



UPDATE – for period 17th – 23rd November 2007

1 Important Dates

- Wednesday November 28th.** G-€N-€I-R-€L-€A-N-D farmer meeting. Silversprings, Hotel Cork.
- Thursday November 29th.** ICBF Board Meeting. Portlaoise.

2 Dairy Genetic Evaluation Consultation Meeting today at Moorepark

A meeting with the dairy industry was held in Moorepark on Friday 23rd November. This meeting was an update on work that was prioritized at the previous meeting (18th October 2007). The following is a summary for each of the key topics:

Review the economic values in the EBI.

1) **Milk price** Scenarios looking at the effect of milk price on the economic values were presented by Laurence Shaloo from Moorepark. Scenarios investigated included 26c/l, 28c/l, and 30c/l for milk price, which were in close proximity to the FAPRI and OECD projections. Following a comprehensive discussion all comments from the audience were advocating a price of 30 cents/l or more.

2) **Concentrate cost** A concentrate price of €250/ton DM were presented and recommended.

3) **Cull cow value** The EV of cull cow weight in the index was also 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.

Calving Performance

The results from the new Calving evaluation (New software (MIX99) and conversion to an Animal model) were presented). The new proofs showed good agreement with the current proofs, correlation of 0.94). This model also incorporates more data on all parities. The new software offers many operational and technical advantages. A recommendation to implement these changes was made by ICBF. Research looking at first versus later lactations is ongoing.

Linear Type traits

Further work on a new definition of overall type was presented. 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. A recommendation to implement these changes was made by ICBF.

Updates on ongoing research work

Genetic Evaluation of Female Fertility. Work was presented on the incorporation of the insemination data into the fertility evaluation.

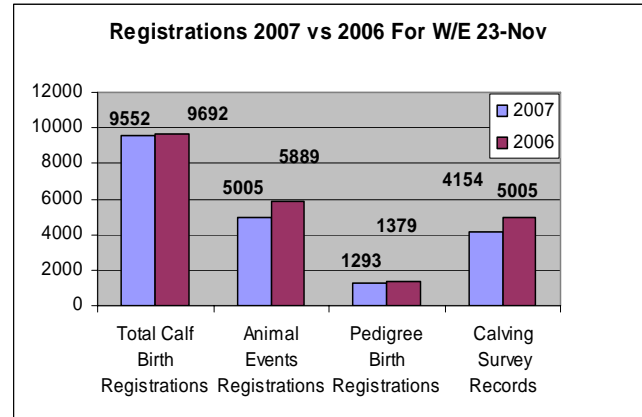
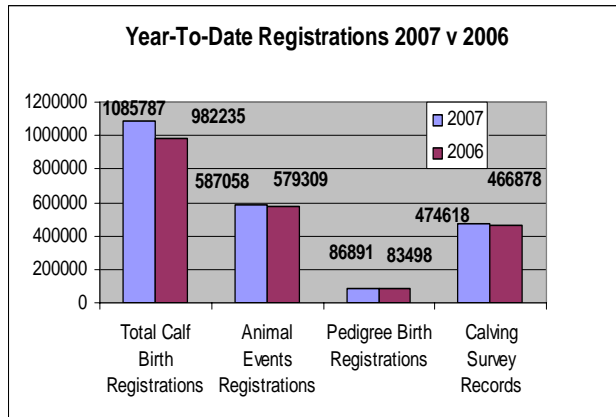
Currently animals with calving intervals greater than 600 days are omitted from the evaluation for that inter-calving period. However the insemination data now allows the inclusion of these records. If an insemination was recorded on the cow within 150 days of calving then this provides evidence that the cow was bred to calve but due to infertility did not calve before 600 days since her last calving. Therefore this animal should be included in the evaluation. This first look at the data allowed back in cows with calving intervals in the 600-800 day window. This yielded an extra 3% of data. Increasing this calving interval to 1000 days and the impacts on heritability of calving interval will be investigated in the next phase of this work.

Improve accuracy of across breed evaluations.

Ways of dealing with minority breeds and crosses between different breeds is currently being assessed. Further work was presented on some of the challenges associated with missing ancestry in the evaluation including results from an update of all breed fractions on animals in the database.



3 Database Update



- 361,579 inseminations have been received so far in 2007, compared with 160,925 in 2006 for the same period.
- Preparations are continuing in order to be ready for the commencement of the Suckler Cow Welfare Scheme. Developments and changes to a number of screens and forms are underway.
- Production of the personalised farmer notebooks for the 2008 season from the database are underway.
- The implementation of the new hardware solution and database upgrade is on-going. The intended date for go-live is scheduled to be Tuesday, December 11th. The database will be unavailable from 12noon on Friday 7th until Tuesday 11th at 9.am. A separate communication will go out to all users relating to this downtime. There are a couple of technical issues to be resolved before this go-live schedule will be confirmed.
- Preparatory work for the go-live of remaining Munster AI technicians is underway, with ICBF working in conjunction with the Munster AI staff.

4 GENEIRELAND®

Gene Ireland Beef Update

- Autumn programme is nearly finished. 94 herds taking a total of 2088 straws.
- Currently sending out breeding charts and a missing sire list to participants to improve recording and level of info on these herds.
- Getting ourselves set up for the Spring 08 programme

DAIRY AUTUMN 2007

- The Autumn programme is now near completion. There are 129 herds signed up, taking a total of 4,677 doses.
- A few remaining herds are being packed today.
- Inseminations from these test bulls are starting to be entered onto the ICBF database and will be monitored over the coming months.
- All participating herds have received breeding charts, along with information on the bulls in their test pack and inbreeding reports (with the exception of the few herds still to be dispatched).

DAIRY SPRING 2007

- It is anticipated a second round of payments for recorded insemination will be carried out by the end of this month. This will pick up any additional inseminations that have been entered onto the database since the first payment back in October.



5 Milk Recording Processing – this week and year to date

National Milk Recording Statistics - Herds, Cows & EDIY 23/11/07						
Milk Recording Organisation	Total Herds Recorded YTD 23/11/07	No. EDIY Herds YTD 23/11/07	% Herds EDIY	Total No. Cows Recorded YTD 23/11/07	No. EDIY Cows YTD 23/11/07	% Cows EDIY
Progressive	2,142	686	32%	169,911	53,258	31%
Dairygold	1,593	555	35%	112,399	40,612	36%
Kerry	1,034	70	7%	72,165	5,688	8%
SWS	932	111	12%	61,257	7,495	12%
Tipperary	170	71	42%	12,329	5,245	43%
Arrabawn	169	128	76%	12,076	9,247	77%
Connacht	154	68	44%	10,154	4,344	43%
Donegal	43	43	100%	3,920	3,920	100%
Total	6,237	1,732	28%	454,211	129,809	29%

Recorded Cows by Milk Recording Organisation - Year on Year Comparison				
Milk Recording Organisation	YTD 2005 Cows Recorded 01/01/05 - 23/11/05	YTD 2006 Cows Recorded 01/01/06 - 23/11/06	YTD 2007 Cows Recorded 01/01/07 - 23/11/07	2007 vs 2006 Year on Year Difference (%)
Progressive	153,276	160,455	169,911	5.6%
Dairygold	98,619	104,169	112,399	7.3%
Kerry	67,693	70,591	72,165	2.2%
SWS	55,586	60,134	61,257	1.8%
Tipperary	9,410	11,869	12,329	3.7%
Arrabawn	7,176	11,106	12,076	8.0%
Connacht	7,435	9,315	10,154	8.3%
Donegal	4,293	5,274	3,920	-34.5%
Total	403,488	432,913	454,211	4.7%

6 HerdPlus

BEEF

1. We continue to receive and key missing sire information from Beef Herds. This will help greatly in the reliability associated with the Suckler Beef Value going forward.
2. We are also visiting and working with Marts to establish data flow on a more routine basis (weekly uploads).

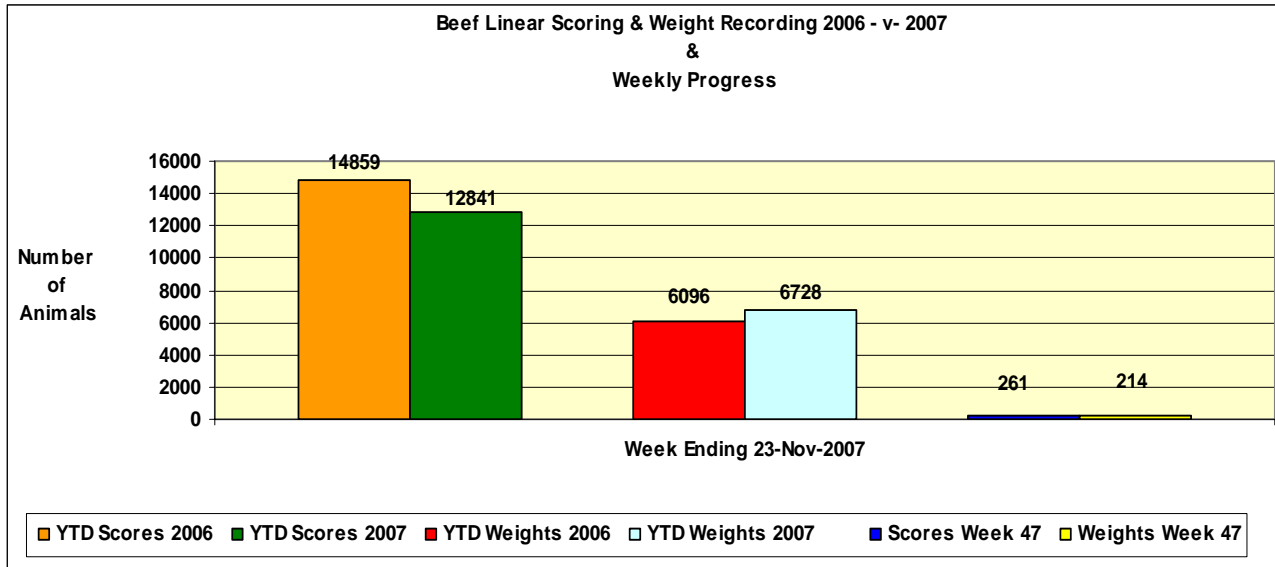
DAIRY

1. We did a feature on winter milk herds in the Cattle Breeding section of this weeks' Farmers Journal (see page 23).
2. First batch of 2008 pocket notebooks were sent to printer this week. We plan to start dispatch next week (early calving herds 1st), Included will be an Expected Calving chart. (large size - A3)
3. HerdPlus staff were in attendance at the National Dairy Conferences this week.
4. We have completed design of the new dairy Calving Report. Its release sees the introduction of some new key metrics e.g. "**CALVES PER COW PER YEAR**" - this is defined as the number of calves born in the



year expressed as a proportion of all eligible cows in the herd. E.g. if you get 60 calves out of 80 eligible cows then **CALVES PER COW PER YEAR** = 0.75. See example report attached.

7 Linear Scoring & Weight Recording



8 Tully

- ✚ A meeting of the Tully advisory committee will be held at Tully on Tuesday 27th November.
- ✚ Health test results for the next intake are returning and the bulls will enter Tully from Monday 26th to Saturday 1st December.
- ✚ The Tully Health Committee will meet on Monday re pre entry isolation.

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Summary Dairy Herd Calving Statistics Report - 2007

LoCall 1850 600 900

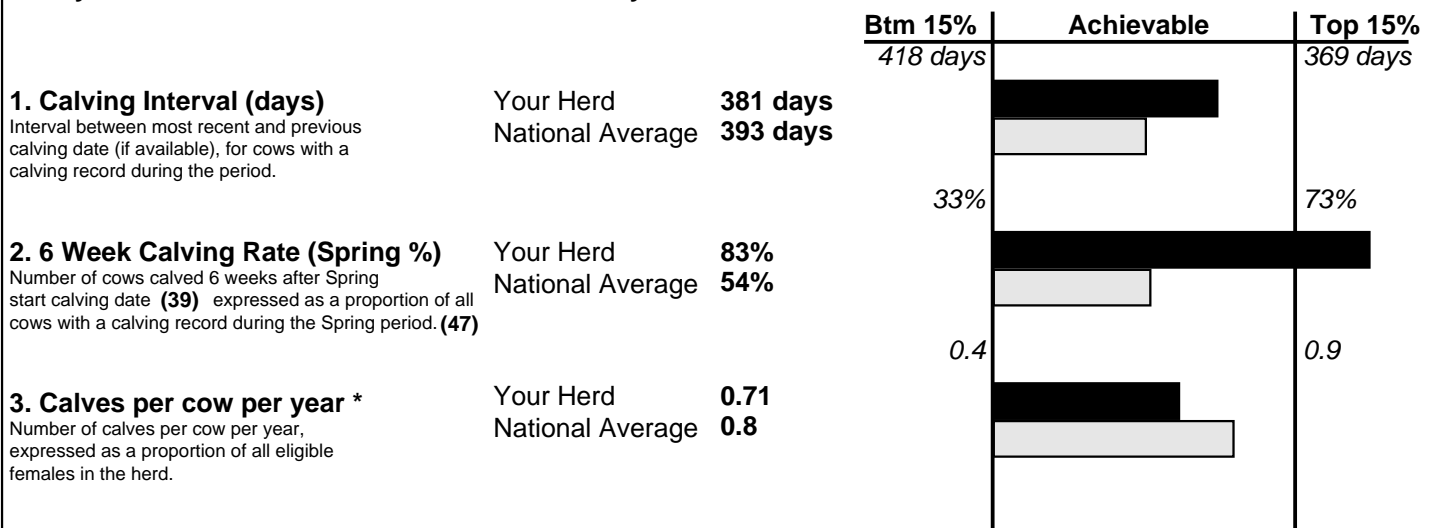
Herd Owner: **SAMPLE**
 Herd Number: **IE1234567**
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a. Summary Data

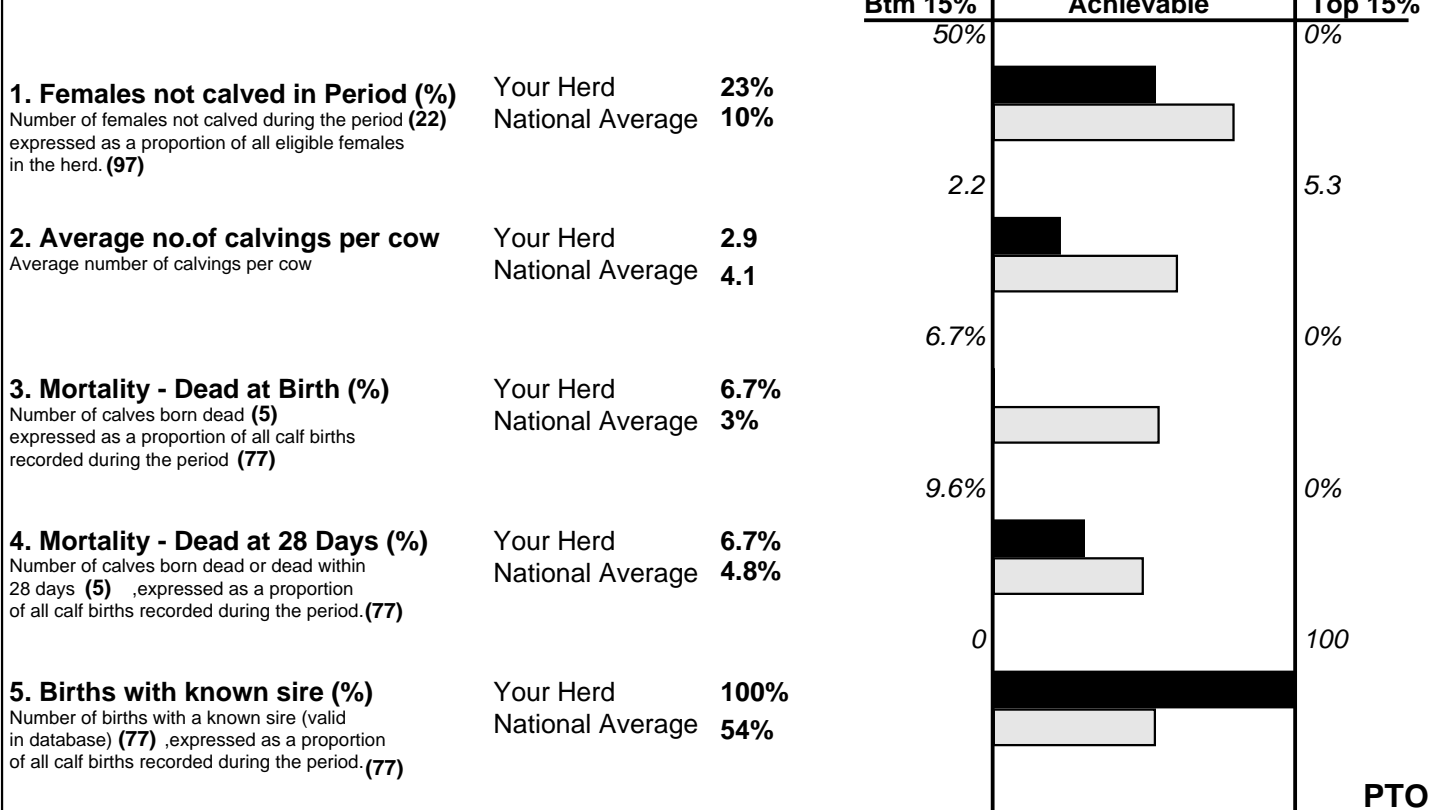
Report is based on dairy cows with a calving record in the cattle breeding database and where the calving date is between - 01/07/2006 and 30/06/2007 .

	All	Heifers		All
Total Calvings	75	22	No. of Females Not Calved	22
No. of Calves - Live at Birth	72	17	No. of Calves - Live at 28 days	72
No. Male Calves - Live at Birth	38	7	No. of Eligible Females *	97
No. Female Calves - Live at Birth	34	10	No. of Females Not Calved + Culled	26
No. Calves - Dead at Birth	5	5	Average Age at Calving	5y 2m (Cows) 1y 11m (Heifers)

b. Key Performance Statistics - relative to all dairy herds in the database



c. Other Performance Statistics



Summary Dairy Herd Calving Statistics Report - 2007

LoCall 1850 600 900

Herd Owner: SAMPLE
Herd Number: IE1234567
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c. Other Performance Statistics (continued)

6. Potential replacements from 2007 born calves

Dairy Female replacements born in 2007 is: **18**

Your Herd **19%**
National Average **31%**

7. AI bred replacements from 2007 born calves

Dairy AI bred replacements born in 2007 is: **18**

Your Herd **19**
National Average **25**

8. 6 Week Calving Rate (Autumn %)

Number of cows calved 6 weeks after the Autumn (**16**) start calving date, expressed as a proportion of all cows with a calving record in the Autumn period. (**28**)

Your Herd **57.1%**
National Average **57%**

9. Births with calving survey data (%)

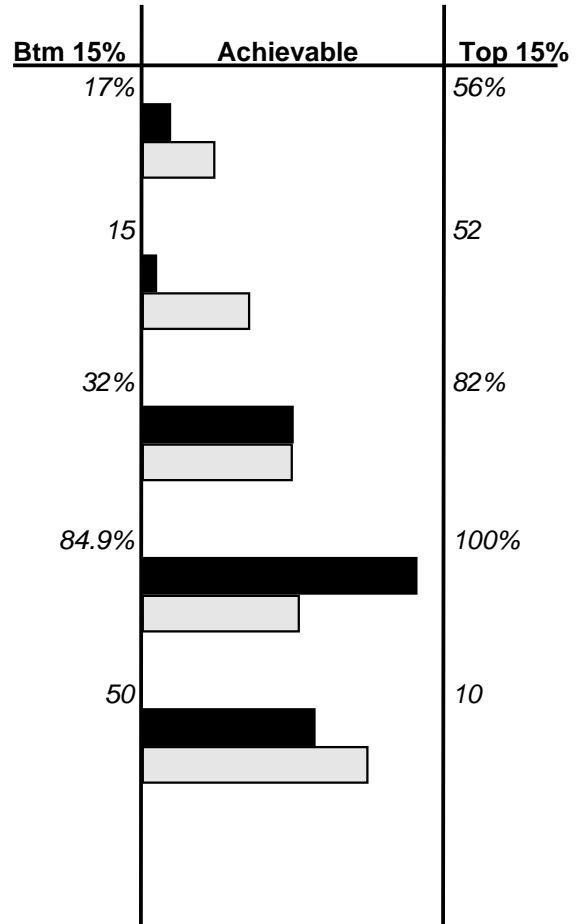
Number of births with calving survey data (**74**) expressed as a proportion of all calf births recorded during the period. (**77**)

Your Herd **99%**
National Average **92.8%**

10. Culled females not calved in the period (%)

Number of culled females with no calving during the period (**26**) expressed as a proportion of all eligible females in the herd. (**97**)

Your Herd **27%**
National Average **20%**



Explanatory Notes

Performance statistics for your herd are expressed relative to all dairy herds in the ICBF database, where the herd has a minimum of 30 calvings during the period. For example, the calving interval for your herd was 381 days. This compares to 393 days for the average of all herds and 369 days for the top 15% of herds (see bar-chart).

*Eligible females = all females that calved on the farm + all females that are greater than 20 months on 01/07/2006 and were in the herd before 01/07/2006 and are either still in the herd or left after 30/06/2007 and did not calve in period.

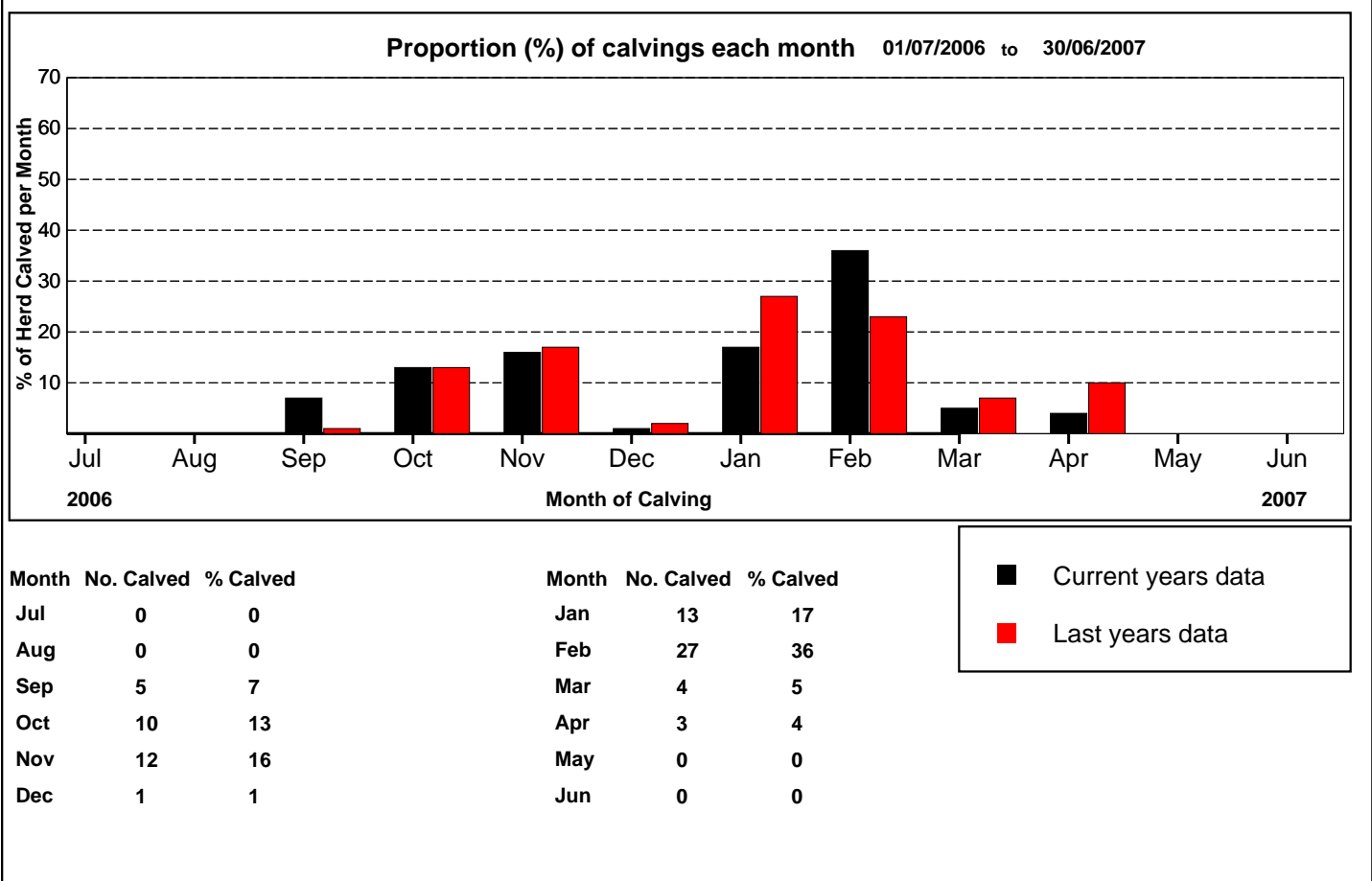
** Calves per cow per year = 365/calving interval x no. of live calves at 28 days / total number of cows eligible to calve.

Summary Dairy Herd Calving Statistics Report - 2007

LoCall 1850 600 900

Herd Owner: SAMPLE
Herd Number: IE1234567
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d. Current Calving Pattern

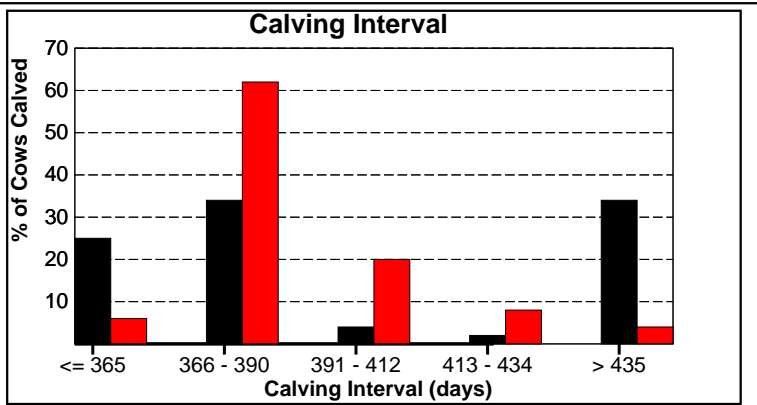


e. Additional Information

A. Calving Interval

Calving Interval	No. Calved	% Calved
% Cows calved <= 365 days	13	25
% Cows calved 366 - 390 days	18	34
% Cows calved 391 - 412 days	2	4
% Cows calved 413 - 434 days	1	2
% Cows calved > 435 days	18	34

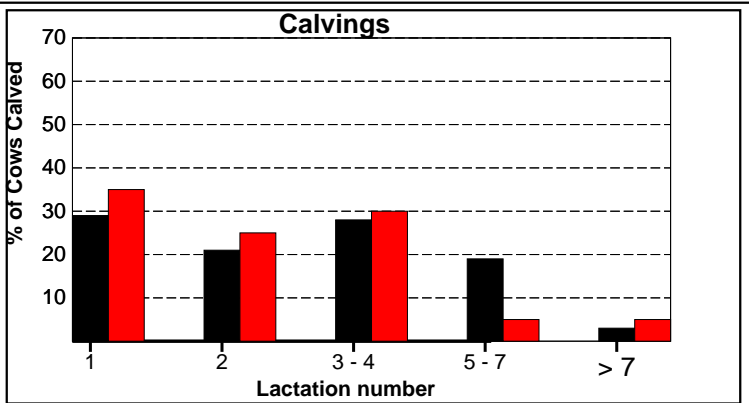
Your Herd
 National Average



B. Number of Calvings

Calvings	No. cows	% of cows
1st Calving	22	29
2nd Calving	16	21
3rd - 4th Calving	21	28
5th - 7th Calving	14	19
> 7th Calving	2	3

Your Herd
 National Average



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GENE IRELAND User Meeting - Overview of DRAFT program.

Date & venue: 10:30 Wednesday 28th November 2007, Silversprings Hotel, Cork

Key Objectives of the meeting:

1. To increase the number of herds involved in the GENE IRELAND program in Spring 2008 (Target 1200 herds).
2. To increase the EBI of young bulls entering the program in the future (Target Top 1% cows).
3. To establish a long-term funding plan for the GENE IRELAND program (Target is €1 million/annum).

Time	Title & presenter	Key questions/issues.
Session 1. Progeny Testing in Ireland. Chairperson – Pat Dillon (Teagasc).		
10.45 AM	Setting the scene. GENE IRELAND®; past, present & future – Brian Wickham (ICBF).	Past to present – EBI trends. Genetic gain - every generation is better, What is GENE IRELAND®, Who benefits. What does it cost and who pays.
11.00 AM	Farmers view – Kevin Twomey, Ballyhooley, Co. Cork.	Herd Background. Why am I involved in the program as a progeny test herd. Experiences to date with the program. Suggested improvements for the future.
11.15 AM	Review of programs to date – Andrew Cromie (ICBF)	GENE IRELAND Trends; Scale, EBI & Efficiency. Survey feedback. Suggested improvements for the future.
11.35 AM	Discussion	
Session 2. Bulls to Progeny Test. Chairperson – Jack Kennedy (Irish Farmers Journal).		
12.15 PM	Farmers view – John Kingston, Ballygarvan, Co. Cork	Herd background. Bulls tested to-date. Why am I involved in the program as a bull mother herd. Experiences to date with the program. Suggested improvements for the future.
12.30 PM	Improving the bull selection process – Francis Kearney (ICBF)	A "science-based" approach to bull selection. Constraints (ancestry, performance, other traits). Managing inbreeding. Potential role of genomic selection. Bull mother listings.
12.50 PM	AI forum & Discussion - (NCBC, Dovea AI, LIC/Eurogene & AI Services, ABS-Genus)	Why are we involved in GENE IRELAND. How do we select bulls for the program. Plans for the future.
1.00 PM	Discussion	
1.30 PM	Lunch & farmer survey	Each table (10 people) will be asked 3 questions related to the future development of the GENE IRELAND program. Key questions would include; (i) How do we get more herds involved in the program, (ii) How do we get more high EBI cows involved in the program, (iii) How do we secure long-term funding for the program. Each table would be asked to come up with 5 suggestions regarding how to address each problem.
Session 3. Where next for progeny testing? Chairperson – Brian Wickham		
2.30 PM	Experiences from recent trip to NZ – Denis O'Donnovan, Rosscarberry, Co.Cork	Overview of trip; Key messages; grass, profit & potential role for cross-breeding. Key message for conference; absolute faith that NZ farmers have in cattle breeding.
3.00 PM	Survey feedback & general discussion	Results from farmer surveys will be compiled and presented. These will form the basis of the discussion with identifying key recommendations for going forward.
3.45 PM	FBD Awards	Launch of the FBD/GENE IRELAND awards for progeny test farmers & breeders.
3.50 PM	Summing up – John O'Sullivan, Lisduff, Co. Cork	Summary of key issues from the meeting to be taken back to the ICBF board.