



UPDATE – for period 25th– 31st October 2008

1 Important Dates

- ✚ **Thursday 13th November** – ICBF Cattle Breeding Conference, Cork Mart Rathcormac. This major event is being sponsored by the FBD Trust. **Please note the change of date** (previously on 6th November).
- ✚ **Thursday 27th November** – ICBF Audit & Finance Sub Committee meeting, Horse & Jockey
- ✚ **Thursday 4th December** – ICBF Board meeting, The Comfort Inn, Portlaoise
- ✚ **Thursday 4th December** – Interim Sheep Board meeting, The Comfort Inn, Portlaoise.

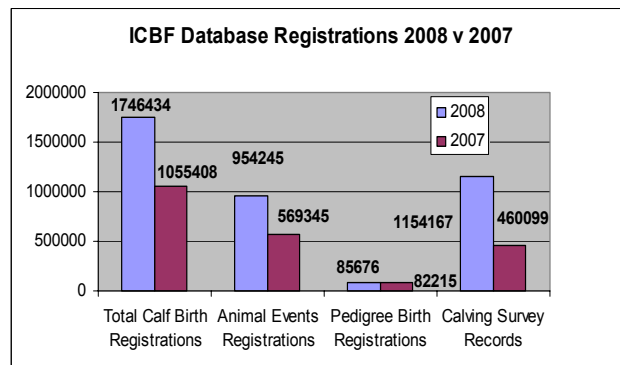
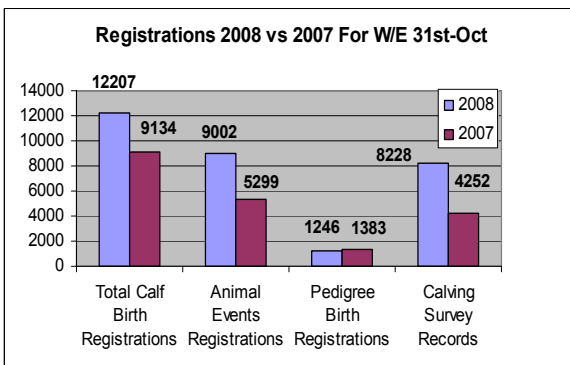


2 Sheep

- ✚ A review of progress on the strategy has seen developments in a number of areas:
- ✚ Animal Identification and Performance Recording – Protocols are being developed for animal identification and trait recording for Sheep Ireland Performance Recording flocks.
- ✚ Sheep Database – The performance data has been successfully loaded onto the new database.
- ✚ 2009 lambing – Invitation letters to existing performance recording breeders will be sent out next week to “kick off” the 2009 season.
- ✚ Plans are being made to hold a number of information and training sessions for performance recording breeders.
- ✚ Tim Byrne has arrived back from New Zealand, and will be around until mid December to develop protocols, attend training sessions, and work with MALP flocks.



3 Database



- ✚ 507,249 inseminations have been received so far in 2008, compared with 356,431 in 2007 for the same period.
- ✚ The work on revamping the AI software for next season is continuing. Testing has continued, but has been slower than we would have liked. Munster AI will be the first company to go live on the new software.
- ✚ The number of calves with a meal feeding introduction has increased to 542,000, with just over 170,000 of these having been weaned.
- ✚ We ran into a number of problems this week with the upgrade of the web-infrastructure, so the process will be completed next week.
- ✚ The revamp of the Milk Recording system continues. The ‘back-end’ work is now almost completed, and the focus will switch to the design of the screens for inputting and data correction.



- ✦ This week, work has continued on migrating the Sheep Performance system to the ICBF/Sheep Ireland database.

4 Dermot Cahill Retirement

Today a number of us will be joining with the Dovea team to recognise Dermot's many years of valuable contributions to Irish cattle breeding. Dermot championed the Friesian as being particularly well suited to Irish dairy farming with a good combination of production, fertility, survival and beef traits. Many farmers share this view and the EBI, which properly accounts for all these traits, has vindicated Dermot's leadership.

Irish cattle breeding has benefitted greatly from Dermot's work. His strongly held beliefs are shared openly, and modified on the basis of good scientific evidence. Over the ten years that I have known Dermot it has been his basic integrity, often flavoured by his rich sence of humor, that I have come to value most. I can count on Dermot to express his own independent point of view, not matter what the issue.

We wish Dermot a long and happy retirement and look forward to his ongoing contribution as a member of the ICBF Board.

5 Technology Challenge & Opportunities

One of the ways ICBF provides value to Irish cattle farmers is through exploiting recent developments in technology. This week we placed an order for computer equipment to ensure a. we are able to deliver indexes incorporating genomic information and b. our website can support the growth in its use.

Computer technology continues to advance rapidly and the challenge we face is to ensure we fully capture the benefits of the technology to achieve our mission. To do this we rely heavily on the expertise and knowledge of our own team. They understand our mission and the technology. We also rely on our equipment and software suppliers. They are constantly improving their products to incorporate the latest developments. Much of this work goes on in the background and what we expect to see, and do see, is a reliable service that is continuously improving.

The opportunities provided by genomic technology are large. We expect the rate of genetic gain in dairy breeding to increase by 50% with significant reductions in cost. However, to deliver this technology we must push out the boundaries of current knowledge and understanding. This applies to all of us, scientists, advisers, breeders and farmers. The challenge we all face is to keep an open mind, to question where we do not understand and to be prepared to change.

6 GENE IRELAND®



Dairy

- ✦ There are 80 herds now signed up to the Autumn 2008 program, taking a total of 3,260 straws.

Beef

- ✦ There are 156 herds now signed up to the Autumn 2008 program, taking a total of 2,816 straws

7 Milk Recording

Recorded Cows by Milk Recording Organisation - Year on Year Comparison			
Milk Recording Organisation	YTD 2007 Cows Recorded 01/01/07 - 31/10/07	YTD 2008 Cows Recorded 01/01/08 - 31/10/08	2008 vs 2007 Year on Year Difference (%)



Progressive	167,504	182,435	8.2%
Dairygold	111,442	124,566	10.5%
Kerry	71,753	79,126	9.3%
SWS	60,708	62,331	2.6%
Tipperary	12,292	13,032	5.7%
Arrabawn	12,058	12,929	6.7%
Connacht	10,085	10,357	2.6%
Donegal	3,901	4,792	18.6%
Total	449,743	489,568	8.1%

National Milk Recording Statistics - Herds, Cows & EDIY 31/10/08

Milk Recording Organisation	Total Herds Recorded YTD 31/10/08	No. EDIY Herds YTD 31/10/08	% Herds EDIY	Total No. Cows Recorded YTD 31/10/08	No. EDIY Cows YTD 31/10/08	% Cows EDIY
Progressive	2,238	929	42%	182,435	73,315	40%
Dairygold	1,690	639	38%	124,566	48,926	39%
Kerry	1,159	248	21%	79,126	16,308	21%
SWS	915	134	15%	62,331	9,727	16%
Tipperary	171	72	42%	13,032	5,775	75%
Arrabawn	166	138	83%	12,929	10,926	85%
Connacht	159	69	43%	10,357	4,356	42%
Donegal	49	49	100%	4,792	4,792	100%
Total	6,547	2,278	35%	489,568	174,125	36%

National Milk Recording Averages by Province - 10 day Period 21/10/08 to 31/10/08

Provincial	No. Herds Recorded	No. Cows Recorded	Average Herd Size	Average 24hr Milk kg/Cow	Average Fat %	Average Protein %	Average F + P kg	Average SCC
Munster	1173	76,611	65	14.8	4.40	3.80	1.22	324
Leinster	337	23,934	71	16.6	4.18	3.69	1.31	323
Connacht	57	2,833	50	18.3	4.32	3.65	1.46	305
Ulster	73	4,353	60	16.1	4.68	3.65	1.34	318

National Milk Recording Results by County - 10 day Period 21/10/08 to 31/10/08

	No. Herds Recorded	No. Cows Recorded	Average Herd Size	Average 24hr Milk kg/Cow	Average Fat %	Average Protein %	Average F + P kg	Average SCC
CARLOW	13	805	62	16.6	4.52	3.78	1.38	268
CAVAN	31	1,774	57	17.2	4.51	3.69	1.41	316
CLARE	43	2,122	49	14.2	4.40	3.78	1.16	364
CORK STH	298	18,061	61	15.9	4.46	3.82	1.32	300
CORK NTH	328	22,070	67	15.3	4.48	3.77	1.26	336



DONEGAL	20	1,543	77	13.4	4.50	3.77	1.11	322
DUBLIN	8	574	72	17.8	4.17	3.57	1.38	377
GALWAY	22	1,312	60	16.0	4.37	3.70	1.29	336
KERRY	150	8,920	59	16.1	4.28	3.61	1.27	336
KILDARE	20	1,275	64	18.7	4.40	3.59	1.49	403
KILKENNY	66	4,337	66	14.0	4.45	3.85	1.16	312
LAOIS	40	2,479	62	14.0	4.82	3.90	1.22	279
LEITRIM	3	131	44	16.8	3.98	3.57	1.27	276
LIMERICK	162	10,306	64	15.0	4.30	3.66	1.19	343
LONGFORD	4	330	83	16.7	4.49	3.68	1.36	328
LOUTH	22	1,636	74	17.6	4.20	3.60	1.37	238
MAYO	20	848	42	19.9	3.60	3.64	1.44	279
MEATH	54	4,473	83	18.5	4.20	3.58	1.44	335
MONAGHAN	22	1,036	47	17.8	4.16	3.50	1.36	315
OFFALY	27	1,766	65	14.5	4.40	3.80	1.19	385
ROSCOMMON	1	46	46	20.6	3.80	3.69	1.54	371
SLIGO	11	496	45	18.4	4.04	3.66	1.42	264
TIPPERARY NTH	52	3,818	73	14.1	4.79	3.91	1.23	328
TIPPERARY STH	85	6,918	81	13.2	4.49	3.83	1.10	268
WATERFORD	55	4,396	80	14.9	4.85	4.03	1.32	320
WESTMEATH	17	1,534	90	10.9	5.15	3.84	0.98	267
WEXFORD	47	3,339	71	16.4	4.33	3.76	1.33	301
WICKLOW E	14	885	63	17.7	4.04	3.64	1.36	323
WICKLOW W	5	501	100	22.4	4.44	3.43	1.76	384
	<i>No. Herds Recorded</i>	<i>No. Cows Recorded</i>	<i>Average Herd Size</i>	<i>Average 24hr Milk kg/Cow</i>	<i>Average Fat %</i>	<i>Average Protein %</i>	<i>Average F + P kg</i>	<i>Average SCC</i>
National	1,640	107,731	66	16.4	4.37	3.71	1.32	320

8 Genetic Evaluations

- ✚ Work continues on the next routine evaluations. At this most of the evaluations have been completed but work continues on the calving and beef evaluations which are expected to be completed early next week.
- ✚ Uploading of completed proofs is under way.
- ✚ Ross Evans gave a talk to Agricultural Science students in UCD on Thursday on beef breeding objectives.
- ✚ Work continues on research into farmer satisfaction ratings and on breed definitions.
- ✚ We are still awaiting foreign information on beef linear scores for inclusion in the across breed beef linear evaluations.

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