



UPDATE – for period 21st – 27th June 2008

1 Important Dates

- 9th July 1.30-5.30pm** - Tentative: Beef Genetic Evaluation Consultation meeting with beef Herd Books
- 17th July, 10:30am** – ICBF Board Meeting, Comfort Inn Portlaoise.
- 9th to 11th October** – World Holstein Friesian Conference hosted by Ireland at Killarney & Millstreet.
For details see www.ihfa.ie.
- 11th and 12th October** – International Beef Expo being hosted in Ireland at Kilkenny Mart.

2 ICAR & INTERBULL

The Irish delegation to the conference last week in Niagara Falls, USA will meet in the next few weeks to review their impressions and identify opportunities for Irish cattle breeding.

Copies of the ICBF presentations to the conference are now in the publications section of the ICBF website (www.icbf.com). These publications document the progress that Irish cattle breeding has made over the last few years. Ireland is now seen as one of the leaders in cattle breeding world wide.

3 PRIORITIES

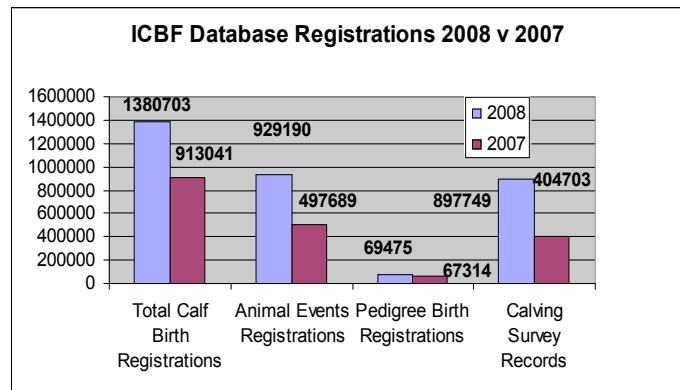
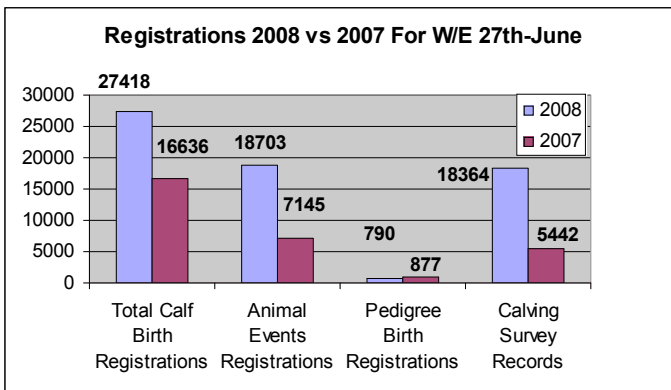
After a few weeks away from the office I have been reviewing ICBF's priorities for the next few months. Some of the key issues to be addressed include:

- **Expanding the use of HerdPlus** in dairy and beef herds. With some 4,000 herds now using the service there is lots of room for expansion. A recently completed survey of existing users revealed a high level of satisfaction with the service and has identified some priority areas where the service can be improved. A survey of non-users will also be conducted to help refine our strategies for recruiting new users.
- **Ensuring the suckler cow welfare scheme operates smoothly.** This is the first year of the scheme and it is a new experience for the thousands of herds that have enrolled. Our focus is on ensuring a rapid turnaround of accurate information and that farmers quickly learn how to record events and gain the benefits of the scheme.
- **Rolling out the on-line herd book** for Beef Breed Associations. This service is now in place for two major beef breeds (Limousin & Charolais) and will be progressively introduced for other beef breeds when they are ready.
- **Enhancing beef genetic evaluations.** The beef genetic evaluation system is being modified:
 - to make full use of foreign data,
 - include across breed evaluations for linear traits,
 - include updated economic values, and
 - expanded to include horned/polled and docility as traits in the relevant economic sub-indexes.
- **Redeveloping the bull search.** The web based bull search system is being enhanced to provide more information on genetic evaluations in a form that is easier to use. At the same time the processes for AI code issuing and the maintenance of “active” bulls will be enhanced.
- **Genomic selection.** Ireland's strategy for evaluating and exploiting this technology is being reviewed in the light of recent developments.
- **Gene Ireland.** The Gene Ireland program for 2009 is currently under review. Funding and the impact of genomic selection are the main issues being considered in the review.

As usual, our work priorities are ambitious and ground breaking. When achieved, they will deliver further improvements to Irish cattle breeding.



4 Database Update



- 412,020 inseminations have been received so far in 2008 on the AI handhelds, compared with 284,262 in 2007 for the same period.
- The work on reviewing the AI software for next season is underway. We will be communicating the plans with the AI handheld users over the coming weeks.
- Over 458,000 birth registrations from new Animal Events users have been received as part of the Suckler Scheme. Over 13,000 herds have received pre-weaning forms. At this point, only a very small number of post-weaning forms (i.e. the calves have been weaned) have been processed, which is as one would expect.
- A re-designed linear scoring and weight recording report is under development and is expected to be completed next week.
- A number of new developments have begun this week, including a revamp of the bull search output, further development of the Gene Ireland application, and the update of the milk recording data entry screens.
- The extract process for the next evaluation run will begin on the database next week.

5 Genetic Evaluations

Key issues from the ICAR/Interbull conference

- Lameness data from hoof trimmers.** Although we have already initiated a project in this area, some German results presented at the conference demonstrated the real benefits of recording lameness data from hoof trimmer via PDA based systems. The work has shown a strong genetic component to lameness, indicating real possibilities for progress on this trait for Irish farmers.
- Workability traits.** The conference has demonstrated the need for ICBF to take a more “farmer focused” approach to recording workability traits such as milking speed, temperament & farmer satisfaction. As a result we will be initiating a project to record this data through GENE IRELAND progeny test herds this summer.
- Gestation Length.** Work from the US has indicated that this trait has an intermediate optimum, with longer gestation length bulls having higher calving difficulty and shorter gestation length bulls having higher calf mortality. We need to quantify if similar trends are apparent based on Animal Events data and if so, reconsider how best to use gestation length data in our breeding programs.

Routine Evaluations

- Extractions for the next routine evaluations will commence next week. The cutoff for all data entering the database for this run is the 4th July.



Evaluation Research

- **International Evaluations.** Work is currently being undertaken on creating and correcting international IDs for Red Dairy cattle breeds. This work will hopefully allow us to participate in the forthcoming Interbull test-run in September for **Red Dairy Cattle breeds**. The number of bulls tested in other countries and Ireland needs to be at least 20 before we can participate. We will also investigate if we have the required number of Jerseys to participate in the **Jersey** evaluation.
- **Incorporation Foreign Beef evaluations.** A further test run of beef evaluation is being performed this week integrating French EBVs for all French breeds for weaning weight and maternal weaning weight (previous run had the Charolais, Limousine and Blonde Aquitaine breeds only). The results of this evaluation will be circulated to the breed societies prior to the meeting with the herd books on 9th July. A decision on implementation for the next routine beef evaluation will then be taken.

6 Tully

- The blood samples for the next intake to Tully will be finished on 27-06-08.
- Results are expected back from 30-06-08.
- Bulls will enter the pre entry isolation from the 07-07-08.

7 GENE Ireland



- The herds and progeny test daughters for linear scoring this year have now been identified and letters are being posted today to those involved.
- A total of 40 test sires are being targeted, which includes the 21 GENE IRELAND[®] bulls used in Spring 2005. Scoring to commence early next month.
- Analysis of Calving Survey results from this past spring identified 15% of progeny test calvings with no record. Contact was made with the herd owners concerned regarding this issue. In most cases we were able to obtain the scores as herd owners had recorded these on their own records.

8 Milk Recording

National Milk Recording Results by County - 10 day Period 17/06/08 to 27/06/08.

	No. Herds	No. Cows	Average Herd Size	Average 24hr Milk kg/Cow	Av. Fat %	Av. Protein %	Av. F + P kg	Av. SCC
CARLOW	14	917	66	25	3.86	3.4	1.82	323
CAVAN	39	2,337	60	25.5	3.75	3.34	1.81	267
CLARE	28	1,526	55	23.8	3.71	3.37	1.69	242
CORK STH	255	16,108	63	24.5	3.74	3.39	1.75	227
CORK NTH	266	18,605	70	25	3.71	3.37	1.77	278
DONEGAL	9	590	66	29.5	3.78	3.41	2.12	240
DUBLIN	6	345	58	28.7	3.49	3.39	1.97	258
GALWAY	18	1,594	89	21.6	4.11	3.4	1.62	405
KERRY	124	8,413	68	25.8	3.66	3.31	1.80	270
KILDARE	19	1,457	77	23.2	3.87	3.38	1.68	415
KILKENNY	59	4,254	72	22.3	3.77	3.4	1.60	220
LAOIS	29	2,051	71	21.7	4.03	3.47	1.63	196
LEITRIM	3	143	48	30.9	3.5	3.28	2.10	244
LIMERICK	126	7,971	63	25.8	3.58	3.32	1.78	297
LONGFORD	10	693	69	27.4	3.82	3.34	1.96	215
LOUTH	23	1,774	77	23.7	3.66	3.41	1.68	283
MAYO	14	955	68	26.6	3.37	3.35	1.79	405



MEATH	59	5,296	90	24.7	3.72	3.33	1.74	312
MONAGHAN	39	2,085	53	26.4	3.7	3.28	1.84	292
OFFALY	26	1,614	62	24.9	3.68	3.35	1.75	286
ROSCOMMON	4	371	93	18.1	3.91	3.38	1.32	552
SLIGO	68	5,082	75	23.4	3.94	3.47	1.73	329
TIPPERARY NTH	73	4,822	66	22.4	3.71	3.37	1.59	233
TIPPERARY STH	54	5,046	93	21.9	3.8	3.38	1.57	292
WATERFORD	17	1,379	81	25.6	4	3.35	1.88	312
WESTMEATH	60	4,210	70	23.8	3.75	3.4	1.70	243
WEXFORD	20	1,627	81	23	3.4	3.41	1.57	234
WICKLOW E	9	994	110	21	3.71	3.4	1.49	348
	<i>No. Herds</i>	<i>No. Cows</i>	<i>Av. herd Size</i>	<i>Av. 24hr Milk kg/Cow</i>	<i>A. Fat %</i>	<i>Av. Protein %</i>	<i>Av. F + P kg</i>	<i>Av. SCC</i>
National	1,471	102,259	72	24.5	3.74	3.37	1.74	294

National Milk Recording Averages by Province - 10 day Period 27/05/08 to 05/06/08.

Provincial	<i>No. Herds</i>	<i>No. Cows</i>	<i>Av. herd Size</i>	<i>Av. 24hr Milk kg/Cow</i>	<i>A. Fat %</i>	<i>Av. Protein %</i>	<i>Av. F + P kg</i>	<i>Av. SCC</i>
Munster	943	63,870	68	24.4	3.74	3.36	1.73	269
Leinster	334	25,232	76	24.1	3.73	3.39	1.72	278
Connacht	107	8,145	76	24.1	3.77	3.38	1.72	387
Ulster	87	5,012	58	27.1	3.74	3.34	1.92	266

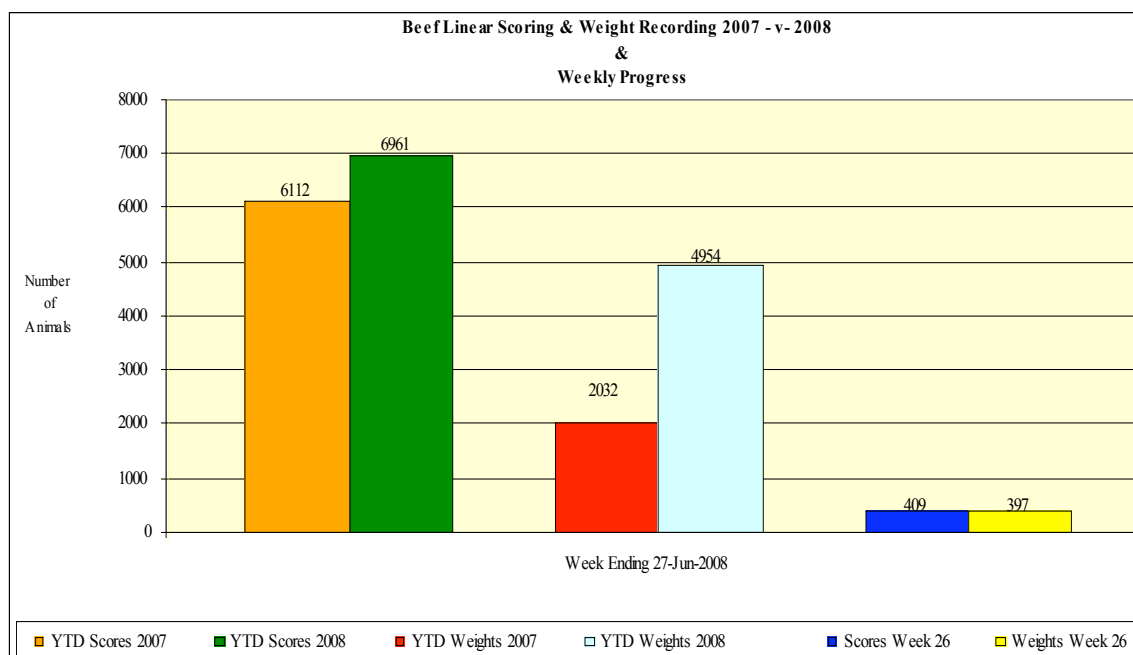
National Milk Recording Statistics - Herds, Cows & EDIY 27/06/08

Milk Recording Organisation	Total Herds Recorded YTD 27/06/08	No. EDIY Herds YTD 27/06/08	% Herds EDIY	Total No. Cows Recorded YTD 27/06/08	No. EDIY Cows YTD 27/06/08	% Cows EDIY
Progressive	2,195	867	39%	168,634	63,706	38%
Dairygold	1,573	522	33%	110,265	38,149	35%
Kerry	1,152	245	21%	75,343	15,368	20%
SWS	907	128	14%	58,357	8,310	14%
Tipperary	166	68	41%	11,870	5,135	43%
Arrabawn	164	136	83%	12,078	10,171	84%
Connacht	138	48	35%	8,290	2,741	33%
Donegal	38	38	100%	3,191	3,191	100%
Total	6,333	2,052	32%	448,028	146,771	33%



Recorded Cows by Milk Recording Organization - Year on Year Comparison				
Milk Recording Organisation	YTD 2006 Cows Recorded 01/01/06 - 27/06/06	YTD 2007 Cows Recorded 01/01/07 - 27/06/07	YTD 2008 Cows Recorded 01/01/08 - 27/06/08	2008 vs 2007 Year on Year Difference (%)
Progressive	146,286	155,889	168,634	7.6%
Dairygold	97,617	104,562	110,265	5.2%
Kerry	67,093	68,398	75,343	9.2%
SWS	55,675	57,909	58,357	0.8%
Tipperary	11,184	11,744	11,870	1.1%
Arrabawn	10,432	11,200	12,078	7.3%
Connacht	7,824	8,828	8,290	-6.5%
Donegal	4,758	3,230	3,191	-1.2%
Total	400,869	421,760	448,028	5.9%

9 GROW – Linear Scoring & Weight Recording



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