



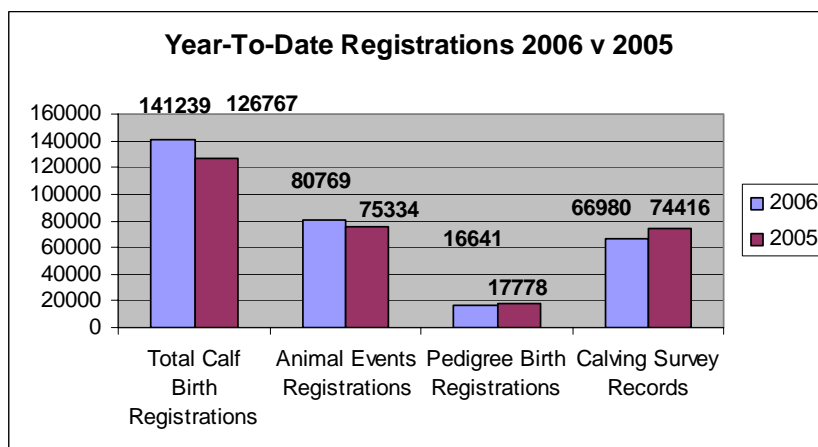
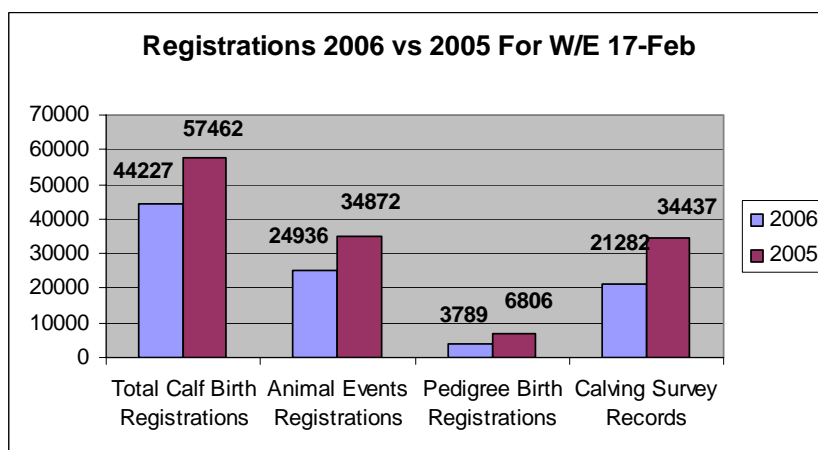
UPDATE – for period 18th–24th February 2006

1 Important Dates

- ✚ **Sunday 26th February. Tune to RTE1 TV from 1:15 to 1:45** for *Ear to the Ground* – a special featuring cattle breeding.
- ✚ **Saturday 4th March Tully Sale.** Show at 11.00am, sale commences at 12.00pm.
- ✚ **Thursday 23rd March 2006,** Audit & Finance Sub Committee meeting.
- ✚ **Thursday 30th March Board Meeting.**
- ✚ **Saturday 6th May Tully Sale.** Show at 11.00am, sale commences at 12.00pm.

2 Database Update

- ✚ 173 new herds added to the database last week. Again, these were driven by new herds signing up to AI.
- ✚ The pace of training of the AI technicians continues to quicken. This week, training took place in PG, Dovea and Dairygold. Kerry technicians will be trained next week.
- ✚ The beef linear scorers will have updated handhelds delivered to them at the Tully bull sale next week.
- ✚ The loading of the latest set of genetic evaluations to the database will be completed next week. Beef EBI reports quickly followed by Dairy EBI reports will then be run.
- ✚ The redesign of the internet bull search function has been completed and will be live on Monday, March 6th.
- ✚ The development of intranet reports to support the AI organisations in the roll-out of the AI handhelds is continuing, and will do so for a number of weeks.
- ✚ The new SCC herd health report has been completed and will be in a testing phase next week, with expected release the following week.



3 Tully

- ✚ An open day was held at Tully on the 18-2-06. 300 people attended with about 85% of the people who attended looking for bulls, this was at least 200 people more than on the same day last year.



- ✚ The final EBI figures for the bulls for sale on the 4-3-06 will be available from the 28-2-06 on the ICBF web site.
- ✚ The judging of the bulls for the FBD prize winners will take place on the 28-2-06.

4 Genetic Evaluations – Beef & Dairy

Dairy:

- ✚ Official EBI proofs from the most recent evaluation for Black & White AI sires are now available on the website.
- ✚ The active bull list is currently being compiled and an initial draft has been circulated to the AI industry before official release next week.

Beef:

- ✚ An evaluation incorporating all information from the latest Tully intake has been completed. Routine evaluation checks are in progress and subsequent to this catalogues for the upcoming Tully sale will be finalised. Work on the Beef Herd reports is nearing completion with a view to releasing these reports in the next two to three weeks.
- ✚ Further testing and refinement of the linear type evaluation are in progress.
- ✚ International beef evaluations: work on updating Guidelines for participation for member countries is continuing. These will be placed on the INTERBULL website shortly.

5 Milk Recording Update

MR Stats week ending 24/02/06

Milk Recording Organisation	2006 Herds Recorded Week 17/02/06 - 24/02/06	2005 Herds Recorded Week 17/02/05 - 24/02/05
Progressive	308	289
Dairygold	99	75
Kerry	82	68
SWS	131	112
Tipperary	0	5
Connacht	11	16
Arrabawn	15	11
Others (Donegal, OAD)	0	0
Total	646	576

€DIY update

- ✚ **Progressive Genetics.** On Fri 17/02/06 the “Wexford” van (with 53 meters on board) was burnt out near Durrow. Thankfully the driver was unharmed but van and meters were destroyed in the fire. The driver noticed smoke coming from the rear of the van and pulled over but the van had taken light from the rear at that stage – all was lost. Progressive are pursuing insurance. ICBF immediately recalled all vans for safety check. Vans brought back this week have been thoroughly checked. We can confirm all we checked to date are 100% OK and are back in operation. An assessment will be conducted on the burnt van. Meantime ICBF has taken delivery of two Progressive Genetics vans which are being picked up by PG staff this weekend. As of Monday 24th Feb, Progressive will have three vans in operation, in Longford, Kilkenny & Wexford.



- ✚ **Tipp/Arrabawn.** The van that burnt was rented to Progressive Genetics and was due to be returned to ICBF this week for redeployment in the Tipp/Arrabawn cell. A replacement van is on order. Meantime to ensure the service goes ahead as planned in Tipp/Arrabawn, ICBF have kitted out and will deliver a rented van this weekend to Paul O'Brien (Technician) so he can start recording as scheduled on 29/02/06.
- ✚ **Dairygold.** Meeting held with Mary O'Keeffe and Noel Coughlan (Farm Advisory Management) with a view to getting farmers who get SCC samples tested in lab (but not milk recording) switched over to €DIY. Once off lab tests cost the farmer money but no records are kept. Advisory staff can't track corrective action progress. For very little extra they can sign up to €DIY. They then "come into the system" and proper advisory support can be offered. This is an example of the well established PDCA cycle (Plan changes>Do changes>Check SCC results> Act on results) for continuous improvement. Continue a few cycles (i.e. redo PDCA) until results improve. Further meetings to take place next week.
- ✚ **Kerry.** Annette Galvin (Kerry Technician) trained by Brian Coughlan of ICBF this week. Canvassing by Kerry staff continuing.
- ✚ **SWS.** Diarmaid O'Donovan (SWS Technician) trained by Brian Coughlan of ICBF this week. Canvassing continuing.
- ✚ **Donegal .** Teagasc and Roy Graham (Donegal Technician) out canvassing this week - first tests underway.
- ✚ **Connacht Gold.** Response to Tech advert good with interviews planned for next week.

6 AI Promotion 2006

- ✚ A letter to the Minister of Agriculture seeking support for the AI Promotion 2006 program was sent on Monday. Some €7,000 is being sought to match a similar amount being contributed by the combined AI industry.
- ✚ The benefit to dairy farmers alone from an extra 50,000 inseminations from AI sires with EBI's averaging €75 over the use of stock bulls with EBI's averaging €25 is some €2.5 million in profit from the resulting offspring. This is a compelling case for the use of AI as a tool to increase farm profitability.
- ✚ Plans for MART based AI Promotion meetings are being finalised. These meetings will include sales of high EBI calves and heifers. All events would be held in local marts (11.00 AM – 4.00 PM) and the events will be split into 3 components; AI trade stands (11.00 AM – 4.00 PM), Information forum (12.00 – 1.00 PM) and sale of high EBI heifers (1.30 PM – 3.30 PM). The schedule for these meetings is:
 - Nenagh 6th April.
 - Ballybay (Monaghan) 7th April.
 - Bandon 11th April.
 - Kilmallock 12th April.
 - Dungarvan 13th April.

7 Strasbourg Cattle Breeding Meeting

On Wednesday this week Brian Wickham of ICBF and John Carty of DAF represented Ireland at a meeting organised by the French cattle breeding umbrella organisation UNCEIA. Held in the European Parliament the meeting was attended by some 300 people representing cattle breeding interests in 20 of the EU states. Some of the key messages from this meeting were:

- ✚ The freedom of trade between EU member states will have a big impact on cattle breeding as more cattle breeding organizations seek to operate across borders and the EU enforces the right of free trade between member states.



- # EU regulations governing cattle breeding are likely to change by becoming less restrictive and relying more on the setting of standards by industry bodies such as ICAR and INTERBULL. This will ensure more flexibility and more relevant standards than those imposed by regulation.
- # The need for cattle breeding regulations is being contested by a number of organizations and EU countries.
- # There is a strong interest in moving away from the regulations governing herd books based on pure-breeding to regulations that are more appropriate for information based cattle breeding.
- # Some EU countries have made rapid progress with establishing cattle breeding infrastructures that are more focused on delivering benefits to farmers and which ensure farmers have the major say in the direction that cattle breeding takes. Denmark was one example discussed.
- # A survey conducted in preparation for the meeting demonstrated the enormous strength of European cattle breeding and that it has the capacity to compete with the rest of the world.

8 Reflections on Achievements and Improvements

As the discussions on the proposed breeding information service continue it is worth reflecting on the progress we have made over the last few years. The database is now well established and operating very smoothly. The number of herds participating is increasing by several hundred per week. Animal events flow to the database every day in their thousands. The dairy and beef genetic evaluation systems are providing extremely relevant and up-to-date information on a wide range of traits for all breeds. Reports in their hundreds, and some days thousands, are delivered to herd owners.

Our achievements are the result of a great deal of effort by many people and organisations and we can all feel considerable pride in our individual contributions to what is undoubtedly a very powerful tool for improving the profitability of Irish cattle farms.

Over the next two months we have the Tully bull sale (4th March), AI Promotion Workshops (last three weeks of March at nine venues) and AI Promotion MART Events (first two weeks of April at five venues). We will be distributing dairy and beef EBI reports to some 15,000 herds. DIY milk recording will be starting for close to 1,000 herds. We are also recruiting herds for GEN€ IR€LAND[®], and rolling-out AI Handheld computers. The reason we do this is, first and foremost, to improve the profitability of Irish cattle farms.

So, as you participate in one or more of these many activities, could you please think about how we could do even better in the future. Discuss your ideas with your colleagues and let me know how we can help. We are very open to suggestions and welcome all opportunities to improve any aspect of our services that deliver benefits to Irish farmers.

Remember, ICBF is owned by farmers and the providers of breeding services (milk recording, Herd Book and Artificial Insemination) in Ireland. We work together to deliver benefits and only by openly sharing our ideas and exploring options can we create a better future for our organisations and Irish farmers. I look forward to an intense period of activity and to finding new and better services for Irish farmers.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brian', written in a cursive style.

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](tel:+3532320222), [mobile +353 \(0\)86 826 9911](tel:+3530868269911) [Fax office +353 \(0\)23 20229](tel:+35302320229) E-Mail bwickham@icbf.com ICBF Web site www.icbf.com Assistant: Mary Madden. © Irish Cattle Breeding Federation Society Limited 2005.