



**UPDATE – for period 23<sup>rd</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> February 2008**

**1 Important Dates**

- ✚ **5<sup>th</sup> March.** 10:30 – 15:00. Meeting with **Beef Breed Associations** to review beef breeding plans for 2008. Abbeyleix Manor Hotel.
- ✚ **6<sup>th</sup> March.** **ICBF Board meeting.** Portlaoise.

**2 Genomic Selection**

This was a topic of discussion at the recent International Cattle Breeders Round Table held in Cork.

ICBF is collaborating with TEAGASC and UCD to develop research programs to investigate and develop the application of genomic selection for Irish dairy and beef cattle breeding.

From the above the following general points have emerged:

- ✚ Genomic selection is a technology with great promise but is not yet proven.
- ✚ Five to ten years of intense research effort will be required to fully evaluate and exploit genomic selection. There is a possibility that at the end of this period it still may not be used widely.
- ✚ The ICBF Cattle Breeding database and ICBF’s genetic evaluation system are key resources in developing and proving the application of genomic selection for Irish cattle breeding.
- ✚ Genotyping using SNP arrays is rapidly reducing in price and increasing in precision. The latest version (50,000 SNP markers) costs some €200 per animal. The great challenge is to use this overwhelming volume of data to identify calves with the greatest genetic potential for traits affecting farm profitability.
- ✚ Some cattle breeding companies are attempting to gain an edge in the market for semen sales by keeping the DNA genotypes and their interpretation secret. This strategy depends on farmers being willing to purchase “*genomically selected*” bulls without the benefit of EBIs (or the equivalent in other countries).
- ✚ A large, and increasing, amount of the worldwide research effort in genomic selection is “open source”.

**3 Milk Recording**

National Milk Recording Statistics - Herds, Cows & EDIY 29/02/08						
Milk Recording Organisation	Total Herds Recorded YTD 29/02/08	No. EDIY Herds YTD 29/02/08	% Herds EDIY	Total No. Cows Recorded YTD 29/02/08	No. EDIY Cows YTD 29/02/08	% Cows EDIY
Progressive	1,198	225	19%	68,738	13,697	20%
Dairygold	332	38	11%	15,678	2,118	14%
Kerry	310	6	2%	13,960	375	3%
SWS	474	23	5%	18,711	1,378	7%
Tipperary	16	0	0%	560	0	0%
Arrabawn	22	12	55%	1,026	643	63%
Connacht	79	14	18%	3,523	625	18%
Donegal	4	4	100%	214	214	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,435</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>122,410</b>	<b>19,050</b>	<b>16%</b>



Recorded Cows by Milk Recording Organisation - Year on Year Comparison				
Milk Recording Organisation	YTD 2005 Cows Recorded 01/01/06 - 28/02/06	YTD 2006 Cows Recorded 01/01/07 - 28/02/07	YTD 2007 Cows Recorded 01/01/08 - 29/02/08	2008 vs 2007 Year on Year Difference (%)
Progressive	69,995	67,034	68,738	2.5%
Dairygold	16,149	14,230	15,678	9.2%
Kerry	12,684	13,765	13,960	1.4%
SWS	19,347	18,645	18,711	0.4%
Tipperary	940	641	560	-14.5%
Arrabawn	1,062	772	1,026	24.8%
Connacht	3,402	3,590	3,523	-1.9%
Donegal	326	75	214	65.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>123,905</b>	<b>118,752</b>	<b>122,410</b>	<b>3.0%</b>

## 4 Genetic Evaluations

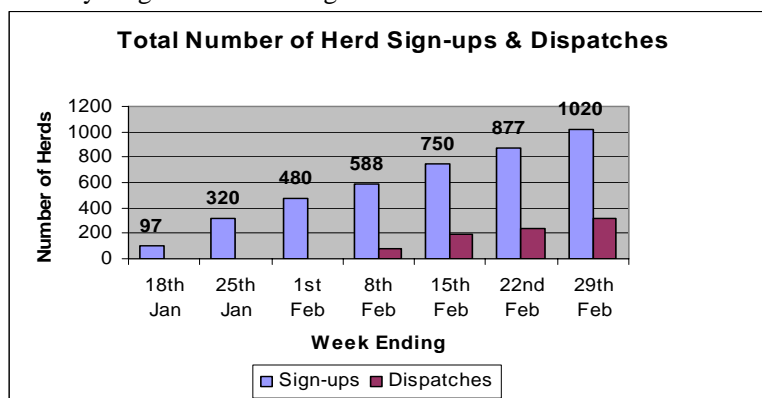
### Beef

- The bull search for Eurostar beef bulls is now operational on the website.
- Files containing extra information from the evaluations on individual traits (numbers of records, herd-year-season contemporary averages etc) are now on the website. The percentiles for each breed will also be available from this evening. These files can all be found in Genetic Evaluations - Beef Evaluation Results.
- ICBF staff gave 2 lectures to UCD 2<sup>nd</sup> year veterinary and 4<sup>th</sup> year Advanced Beef students on Wednesday in Belfield. The lectures covered material relating to the current status of genetic improvement in the Suckler Herd and the construction of the Eurostar indexes.

## 5 GENE Ireland

### Dairy Spring 2008

- We have now reached the 1000 mark for sign-ups, with herds taking a total of just under 41,000 doses. Enough doses to test 58 young bulls at this stage.





- ✚ The dispatch of the first group of 5 test bulls is now complete. We anticipate the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> test groups will be finished by the end of next week.
- ✚ We are also hoping to start dispatch of the first Friesian pack this coming week.
- ✚ Information relating to the Pure Friesians, Jerseys and Red Breeds are now available on the ICBF website.
- ✚ Work is currently being done on the Inbreeding Reports, with the aim to start posting these next week, to the herds that have been dispatched.

AI CODE	NAME	SIRE	MGS	EBI	MILK	FERT
KJI	KILLGOREY BENJAMIN	RUU	ENM	160.17	65.67	63.34
MYK	MEENASCORTHY KENWAY	BWZ	KBC	141.37	96	31.45
RHS*	RAHEENARRAN MEB SOCHAR	MEB	TIH	114.34	7.2	91.08
TXI	CARRACOUSH TISABRI	OJI	HMP	193.85	97.43	62.8
WSU	BOWENSCROSS SUPER	QUR	SPW	138.41	71.95	40.36
				<b>149.63</b>	<b>67.65</b>	<b>57.81</b>

\* 100% Friesian

### Beef Spring 08

- ✚ 156 herds signed up taking 3018 straws, 2755 of which have been sent to farmers.
- ✚ The bulls fully tested so far are CF61,CF85, AIZ, CVV,FL21 and AIZ.
- ✚ Breeds currently available are CH,LM,SI,AA,HE and SA with more to be added as they become available.
- ✚ The current bull panel is:
  - CH - MVO and CF71
  - LM - FL24 and MBV
  - SI - IS4 and DRU
  - HE - BXD
  - SA - ARZ
  - AA - AMZ
- ✚ To learn more Phone 045 521573

## 6 Tully

- ✚ A meeting of the Tully veterinary committee will take place on the 6-3-08 in Tully.
- ✚ The list of potential bulls for the next intake to Tully will be sent to breed societies from the 3-3-08.
- ✚ A bio security audit of Tully will be carried out on the 6-3-08.

## 7 HerdPlus®

### GROW

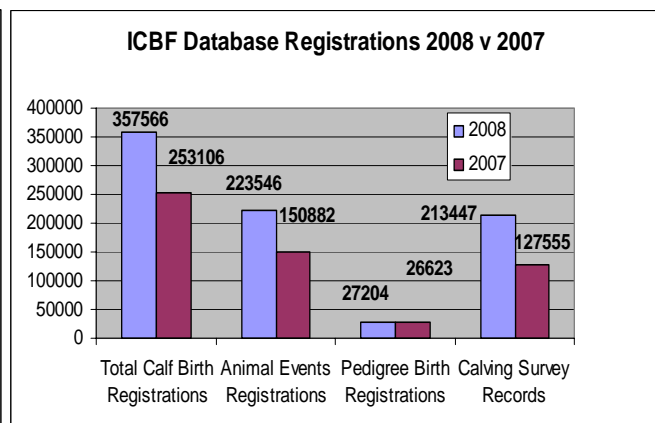
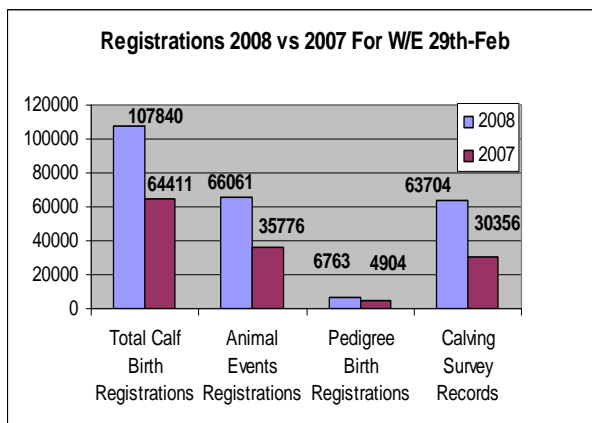
- ✚ The Wexford Beef Discussion group which is co-ordinated by Michael Fitzgerald (Teagasc Wexford) met on Thursday the 28<sup>th</sup> February. Pat Donnellan & Ross Evans were invited to attend to speak about Euro – Stars, Herdplus, GROW & G-€N-€Ireland.
- ✚ The meeting took place on the farm of Patricia Furlong ‘Ballyharron House’, Crossabeg, Co. Wexford. Patricia uses 100% Beef AI on the herd.



- ✚ The Herd was scored & weighed before and will be picked up in the GROW Commercial herd project again this year. It is also an ideal candidate herd for the GENIreland progeny test scheme.
- ✚ The meeting covered:
  - An explanation of the Euro – Star Indices & Herdplus reports.
  - An analysis of a selection of cows in the herd to see how reflective their evaluations are of their own performance. Indeed when a selection of the Suckler Cows in Patricia’s herd that have performed well were analysed it was interesting to note that they were sired by Beef AI Sires that had 4 or 5 stars for the ‘Milk & Fertility’ Sub Index.
  - A discussion on the GROW & GENIreland programmes.
  - Attached are some pictures from the event.



## 8 Database Update

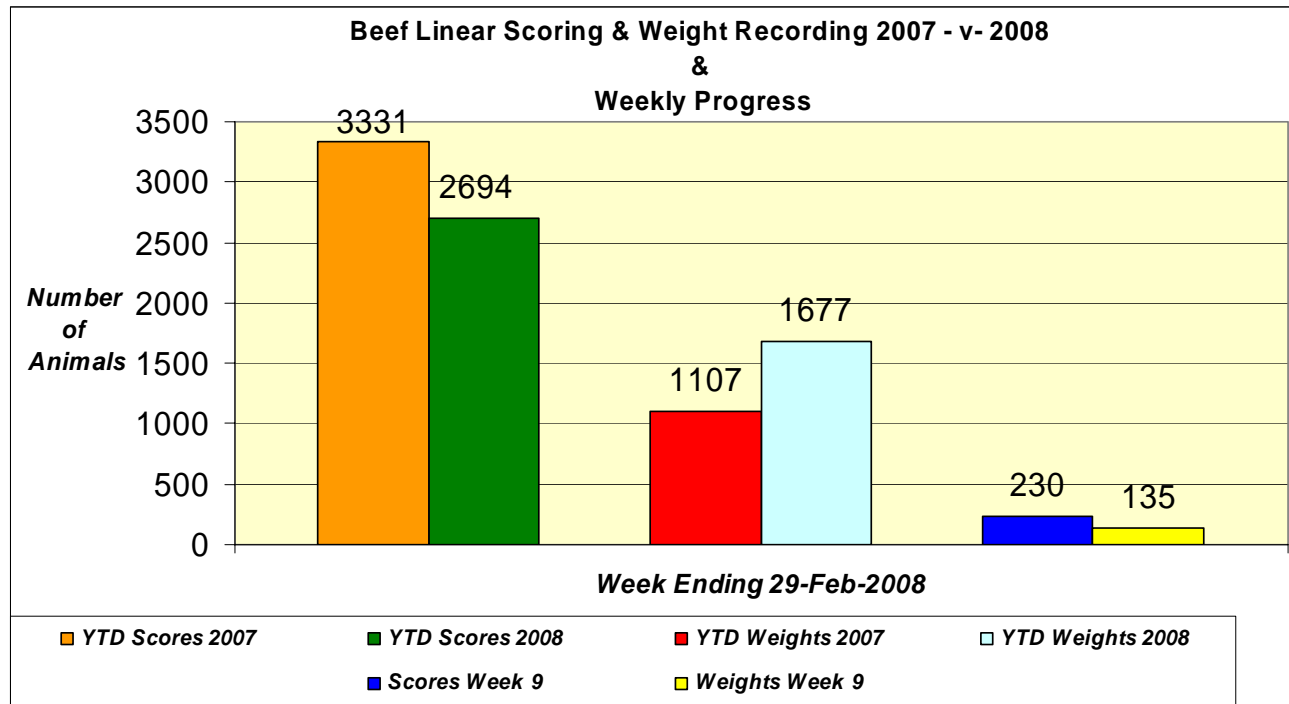


- ✚ 26,848 inseminations have been received so far in 2008, compared with 19,697 in 2007 for the same period.
- ✚ ICBF have received 31,800 suckler applicant details from DAF, which have been processed. Around 57,000 birth registrations from new Animal Events users have been received.



- ✦ Sire recording and Calving survey recording on Animal Events continues to be of good quality.
- ✦ Testing of the new loading solution for Animal Events Records is entering its final phase. This is expected to go live on March 10<sup>th</sup>, allowing us to comfortably deal with any increased volumes of data due to the Suckler Scheme.
- ✦ The first of the AI Handhelds went live this week with the 2008 software, with Dovea leading the way. The switch-over has been smooth.
- ✦ The testing of the 2008 Sire Advice is almost complete, and should be released at the end of next week. A test version will be issued to those participating in the Sire Advice working group over the coming days.

## 9 GROW – Linear Scoring & Weight Recording





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