



UPDATE – for period 21st–27th July 2007

1 Important Dates

- ✦ **Tuesday 31st July.** First meeting of Tully Advisory Committee. 10:30 – 14:00 at Tully.
- ✦ **Thursday 2nd August, 11:00 – 13:00.** Dairy Genetic Evaluation Consultation meeting. Room 1, Moorepark Conference Centre.
- ✦ **Thursday 2nd August, 14:00 – 16:00.** Profit with AI Partnership Meeting. Room 1, Moorepark Conference Centre.
- ✦ **Friday 10th August, 1:00pm – 5:00pm.** Due to essential maintenance on the data links the ICBF network (IRIS, intranet and web) will be unavailable from 1.00pm – 5:00pm. If you have any issues regarding this please contact Niall Naughton at (023) 20217.
- ✦ **August 24th to 30th.** Interbull and EAAP Annual Meetings, UCD, Dublin.
- ✦ **Wednesday, August 29th.** EAAP Field Trip – Cattle Breeding in Ireland. Visit a beef & dairy farm.
- ✦ **Tuesday, September 11th.** EBI €100 Open Day. On farm of Pat & Noreen Cronin, Macroom, Co. Cork.
- ✦ **September 25th to 27th.** Ploughing Championships, Tullamore.

2 EBI €100 Awards

This annual event sponsored jointly by TEAGASC, ACC Bank, the Irish Farmers Journal and ICBF took place on Tuesday this week. Details of the winners were provided in the Irish Farmers Journal on Thursday. Congratulations to all the winners.

The competition is playing a very important role in promoting best practice in cattle breeding and management on Irish dairy farms. The EBI, its associated sub-indexes and individual trait information is a very powerful tool for Irish cattle breeding. The winners of the competition are farmers who have developed a good understanding of the EBI and demonstrated this by putting it to good use in the breeding of their own herd. They are amongst the best cattle breeders in Ireland and deserve the widespread recognition that goes with the awards. They also demonstrate that any farmer can follow their example and in time aspire to winning an award. As more and more farmers follow these examples the Irish dairy breeding industry will become stronger, more self sufficient and more profitable.

It was appropriate that Michael Ahern, the Minister for Innovation Policy, presented the awards. The EBI in its current form is the result of a sustained period of continuous innovation. Over a period of seven years we have moved from the RBI, which Moorepark research clearly demonstrated was leading to ever poorer fertility, to the EBI which has reversed the twenty year decline in the fertility of the daughters of the bulls used in AI. At the same time, the genetic merit for yield of milk solids of the bulls being used in AI is continuing to increase and both fat% and protein% are now increasing where they were previously static. This is a remarkable demonstration of the power of innovation, good science and excellent cattle breeding.

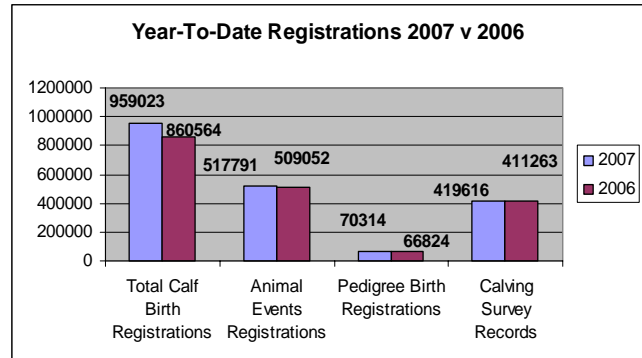
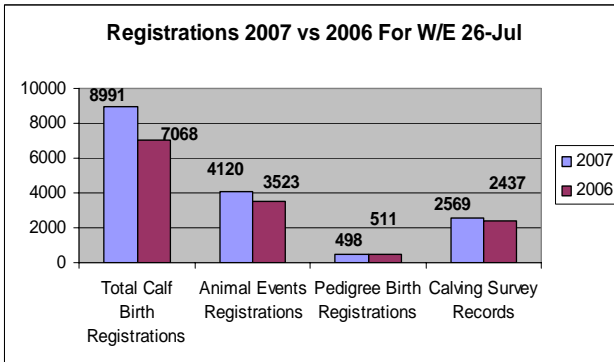
Mexican born geneticist Dr Nicolas Lopez-Villalobos, currently at Moorepark on sabbatical leave from Massey University in NZ, gave a summary of dairy breeding in New Zealand. This was followed by an excellent discussion about the future directions of cattle breeding in Ireland. It focused on the selection of bulls for GEN€ IRELAND® and the steps that need to be taken to ensure they are of the highest possible EBI. Farmers attending identified a number of criteria in AI bull selection that appeared to be unrelated to EBI which were slowing progress and made it very clear they wanted good science to be used to provide them with ever more profitable cows in the future.

A special thanks to the judges, George Ramsbottom, Jack Kennedy and Andrew Cromie. They had over 60 entrants to rank and in a short period visited all 25 on their short list. At the awards ceremony they explained how the winners were picked.

We look forward to a very informative open day on farm of the winners, Pat and Noreen Cronin, on Tuesday September 11th.



3 Database Update



- ✚ 319,036 inseminations have been received so far in 2007 on the AI handhelds, compared with 134,262 in 2006 for the same period.
- ✚ The majority of herdbooks are now using the new Web Front end as the main means of completing Herdbook administration activities. As any issues arise, these are being fed back to the development team.
- ✚ The work on redesigning the loading processes of files received from the Department of Agriculture is continuing. The CMMS and I&R 'white card' files are nearing completion. The Animal Events files have an extensive amount of work to be done, which will be completed over the coming months.
- ✚ Further work on HerdPlus® modules is on-going, focusing around the data recording aspects.
- ✚ Last Monday (July 23rd), a very constructive meeting of an extended Sire Advice working group was held. A revised prototype which incorporates feedback from the meeting will be issued to the members of the group today, in order to get further feedback.

4 Genetic Evaluations

Developments in Dairy Evaluations

- ✚ Evaluations for the next routine dairy run are continuing. All traits will be updated with new data for this run. Files will be submitted to Interbull on Tuesday next.

Developments in Beef Evaluations

- ✚ New beef evaluations are currently being run
- ✚ Investigation on various model/software improvements for beef traits is ongoing.

International Beef

- ✚ Descriptive statistics are being provided for each beef breed to describe the degree of connection between Ireland and other countries. These show where sires come from, how many progeny they have in Ireland and the percentage for which we have correct international identifications. Once the final format of the report is established it will be made available for all interested breeds. Current priority is for Simmental and Angus.
- ✚ Work on the carcass data collected from Pettits highlighted some issues around ancestry information. These have been solved and as a result extensive ancestry information, up to nine generations, is being used in the next phase which is the estimation of genetic parameters for the cut data. Sirloin is the first variable being used in this work.



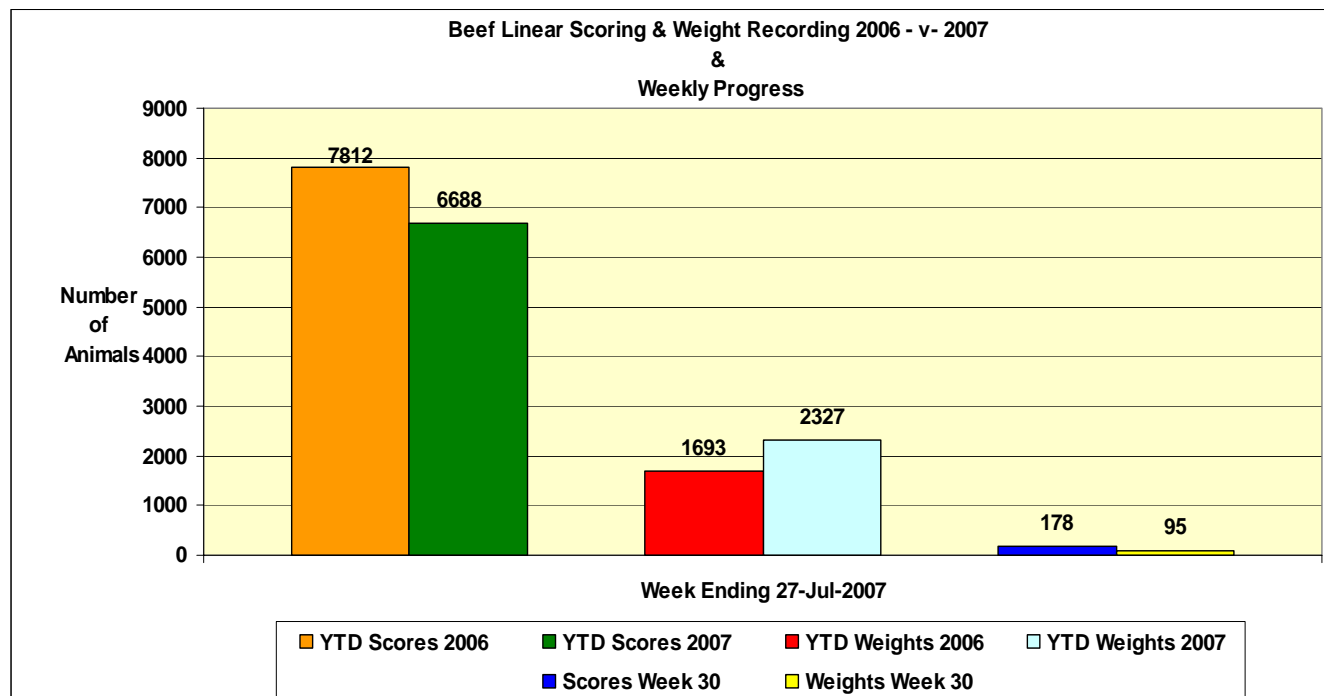
5 Tully

- ✚ The establishment of bio-security protocols for Tully isolation units and farms is continuing and will be presented at the Tully Advisory Committee meeting on Tuesday next (31st July).
- ✚ Maintenance of safety barriers is continuing.
- ✚ The sourcing of pre entry isolation units is continuing.

6 HerdPlus®

- ✚ Linear Scoring & Weighing - as part of the revamping of this service we are looking to redesign the report. Breed Associations have been invited to help with the design. Proposals received will be circulated once agreed.
- ✚ Beef HerdPlus Focus Group - first steps on service roll out were taken on Wed 25th when we invited 16 beef farmers to a meeting in Tullamore. The objective was to critique and give feedback on following reports;
 - Calving Report
 - Weanling Report
 - Carcass Report
 - Euro-Star Breeding Summary
- ✚ The farmers were put into 3 separate groups to review each report. Findings were summarised and collated. It proved to be a very useful exercise with plenty of good ideas and positive constructive feedback. Over the next few weeks ICBF development team will turn this feedback into new reports. Watch this space in August for views of these reports.

7 Beef Linear Scoring & Weight Recording





8 Milk Recording Processing this week

Milk Recording Organisation	YTD 2005 Cows Recorded 01/01/05 - 27/07/05	YTD 2006 Cows Recorded 01/01/06 - 27/07/06	YTD 2007 Cows Recorded 01/01/07 - 27/07/07	2007 vs 2006 Year on Year Difference (%)
Progressive	144,259	150,736	160,965	6.4%
Dairygold	94,891	101,275	108,798	6.9%
Kerry	65,926	68,831	70,210	2.0%
SWS	53,418	57,821	59,422	2.7%
Tipperary	9,178	11,618	12,055	3.6%
Arrabawn	6,967	10,808	11,645	7.2%
Connacht	7,122	8,620	9,595	10.2%
Donegal	3,297	4,959	3,628	-36.7%
Total	385,058	414,668	436,318	5.0%

Milk Recording Organisation	2007 Herds Recorded Week 20/07/07 - 27/07/07
Progressive	309
Dairygold	299
Kerry	176
SWS	142
Connacht	34
Arrabawn	22
Tipperary	17
Donegal	9
Total	1,008

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