



UPDATE – for period 18th– 25th January 2008

1 Important Dates

- ✦ **Thursday 31st January.** 10:30 to 13:00 at Comfort Inn, Portlaoise. **ICBF Board Meeting.**
- ✦ **Friday 8th February.** Publication of **updated dairy and beef genetic evaluations.**
- ✦ **Thursday 14th February.** 10:30 to 13:00 at Moorepark (conference room 3). **Dairy Genetic Evaluation Consultation meeting.**
- ✦ **19th to 21st February.** Cork International Airport Hotel. **International Cattle Breeders Round Table.**

2 Animal Welfare and Breeding Recording Scheme (AWBRS) – Suckler Cow Scheme

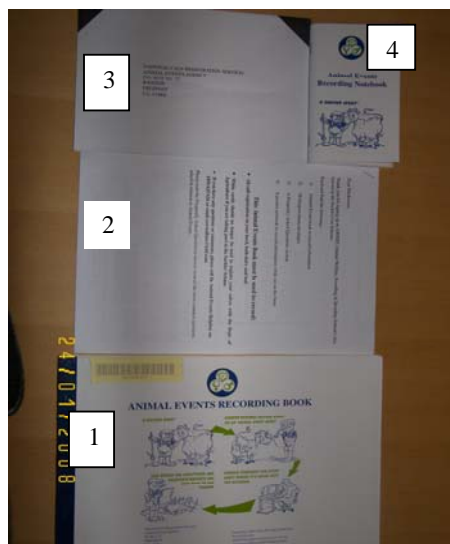
As is being well documented in the farming press, the newly launched initiative is proving very popular with beef farmers.

As of today, we have 23,855 herds applications received and processed. Around 18,500 of these will have been issued with new Animal Events books. The remaining herds either already have Animal Events books (e.g. they are a member of a breed society) or they are completing their registrations electronically.

As one would expect, the top 5 counties in terms of applications processed are in the West. See table below.

County	No of Applications
Galway	2772
Mayo	2078
Clare	1981
Roscommon	1543
Donegal	1329

The number of calf registrations being received through the scheme is still relatively small (as one would expect), given that farmers have 27 days (from date of birth) to register the calves. Early January calves are only just beginning to hit that deadline now. Of those calves that have been registered using the new books, 94% have a sire recorded, and 97% have a calving survey.



The pack going out to farmers includes the following (see picture on left)

1. Animal Events Recording Book
2. Answers to 'Frequently Asked Questions' (FAQ's)
3. Freepost return envelopes (for returning the Animal Events Sheets)
4. Animal Events notebook (for use around the farm)



The books are pre-packed (see above right), in order to ensure the shortest possible turnaround from the time ICBF gets the applicant details from DAFF to when the farmer gets his materials.

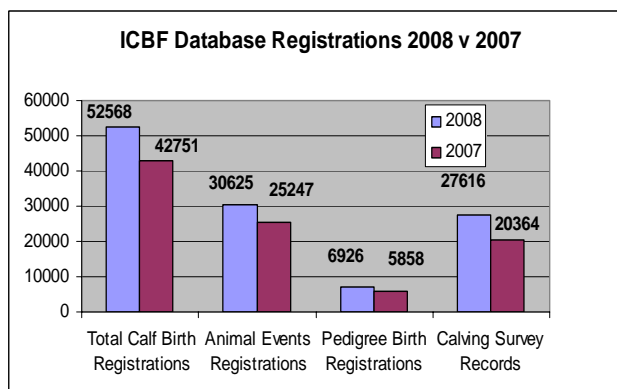
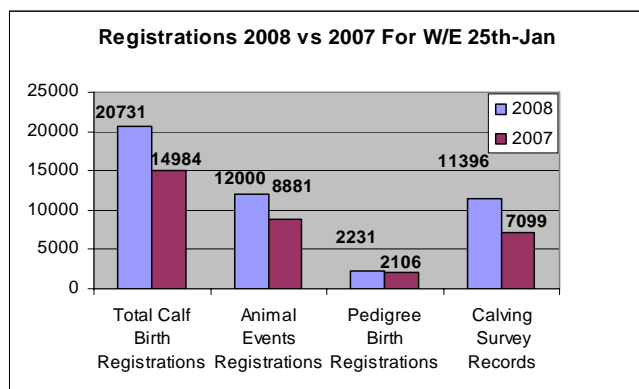
Typically, farmers are getting their materials within a couple of days of ICBF receiving notification from DAF. John McCarthy (pictured above) is coordinating the systems and logistical aspects of the scheme from the ICBF side.



3 Tully

- The Tully Advisory Committee met on Wednesday. The main focus of the meeting was on ensuring the best bulls in the current intake and future intakes enter the GENEIRLAND[®] progeny test. It was agreed that GENEIRLAND[®] covers all breeds and that immediate priority will be given to ensuring the availability of elite young bulls from the full range of beef breeds. Use of the 700 straws of semen from each test sire will depend on recruiting herds that are keen to use bulls from each breed. An industry wide effort is now needed to ensure the success of GENEIRLAND[®] beef as an integral part of beef breed improvement.
- The Linear scoring of the December intake will take place on the 31st Jan 2008 at Tully
- Weighing of the December intake took place this week on the 25th Jan 2008 and results will be sent out to breeders and breed societies before the 29th Jan 2008

4 Database Update



- 12,066 inseminations have been received so far in 2008 from AI handhelds, compared with 9,016 in 2007 for the same period.
- A significant amount of development work is still on-going in relation to the Suckler Scheme.
- The design and implementation of some updates to the GENEIRLAND[®] application continued this week in advance of the Spring AI season. Testing on this will begin next week.
- The generation of the Annual Milk Recording reports from the database has continued this week.
- Testing of the new loading solution for Animal Events Records continued this week and will continue for a number of weeks. This is a key piece of development work, given the additional volumes of data that will be received as part of the Suckler Scheme.
- Work is also continuing on the 'On-line Herdbook'. Good progress was made on finalising the design with the herdbooks this week.
- The new version of the AI handheld software for 2008 has been issued to a number of technicians on a trial basis this week, in advance of a full roll-out in a few weeks.

5 Genetic Evaluations

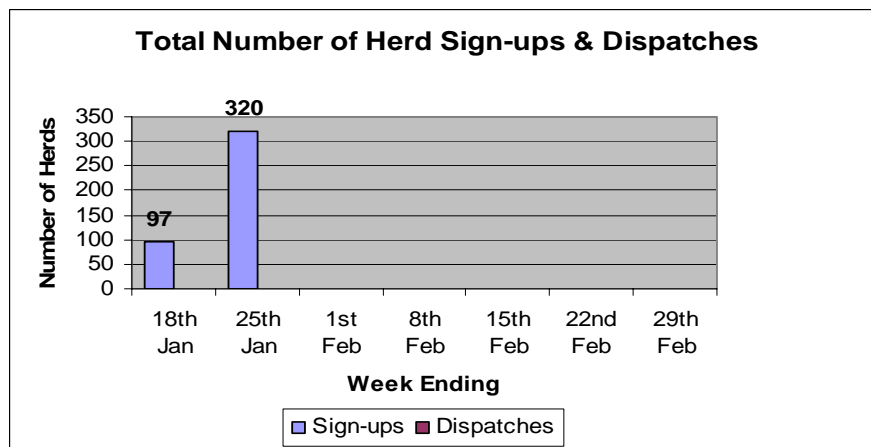
- All domestic evaluation files have been loaded to the database for the next routine release of proofs and the parental averaging step has commenced for all animals with no information in the evaluations. The last of the foreign conversions will be completed today and sent to the database for uploading. It is anticipated a provisional AI bull list for Dairy sires will be released early next week.



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Dairy – Spring 2008

- ✚ Herd sign-ups has been steady all week with 320 herds now joined, as per graph below.



- ✚ The final run of payments for recorded inseminations in Spring 2007 has been completed and cheques will be posted to these herds next week.
- ✚ The first group of 5 test bulls to be dispatched has been identified and will consist of the following bulls:

FIRST TEST GROUP

AI CODE	NAME	SIRE	MGSIRE	EBI	MILK SI	FERT SI
NBU	CNOCEEN BUNT RUUD	RUU	MBH	162.4	48.6	77.8
USJ	UACHTARLANN SJOERD	NHS	ESZ	88.9	71.4	15.7
LZD	LAURAGH DANE	UYC	SPW	128.0	64.2	53.2
KMA	KNOCKSOUNA MARS	MAU	LLO	115.5	45.0	57.5
VEW	MOATVIEW S BARTHO	LBO	NHS	95.5	54.2	40.8
Average				€118.0	€ 56.7	€ 49.0

Beef – Spring 2008

- ✚ Recruiting herds for the Spring 08 beef programme.
- ✚ Currently 53 herds who will take 1,106 straws.
- ✚ First bull (AIZ Limousin) reached his target of 700 straws this week

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BEEF

- ✚ Training of GROW Scorers on laptop and new web tools continued this week.
- ✚ Meeting held with Kilkenny Teagasc advisors re Euro-Star education and rollout in the county.

DAIRY

- ✚ HerdPlus® staff presented "Milk Recording/HerdPlus" update to 60 dairy farmers and advisors in Teagasc office in Nenagh on 23rd Jan - good discussion and feedback.
- ✚ First batches of Milk Recording Annual Reports sent this week to those farmers who submitted dry offs.



8 Irish Dairy Cattle Breeding

On Monday this week I was to give a presentation on the *Evolution of a Selection Index for Irish Dairy Breeding* at a dairy cattle breeding workshop in the UK. Unfortunately, flight disruptions prevented this. A copy of my presentation is available in the publications section of the ICBF website (www.icbf.com). The key message is that Irish dairy cattle breeding has changed dramatically in the last few years. Real progress is now been made in breeding more profitable cattle. Key to achieving the change is the database, animal events and a focus on farm profit in genetic evaluations.

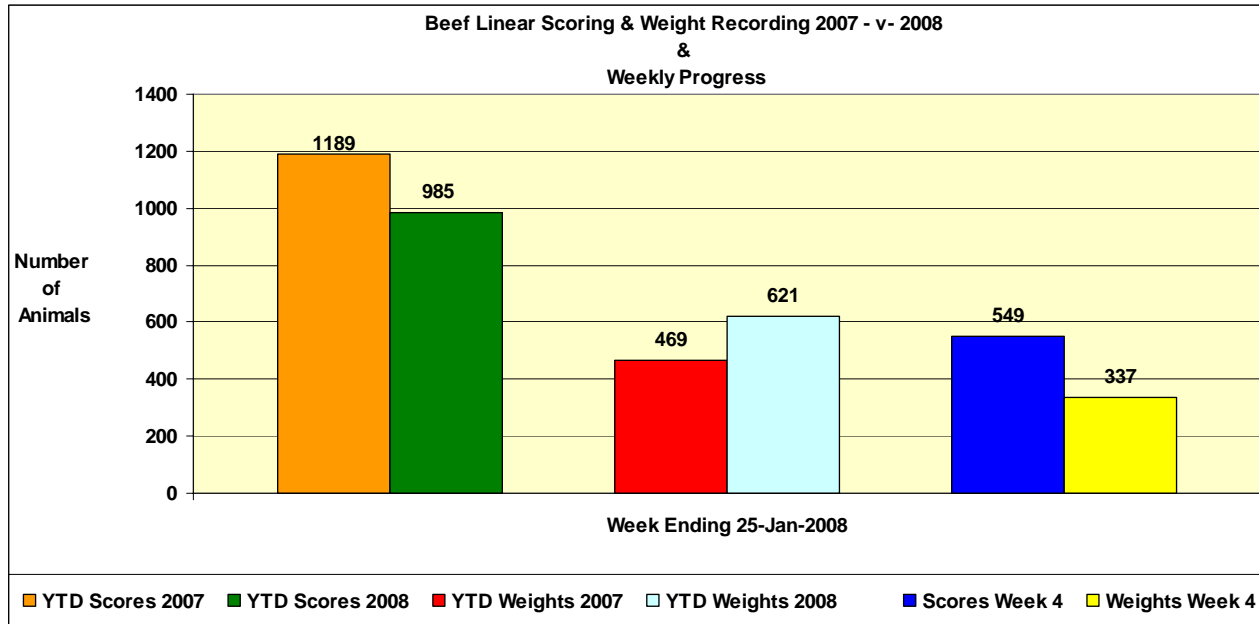
9 Milk Recording

National Milk Recording Statistics - Herds, Cows & EDIY 25/01/08						
Milk Recording Organisation	Total Herds Recorded YTD 25/01/08	No. EDIY Herds YTD 25/01/08	% Herds EDIY	Total No. Cows Recorded YTD 25/01/08	No. EDIY Cows YTD 25/01/08	% Cows EDIY
Progressive	692	90	13%	37,377	5,282	14%
Dairygold	107	5	5%	5,033	234	5%
Kerry	140	4	3%	6,503	325	5%
SWS	207	6	3%	7,746	472	6%
Tipperary	10	0	0%	344	0	0%
Arrabawn	8	0	0%	264	0	0%
Connacht	48	7	15%	1,742	286	16%
Donegal	0	0	0%	0	0	0%
Total	1,212	112	9%	59,009	6,599	11%

Recorded Cows by Milk Recording Organisation - Year on Year Comparison				
Milk Recording Organisation	YTD 2005 Cows Recorded 01/01/06 - 25/01/06	YTD 2006 Cows Recorded 01/01/07 - 25/01/07	YTD 2007 Cows Recorded 01/01/08 - 25/01/08	2008 vs 2007 Year on Year Difference (%)
Progressive	46,923	46,608	37,377	-24.7%
Dairygold	7,928	5,242	5,033	-4.2%
Kerry	4,825	6,875	6,503	-5.7%
SWS	7,963	9,320	7,746	-20.3%
Tipperary	759	282	344	18.0%
Arrabawn	427	442	264	-67.4%
Connacht	2,344	2,588	1,742	-48.6%
Donegal	0	0	0	0.0%
Total	71,169	71,357	59,009	-20.9%



10 GROW – Linear Scoring & Weight Recording



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