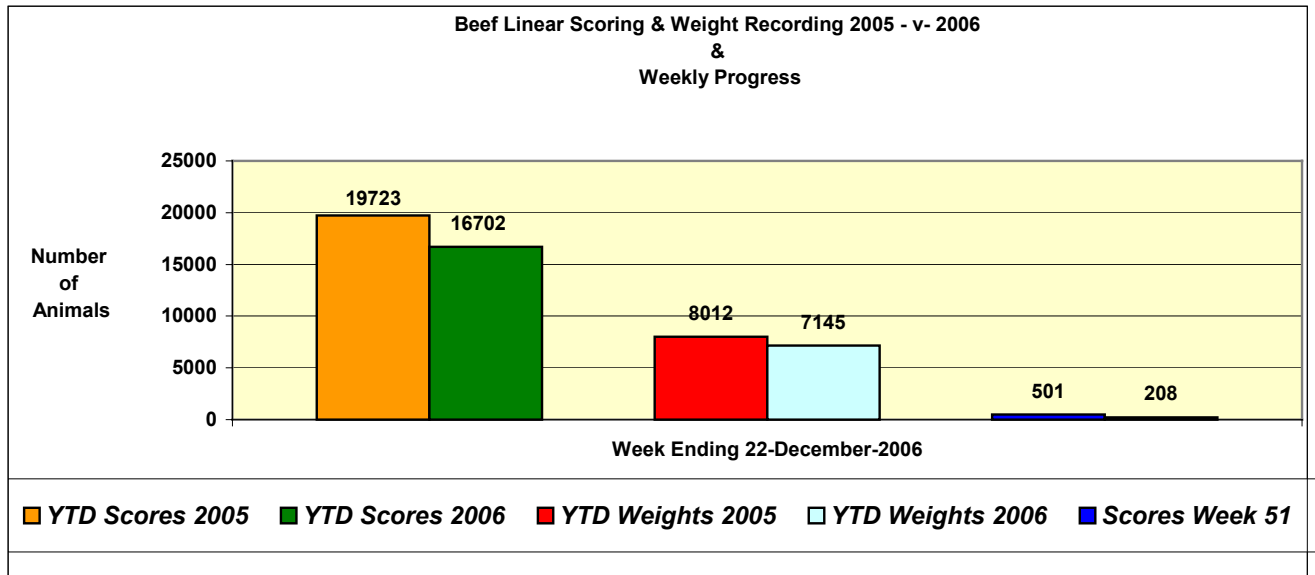
Annual Processing

Milk Recording Organisation	YTD 2005 Herds Recorded 01/01/05 - 22/12/05	YTD 2006 Herds Recorded 01/01/06 - 22/12/06	Year on Year Herds Difference (%)	YTD 2005 Cows Recorded 01/01/05 - 22/12/05	YTD 2006 Cows Recorded 01/01/06 - 22/12/06	Year on Year Cows Difference (%)
Progressive	2,087	2,113	1%	155,714	162,826	5%
Dairygold	1,529	1,552	2%	98,891	104,621	6%
Kerry	1,067	1,075	1%	68,260	70,872	4%
SWS	939	959	2%	56,293	60,837	8%
Tipperary	142	168	18%	9,493	11,898	25%
Arrabawn	109	159	46%	7,186	11,101	54%
Connacht	110	140	27%	7,536	9,406	25%
Donegal	58	58	0%	4,888	5,281	8%
Total	6,041	6,224	3%	408,261	436,842	7%





8 Beef Linear Scoring & Weight Recording



9 Herd Plus

1. Regional HerdPlus meetings (7) being planned from Jan 15th to Jan 31st - country wide. Watch press for details.
2. First Personalised Pocket Books sent for printing - first batch will be issued to early calving herds in the first week of January 2007
3. Sire Advice sub committee met this week and feedback and enhancements will be incorporated for release of product in January 2007.
4. On behalf of the HerdPlus team we would like to take this opportunity to thank all our Herdplus clients for their support in 2006. We wish you all a happy and peaceful Christmas, and we look forward to providing you independent and scientific analysis of your herd so you have a prosperous 2007.



We would like to thank everybody for their contribution during the year and we look forward to another very productive year in 2007.



We will close today for Christmas and return on Tuesday 2nd January 2007, if you need to contact ICBF urgently, please telephone Sean Coughlan on his mobile 087 2903121.

