

1. Important Dates

- ✚ **Thursday 30th April 2009.** 10:30 – 14:00 **ICBF Board Meeting**, Maldron Hotel, Portlaoise.
- ✚ **Thursday 30th April 2009.** 14:30 – 16:00 **Annual General Meeting**, Maldron Hotel, Portlaoise. A copy of the ICBF Annual Report for 2008 is now available on the ICBF website (www.icbf.com) in the publications section.
- ✚ **Thursday 7th May 2009.** 11:00 – 13:00 **Sheep Board Meeting** followed by **meeting with owners of MALP flocks** at Johnstown House Hotel, Enfield & Potterton's farm.

2. Interbeef

Research Results

The Interbeef Working Group met informally on Friday last week (17th April) to review the results of the latest INRA research on the computation of international beef genetic evaluations. The report was presented by Eric Veno of INRA. Key points from the report included:

Background – there has been a lot of previous research which identified issues that need to be resolved before international evaluations can be a practical reality. The current research and the database developments at the Interbeef centre is intended to address these issues. It involves weaning weight, for two breeds (Charolais & Limousin) and five countries (France, Denmark, Sweden, Ireland and UK). The UK involves only the Limousin breed.

Preamble - previous work had established few links (common animals) between the Ireland & UK. The research found 545 common animals, including 155 sires with progeny in both countries. The key issue was the absence of a common identification in each the herd books in each country. The conclusion is that:

- a. Each country should store, for every animal, its full official international identification.
- b. The Interbull database to verify all official international identifications and store the pedigree of the animal as determined by its country of birth registration.
- c. The Interbull database must have a system for identifying and removing duplicate animals.
- d. The Interbull database will be the source of pedigrees used in international genetic evaluations.
- e. These procedures will be a requirement for participation in international beef evaluations.

Data – for both breeds there is much more data from France than any other country. Sweden has more Charolais data than Ireland. The Irish weaning weight data involve many herds with small numbers of records and this makes accurate genetic evaluation difficult. Recent efforts in Ireland to increase weight recording is improving the quality of the Irish data for both breeds. The form used by each country to communicate the key factors to be taken into account needs to be modified to provide more detail on fixed effects and extent to which data used nationally differs from data sent for incorporation in international evaluations.

Connectedness – there are sufficient connections between some countries to enable genetic parameters to be estimated. The level of connection between countries is only slightly less than between some regions in France. The very small numbers of weaning weights per herd in Ireland reduces the connection between Ireland and other countries.

Parameter Estimation – was a long a difficult task. Complications were experienced with the software used and the data structure. However, by using procedures developed by Interbull for dairy a consistent set of parameters was estimated for use in international genetic evaluations.

Genetic evaluations – were computed for both breeds and all countries. Results showed good agreement between countries. Reliabilities have yet to be computed.

Concluded that international evaluation for weaning weight is practical and that further investigation is required to explain some anomalies. The results should now be distributed to participating countries for consideration and that once feedback has been received the next step(s) can be decided.

Informal Meeting of WG

Project Plan – involving the five themes below will form the basis of future planning and reporting. The five themes and actions agreed under each were:

- Data collection & distribution
 - Pedigree handling part of Interbull database is complete, same system for dairy & beef and currently being tested for both.
 - Report on experiences will be provided to Interbull meeting in August.
 - Plan to go live with pedigree part in September for dairy.
- Genetic evaluation
 - Results from research will be sent from INRA to the Interbull Centre for distribution to the participating countries. Feedback will be requested and the next steps determined by the feedback.
- Expansion
 - To new traits based on feedback from participating countries. Trait sets to be considered include: calving, carcass, and female performance.
 - Consideration to be given to use of crossbred data and provision of across breed evaluations based on feedback from Scientific Advisory Committee.
- Service Agreement & Organisation
 - Interbeef Working Group to hold full planning session at its next meeting in August.
 - Future communication to be via Interbeef Forum on Interbull website.
- Research
 - Agree to need for Scientific Advisory committee. List of members to be considered.
 - Research on use of ancestry records by INRA agreed subject to communication prior to publication in accordance with Interbeef agreement.
 - INRA to present results of genetic evaluation and pedigree research at Interbull meeting in August.

3. Highfield House Modifications

Dan Murphy and his team of builders started work this week on modifications to Highfield House. These changes are being made by Shinagh Estates Ltd (the building owner) to provide ICBF with office accommodation to meet our requirements over the next three years.

The main changes are:

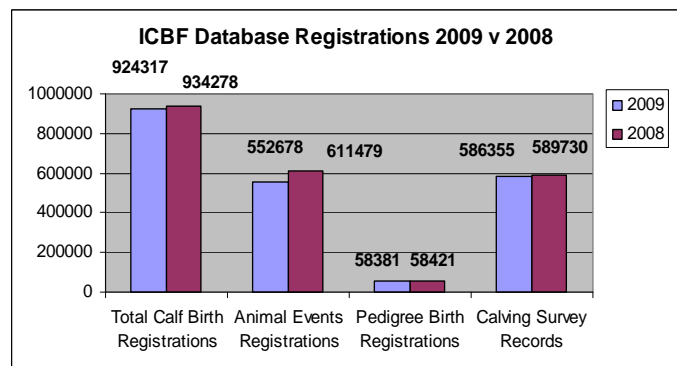
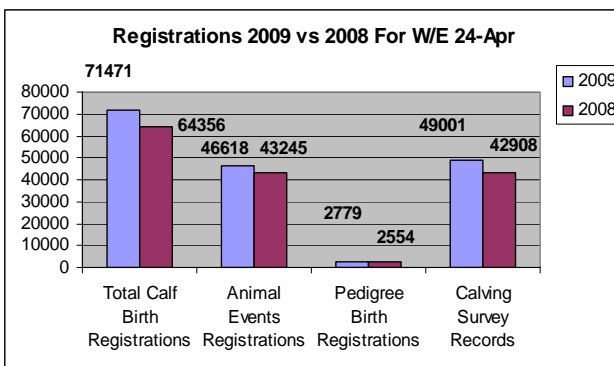
- The area previously occupied by the SWS Milk Testing laboratory is being converted into office accommodation for the IT Developers and Genetics Team. This area is being linked by a new corridor to the existing canteen
- The area currently occupied by the IT Developers and Genetic Team is being converted into an open plan office for the Customer Support Team.
- The car park and associated road access is being improved to remove a number of potential safety hazards.

4. Tully

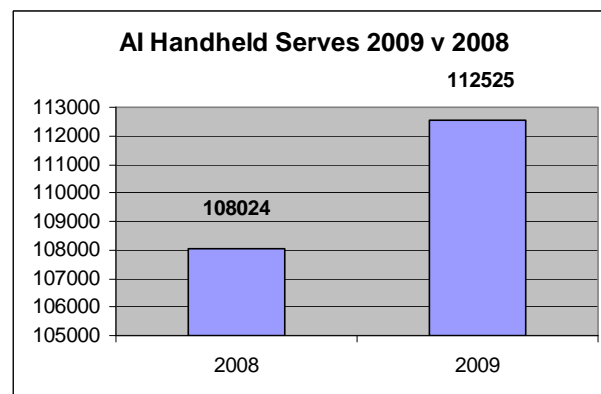
- ✚ Bloods are starting to be received and are being sent for analysis for the next Tully intake.
- ✚ Belgium Blue bull sired by Tintin de MY that was recently purchased by NCBC from the last intake and has passed all the health testing requirements. See picture on right.
- ✚ Power washing of all facilities was again being carried out this week including the off farm isolation unit.



5. Database



- ✚ With some clarity on the 2009 Suckler Scheme, we will now be updating some of the pre and post weaning forms for the 2009 born calves and they will be released in the coming weeks. In relation to 2008 born calves, the number of calves with a meal feeding introduction has increased to 774,000, with just over 681,000 of these having been weaned.
- ✚ The revamp of the Milk Recording system continues. Testing has continued this week. Parallel runs on both Munster and PG Milk Recording herds continued next week.
- ✚ Work has begun on updates to the Fertility reports for the coming AI season – we hope to complete these over the coming week.
- ✚ Work on a new mechanism of sending and receiving Suckler scheme data to DAFF is continuing.
- ✚ Development on the sheep application continues, with on-going updates being released.
- ✚ The graph shows Inseminations recoded on AI Handhelds in 2009 compared with 2008.



6. Genetic Evaluations

Genomic Update

- Genotyping of the latest batch of samples is now complete and we received the results today. We are currently preparing files for the genomic selection software. We hope to have genomic figures for these bulls next week. At this point all Genomically Selected bulls will have their proofs updated and a new Active Bull list will be generated.

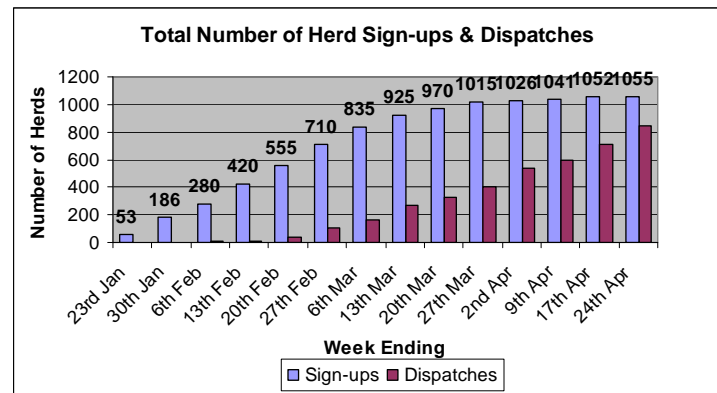
Beef

- The bull search and the usual AI sire files on the website have been updated with the proofs from the April 2009 routine evaluation.

7. GENE IRELAND®

Dairy

- A good number of herds were packed this week, but we are still slightly behind target in relation to AI Start dates. Currently packing herds that were due to start this week.



8. Milk Recording

National Milk Recording Statistics - Herds, Cows & EDIY 24/04/09						
Milk Recording Organisation	Total Herds Recorded YTD 24/04/09	No. EDIY Herds YTD 24/04/09	% Herds EDIY	Total No. Cows Recorded YTD 24/04/09	No. EDIY Cows YTD 24/04/09	% Cows EDIY
Progressive	1,699	554	33%	120,727	39,484	33%
Dairygold	1,201	370	31%	74,952	24,120	32%
Kerry	765	46	6%	42,140	2,363	6%
SWS	791	88	11%	45,497	5,330	12%
Tipperary	92	21	23%	6,586	1,983	30%
Arrabawn	97	74	76%	6,369	5,028	79%
Connacht	94	13	14%	4,875	724	15%
Donegal	4	4	100%	372	372	100%
Total	4,743	1,170	25%	301,518	79,404	26%

Recorded Cows by Milk Recording Organisation - Year on Year Comparison			
Milk Recording Organisation	YTD 2008 Cows Recorded 01/01/08 - 24/04/08	YTD 2009 Cows Recorded 01/01/09 - 24/04/09	2009 vs 2008 Year on Year Difference (%)
Progressive	120,545	120,727	0.2%
Dairygold	72,740	74,952	3.0%
Kerry	46,639	42,140	-10.7%
SWS	43,594	45,497	4.2%
Tipperary	7,109	6,586	-7.9%
Arrabawn	5,599	6,369	12.1%
Connacht	5,963	4,875	-22.3%
Donegal	432	372	-16.1%
Total	302,621	301,518	-0.4%

National Milk Recording Averages by Province - 10 day Period 14/04/09 to 24/04/09								
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	916	56,979	62	26.6	3.90	3.38	1.94	275
Leinster	322	23,867	74	26.1	3.87	3.45	1.91	279
Connacht	41	2,068	50	25.5	3.81	3.35	1.83	371
Ulster	54	2,416	45	26.3	3.87	3.25	1.87	301

National Milk Recording Results by County - 10 day Period 14/04/09 to 24/04/09								
	No. Herds Recorded	No. Cows Recorded	Average Herd Size	Average 24hr Milk kg/Cow	Average Fat %	Average Protein %	Average F + P kg	Average SCC
CARLOW	9	532	59	25.1	3.80	3.38	1.80	242
CAVAN	30	1,320	44	26.2	3.98	3.35	1.92	253
CLARE	29	1,178	41	26.5	3.73	3.35	1.88	254
CORK STH	275	16,956	62	26.5	3.81	3.40	1.91	312
CORK NTH	240	15,240	64	26.7	3.79	3.41	1.92	264
DONEGAL	5	328	66	27.4	3.91	3.11	1.92	327
DUBLIN	3	147	49	26.8	3.83	3.55	1.98	340
GALWAY	17	904	53	28.6	3.77	3.34	2.03	312
KERRY	106	5,776	54	27.9	3.68	3.29	1.94	305
KILDARE	19	1,343	71	27.6	3.96	3.48	2.05	299
KILKENNY	67	4,667	70	26.1	3.88	3.45	1.91	224
LAOIS	39	2,707	69	25.4	3.88	3.46	1.86	251
LEITRIM	5	191	38	27.8	3.93	3.33	2.02	228
LIMERICK	89	5,278	59	28.0	3.64	3.34	1.95	282
LONGFORD	2	73	37	26.4	3.54	3.49	1.86	196

LOUTH	17	1,391	82	26.1	3.82	3.49	1.91	339
MAYO	9	426	47	24.7	3.66	3.36	1.73	335
MEATH	35	3,952	113	24.8	3.99	3.42	1.84	420
MONAGHAN	19	768	40	25.2	3.98	3.29	1.83	322
OFFALY	29	1,993	69	26.2	4.13	3.46	1.99	222
ROSCOMMON	1	32	32	27.9	3.57	3.42	1.95	545
SLIGO	9	515	57	18.7	4.19	3.28	1.40	434
TIPPERARY NTH	62	4,073	66	25.2	3.88	3.44	1.84	215
TIPPERARY STH	65	4,336	67	26.4	3.87	3.35	1.91	256
WATERFORD	50	4,142	83	25.6	3.95	3.47	1.90	312
WESTMEATH	21	1,466	70	23.3	3.99	3.35	1.71	257
WEXFORD	61	4,018	66	25.9	3.93	3.52	1.93	239
WICKLOW E	16	1,105	69	25.5	3.63	3.48	1.81	282
WICKLOW W	4	473	118	29.8	4.28	3.34	2.27	320
	<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	1,333	85,330	63	26.1	3.86	3.39	1.90	296

9. Change in our phone numbers

The ICBF phone numbers have changed. Our new numbers have “88” added to them after the area code (023). Please amend your files as soon as possible. The old numbers will continue to work until May of 2009.

Old Number (example)	New Number (example)
Phone: 023 20222	023 88 20222
Fax: 023 20229	023 88 20229

Brian Wickham Ph.D. Chief Executive Irish Cattle Breeding Federation Soc. Ltd, Highfield House, Shinagh, Bandon, Co. Cork, Ireland, Phone office +353 (0)23 882 0222, mobile +353 (0)86 826 9911 Fax office +353 (0)23 882 0229 E-Mail bwickham@icbf.com ICBF Web site www.icbf.com