

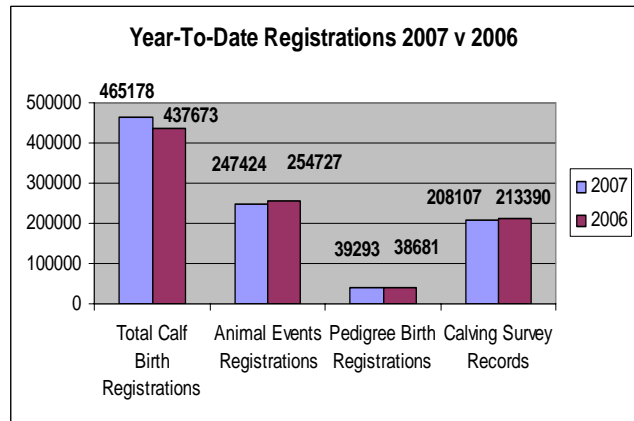
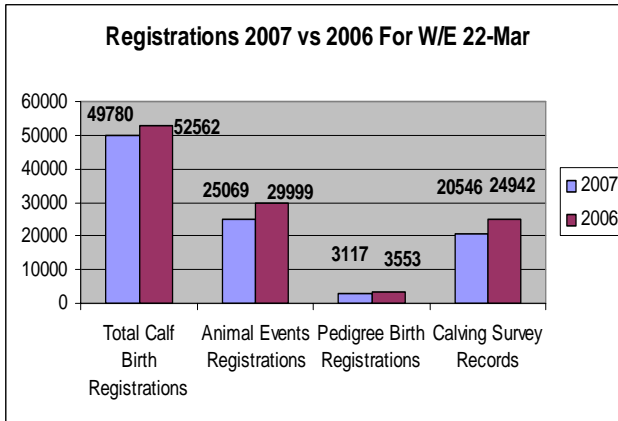


**UPDATE – for period 17<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2007**

**1 Important Dates**

- ✚ **ICBF Board Meeting.** Thursday 29th March, Comfort Inn, Portlaoise.
- ✚ **High EBI Heifer Sales** Dungarvan 29<sup>th</sup> March, Nenagh 30<sup>th</sup> March  
 Enniscorthy 2<sup>nd</sup> April, Fermoy 4<sup>th</sup> April, Kilkenny 16<sup>th</sup> April

**2 Database Update**



- ✚ 198,992 inseminations have now been recorded on the AI handhelds. By next Monday, all technicians will be operating on the new AI handheld server, and we will be ready for the massive pick-up in activity on handhelds over the next 4 weeks.
- ✚ The response to the recent EBI reports has been positive. Work is now underway to finalise the breeding charts for the coming breeding season.
- ✚ The use of the Sire Advice program is on-going. 500 herds have now run the Sire Advice programme. We are finalising the testing of a change this week which will allow farmers enter a different set of bulls for the cows and for the heifers.
- ✚ The new Teagasc Discussion Group application is getting good use and feedback continues to be positive.
- ✚ The Herdbook front end will be issued to a number of breed societies next week to work in tandem with the existing front end, until societies are comfortable with moving completely to the new product. As feedback is received, we will build it into the new application.
- ✚ Some of the hardware which the main database depends on is due for renewal this year, and we are currently investigating a new infrastructure set-up which would give us more flexibility, while at the same time reduce our infrastructure costs.

**3 International Beef Evaluations**

- ✚ Work continues on INTERBEEF guidelines and conversion formulae for Charolais and Limousine between France and Ireland.



## 4 Genetic Evaluations

### Dairy

Some outstanding issues were clarified in relation to International Identifications.

### Beef

With the launch of the Eurostars index over the last couple of weeks and discussions with ICBF, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in Northern Ireland (DARDNI) have taken the decision to revise the criteria for eligibility for the Northern Ireland elite bull grant (See document below). Testing of new software to evaluate maternal traits is being carried out in conjunction with ID-Lelystad.

## 5 HerdPlus

- ✚ Sire Advice activity is on the increase this week. March to date there were some 537 distinct herd owners who ran the program.
- ✚ The average number of times a farmer runs Sire Advice for his herd is approx 4 times, with over 20,000 runs logged in the period so far.
- ✚ Tip/Reminder: If a farmer "saves" his Sire Advice run, then his bull selections will get loaded to AI technicians hand-held and will also be reflected on his Breeding Chart which will be sent the first week of April 07.

## 6 Tully

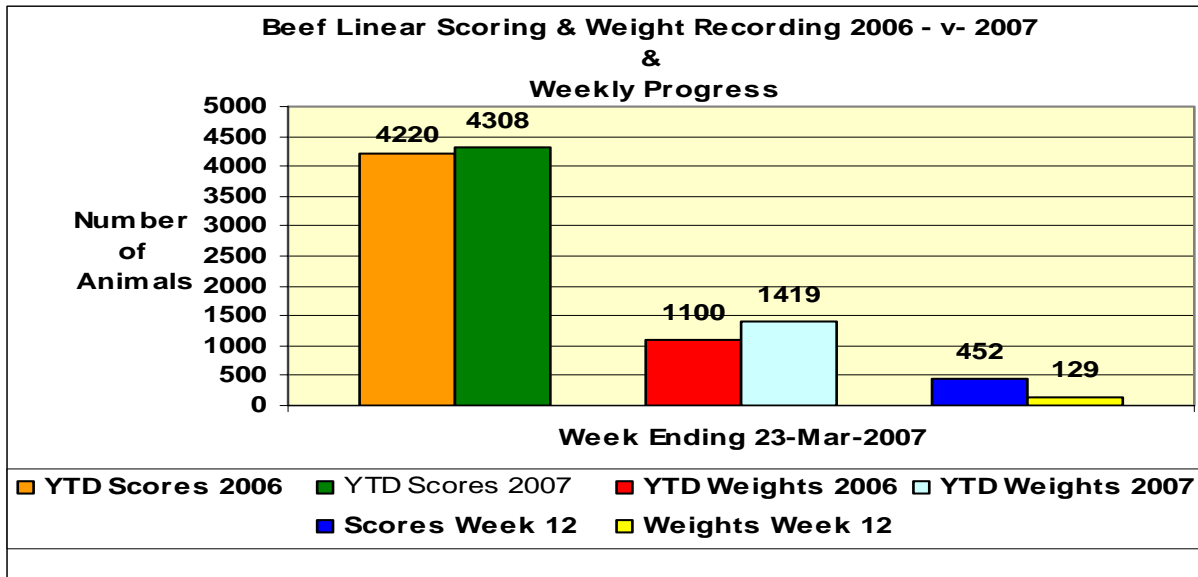
- ✚ Linear scoring of the December intake of bulls took place on the 21-3-07. Final Blup figures will be up on the ICBF web site on the 23-3-07.
- ✚ TB and brucellosis testing of the December intake took place on the 20-3-07.
- ✚ 12 bulls from the October intake were exported to Northern Ireland and Scotland over the last week.
- ✚ A majority of breeders have indicated the option for their bull and next week a statement of their account will be issued.

## 7 Milk Recording

Milk Recording Organisation	2007 Herds Recorded Week 16/03/07 – 23/03/07 (4 day wk)
Progressive	250
SWS	105
Dairygold	113
Kerry	117
Connacht	16
Tipperary	12
Arrabawn	11
Donegal	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>625</b>



## 8 Beef Linear Scoring



## 9 Gene Ireland

- ✚ 413 herds have now signed up for the spring programme, totalling 17,770 straws.
- ✚ Signing up of new herds continues but is slow going.

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## **Eligibility of Pedigree Beef Bulls for Northern Ireland Beef Improvement Grants**

### **Background**

Buyers from the North of Ireland who purchased elite bulls from breeds which were involved in linear scoring for beef improvement purposes were eligible for a grant from the DARDNI. Under this selection criteria bulls from Charolais, Limousine and Simmental breeds and which were linear scored were eligible in recent years.

With the launch of the new Euro-star indexes by ICBF (which allows a more comprehensive assessment of genetic merit of bulls both across and within and over a range of production, calving and maternal traits) the eligibility status of bulls was revised through discussions between DARDNI and ICBF personnel. The within breed BLUP indexes will be still also be used to determine the eligibility of animals from Charolais, Limousine and Simmental breeds.

Bulls from all beef breeds will now qualify for the NI grant in one of 2 ways based on the new Euro-star indexes:

- 1) As elite carcass sires if they are in the top 1% on the Beef Carcass Index for their breed and provided they are above average for Overall Suckler Beef Value and not in the bottom 1% of the breed for the Calving Index.
- 2) As elite maternal sires if they are in the top 1% on the Milk & Fertility Index for their breed and provided they are above average for Overall Suckler Beef Value and not in the bottom 1% of the breed for the Calving Index.

The percentiles for all the indexes and the individual traits are available on the ICBF website for all the breeds at <http://www.icbf.com/services/evaluations/beef.php>. To explain this further Tables 1 and 2 below shows the percentiles for the 7 most predominant beef breeds.

### **Elite Carcass Bulls**

Table 1. Percentiles for each breed for the qualifying criteria for elite carcass bulls.

<b>Breed</b>	<b>Beef Carcass Index (top 1%)</b>	<b>Suckler Beef Value (Above average)</b>	<b>Calving traits Index (not bottom 1%)</b>
<b>Aberdeen Angus</b>	<b>€3</b>	<b>€1</b>	<b>€-0.3</b>
<b>Blonde</b>	<b>€16</b>	<b>€1</b>	<b>€-21</b>
<b>Belgian Blue</b>	<b>€20</b>	<b>€7</b>	<b>€-29</b>
<b>Charolais</b>	<b>€39</b>	<b>€2</b>	<b>€-24</b>
<b>Hereford</b>	<b>€36</b>	<b>€4</b>	<b>€-8</b>
<b>Limousin</b>	<b>€100</b>	<b>€3</b>	<b>€-18</b>
<b>Simmental</b>	<b>€7</b>	<b>€1</b>	<b>€-20</b>

### **How to interpret**

An elite carcass Limousin bull must have a Beef Carcass Index in the top 1% of the breed i.e. €100, plus a Suckler Beef Value above breed average i.e. €3 and a Calving Traits Index not in the bottom 1% of the breed i.e. better than €-18.

### Elite Maternal Bulls

Table 2. Percentiles for each breed for the qualifying criteria for elite Maternal bulls.

Breed	Milk & Fertility Index (top 1%)	Suckler Beef Value (Above average)	Calving traits Index (not bottom 1%)
Aberdeen Angus	€156	€21	€-0.3
Blonde	€12.5	€71	€-21
Belgian Blue	€79	€77	€-29
Charolais	€5.2	€92	€-24
Hereford	€112	€24	€-8
Limousin	€57	€73	€-18
Simmental	€141	€71	€-20

### How to interpret

An elite maternal Limousin bull must have either a Milk & Fertility Index in the top 1% of the breed i.e. €57, plus a Suckler Beef Value above breed average i.e. €73 and a Calving Traits Index not in the bottom 1% of the breed i.e. better than €-18.

**Please note that these Eurostar benchmarks may change slightly after a genetic evaluation run as more data is accumulated on each breed. Therefore always refer to the most recent benchmarks on the ICBF website when checking eligibility.**

### Qualification based on existing Within Breed BLUP figures

Table 3. Qualification based on existing Within Breed BLUP figures (Charolais, Limousine and Simmental)

Breed	Muscle Index	Skeletal Index
Charolais	132	104
Limousin	131	106
Simmental	129	102

### How to Interpret

An elite Simmental bull must have:

- A Muscle Index of 129 or higher.
- A Skeletal Index of 102 or higher
- **Also, the animal must be linear scored.**

**Other Key notes:**

1. The carcass conformation and PTA muscle which were used in 2006 and early 2007 as an interim criteria will no longer be used.
2. There is no age limit on a bull. Females do not qualify.
3. The bull must be veterinary inspected by the purchaser. Basically it is a brief inspection to ensure the animal is in sound health, capable of serving cows and true to breed type.

If you have any queries you can contact ICBF (023) 20222, [query@icbf.com](mailto:query@icbf.com) or Kieron Mailey in DARDNI (028 94 426 831).