



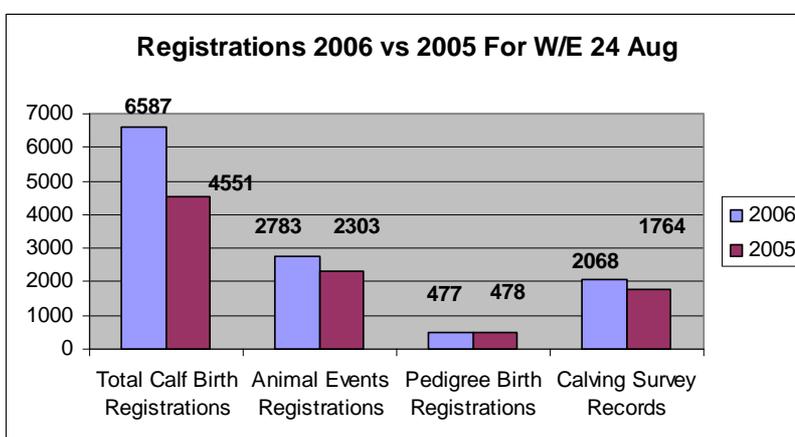
Update for period 19th-25th August 2006

1 Important Dates

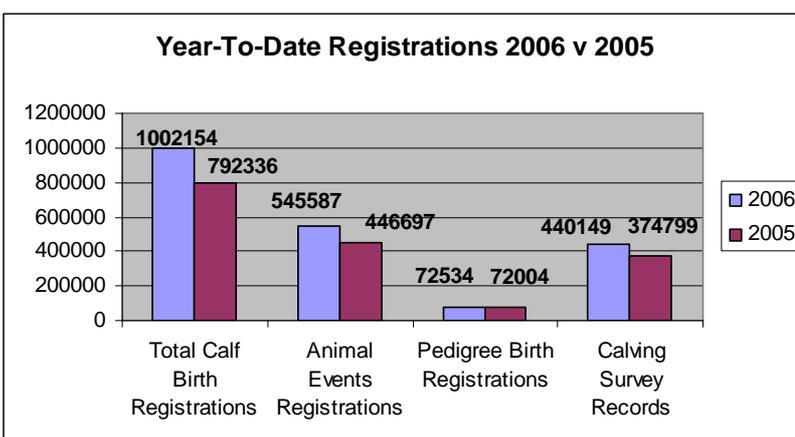
- ✚ **Tuesday 12th September** – TEAGASC Grange Open Day.
- ✚ **Wednesday 13th September** – EBI €100 Open Day – near Birr.
- ✚ **Thursday 14th September** – ICBF Board meeting, Heritage Hotel Portlaoise.
- ✚ **September 27th to 30th** - Ploughing. The new breeding information service (HerdPlus) will be the main focus of the ICBF stand.
- ✚ **Wednesday 4th October** – Beef Breeding Consultation meeting - Abbeyleix Manor Hotel.
- ✚ **Thursday 11th October** – Dairy Genetic Evaluation Consultation meeting – Moorepark.

2 Database Update

- ✚ 21 new herds added to the database last week.
- ✚ Over 147,000 inseminations have now been recorded on the AI handhelds.
- ✚ The loading of the latest Dairy Genetic Evaluation is now complete including parent averaging. The final bull search and top bull and cow files are now available on the website.
- ✚ The latest beef calving reports are now also available to farmers online.



- ✚ Data relating to French beef breeds was received from France this week allowing us to complete records on over 8,000 ITTs (International Identifications according to the Interbull standard format) and the addition of some 5,000 sire and or dam records on the database where no information existed previously. As from Monday next week anybody wanting to see the impact should use the Bull Search on ICBF's website – the National ID for each bull is the ITT where it is known. Note that the ITT looks like this: **CHLFRAM007121181092**. In this example the breed is Charolais (CHL), country of birth is France (FRA), sex is male (M) and the number for this animal is 007121181092. The use of the ITT is an important step in preparing for international evaluations for beef breeds and traits as it provides a world-wide unique identification for every animal.



- ✚ Testing and refinement of the new EBI report is continuing.
- ✚ The new release of Linear Scoring hand-held software, for beef and dairy, is being tested.

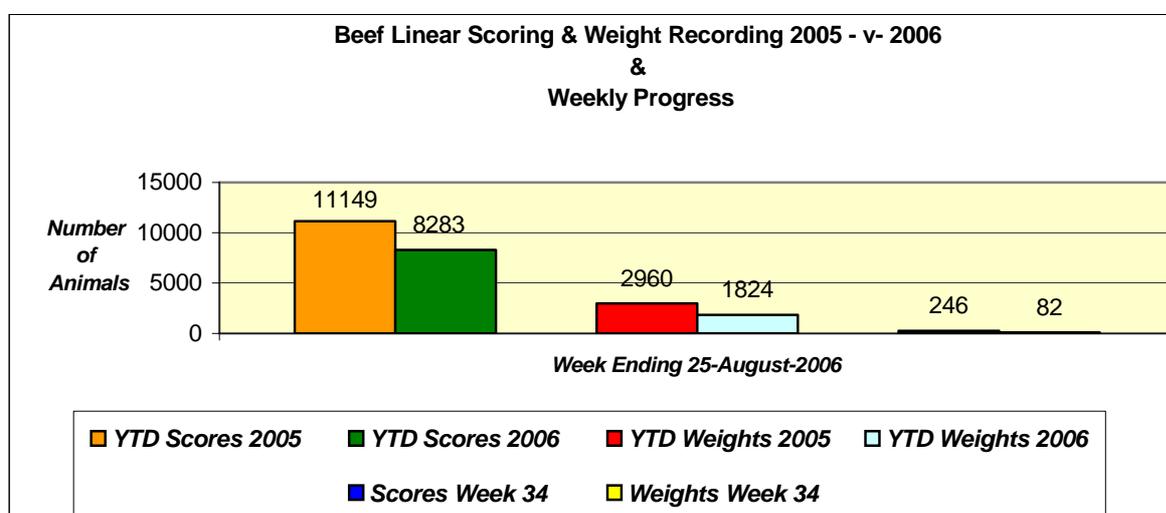


✚ Work is progressing on the new herdbook front-end to IRIS.

3 Tully

- ✚ A group of 26 pedigree breeders from Fermanagh will visit Tully on the 30-8-06.
- ✚ Finn Millard from Scotland has been appointed as the beef breeding analyst. He will be based at Tully and will commence his 9 month contract on the 4-9-06. Finn is taking the position previously held by Tim Byrne.
- ✚ Inspections for the next intake to Tully have started and the quality of bulls is up on last year. 120 bulls are expected to start test before the end of September.

4 Beef Linear Scoring



5 Milk Recording Update

Milk Recording Herds and Cows Year To date 2006 versus Year to date 2005

Milk Recording Organisation	YTD 2005 Herds Recorded 01/01/05 - 25/08/05	YTD 2006 Herds Recorded 01/01/06 - 25/08/06	Year on Year Herds Difference(%)	YTD 2005 Cows Recorded 01/01/05 - 25/08/05	YTD 2006 Cows Recorded 01/01/06 - 25/08/06	Year on Year Cows Difference(%)
Progressive	2,075	2,089	1%	145,743	152,613	5%
Dairygold	1,520	1,547	2%	96,028	102,174	6%
Kerry	1,064	1,074	1%	66,499	69,292	4%
SWS	934	958	3%	53,813	58,413	9%
Tipperary	141	168	19%	9,264	11,717	26%
Arrabawn	108	157	45%	7,044	10,901	55%
Connacht	110	137	25%	7,189	8,914	24%
Donegal	33	56	70%	3,364	5,133	53%
Total	5,985	6,186	3%	388,944	419,157	8%



Milk Recording Stats week ending 25/08/06

Milk Recording Organisation	2006 Herds Recorded Week 18/08/06 - 25/08/06
Progressive	311
Dairygold	222
Kerry	183
SWS	165
Arrabawn	27
Tipperary	26
Connacht	15
Donegal	4
Total	953

6 Genetic Evaluations

- ✚ Official Evaluations for the latest EBI run are now available on the website and the bull search. Please note that we are awaiting clarification of the values of two type traits from Interbull – Teat Placement and Rear Teat Placement. Domestic type figures will be used in place of the Interbull figures where available, but some bulls may be subject to change. We hope to have this resolved early next week. We would like to acknowledge the feedback of the industry representative who brought this to our attention.
- ✚ Work continues on the preparation of production, calving, longevity and fertility files for the Interbull test-run.

7 International Beef Evaluations

- ✚ Development on the beef performance, linear type and international evaluations continues.

8 World Congress on Genetics Applied to Livestock Production

Further to the report in last weeks update, Andrew Cromie has sent in his observations from the conference we attended in Brazil.

- ✚ **Multiple breed evaluations.** Everyone is starting to do this. We need to be leading the way. How to handle small breeds groups and breed combinations is one of the major obstacles. We need to re-examine our genetic evaluation models, in this regard. Handling heterosis & recombination as random effects in the model is a major option for consideration.
- ✚ **Genomic Selection.** Slow progress is this area. Validation of QTL's, including their affects in commercial populations is one of the major obstacles. This requires accurate phenotypic data. Again ICBF are well positioned in this regard. We must put in place “world best systems” for data recording if we are too fully realise the benefits of genomic selection in the future (future being 10-15 years).
- ✚ **Indexes.** Large move towards “restricted indexes”. Also, high level of interest in Peter Amers “market survey” approach to index. ICBF are well positioned to do some work in this area, especially through Teagasc Discussion Groups.
- ✚ **Calving performance.** Traits of growing interest because of their cost at farm level. Must look at new models for these traits, including separating heifer and cow performance (2 separate traits).
- ✚ **Fertility traits.** We need to consider additional predictors of CI & SURV, including insemination data, age at 1st calving and live-weight.
- ✚ **Indicator traits.** The new EDIY milk recording systems offer ICBF the opportunity to look at additional predictor traits, e.g., electro-conductivity as a predictor of mastitis, milk temperature as an indicator of illness.



9 HerdPlus - Breeding Information Service

Good progress is being made toward the launch of HerdPlus - the breeding information service that will be launched in the next few weeks.

The logo for this service has been finalised and an application for registration as a trademark lodged. It looks like this:



Please check out the ICBF website for further information and to see an example of the updated EBI report that will be one key part of the HerdPlus service.

10 Role of ICBF

I have spent a considerable amount of time this week preparing responses to a number of questions about the function and role of ICBF. These questions have been raised with DAF by individuals and organisations involved in the Irish cattle breeding industry.

As I have been preparing this material a couple of things struck me.

Firstly, the enormous amount of progress that has been made in Irish cattle breeding since the establishment of ICBF. A simple example appears as part of the database report in this week's update. This week we were able to clean-up identification issues for some 9,000 pedigree beef cattle, of all breeds (Charolais, Limousin, Saler, Aubrac, Blonde d'Aquitane), that originated in France. Further, we were able to add 8,000 ancestors, where there was no information, to the pedigree files for Herd Books covering these breeds in Ireland. The ICBF database coupled with our commitment to international evaluations and our good relationship with the French organisations enabled this work to be completed without major cost and for the benefit of all sectors of the beef breeding industry. That is, herd books, AI, pedigree breeders and beef farmers.

Secondly, that there are still people in our industry who appear not to comprehend the way science has provided tools for breeding more profitable beef cattle. While our approach is simple enough, being a combination of data collection, genetic evaluation and breeding scheme design, some of the details can appear complicated and the science rather daunting. We must continue to communicate with all sectors of our industry and ensure we provide clear, logical and scientifically sound explanations for the information we provide for use by farmers and breeders.

The role of ICBF in these ongoing discussions and debates is primarily to provide objective, credible and scientifically based information and advice to the breeding industry. To do this we must operate an excellent database service, provide the most accurate and relevant genetic evaluations and ensure the industry has breeding schemes that generate optimal rates of genetic progress.