UPDATE – for period 29th August to 3rd September 2004

1 Beef Technical Meeting

At Wednesday's meeting the following were considered:

- ICBF's draft strategic plan was explained and subject to two clarifications was referred to Herd Books for discussion. Meanwhile, ICBF is formulating its budgets for 2005 and longer term plans based on the current draft.
- Some 103,000 beef calvings (beef sire and suckler dam) recorded so far in 2004. Of these, 56% were via animal events. This is a major achievement for the first year of beef herd book recording on the database and demonstrates very clearly the benefits of the integrated database.
- To ensure inseminations are well recorded prior to calving in 2005 all pedigree beef breeders will be given a report of inseminations recorded for their cows in 2004. The report will contain both technician and DIY inseminations already recorded. The form will have space for unrecorded inseminations to be reported for entry to the database in advance of calving. This is expected to help reduce sire errors in 2005 and provide better information on fertility in beef herds.
- An electronic system is being built for loading ancestry and identification information on imported animals of all breeds. The development is taking place in conjunction with cattle breeding database organisations in countries that Ireland imports from and exports to.
- Linear scoring and weight recording is underway again for beef animals following the completion of a review of operations. The current arrangements, the result of a great deal of good will by all parties, will be in place for the rest of 2004. A further review will be conducted in January 2005.
- The new calving survey evaluations were discussed and will become official at the next run (October 2004).
- The beef genetic evaluation research project will be reporting progress at a full day meeting scheduled for Wednesday 13th October in Port Laois. At the meeting the research team will be reporting on progress with the development of evaluations for beef production traits and the development of overall economic indexes for beef cattle.

2 Consultation with AI Companies and Dairy Herd Books

- 26 people representing AI organizations, Irish Holstein Friesian Assn, DAF and ICBF, attended Wednesday's meeting.
- The new calving survey evaluations were also discussed at this meeting.
- The main business of the meeting was a proposal dealing with the reliability of proven AI dairy sires. The issue of relatively large numbers of proven bulls with low reliability on ICBF's Active Bull list was raised by a number of groups following the release of ICBF's Active Bull list in March 2004. It was a topic of discussion amongst farmers on the EBI farm walks held in the spring of 2004. A discussion paper was circulated on 30th June and on the basis of feedback and discussions with DAF a revised proposal with two main elements was put to the meeting.
- The first element was a recommendation to DAF that the reliability of EBI should be used in place of the reliability for milk traits with a lower limit of 50% for a bull to be approved for widespread usage in Ireland. After considerable discussion a show-of-hands indicated that most of the people attending the meeting were opposed to this change. The concern amongst those AI organizations dependent on imported semen was that since the EBI includes a significant component for calving interval and survival it is harder for bulls proven in a number of other countries to reach 50% reliability on EBI. However, it needs to be pointed out that where the "foreign" testing scheme includes fertility and survival traits similar to those used in Ireland and the bulls have a reasonable number of daughters (100 or so) there will be no difficulty in meeting the 50% reliability criteria proposed.

- The second element was a proposal to increase the minimum reliability criteria for ICBF's Active Bull list from its current 50% (by no means a high figure) by 2% points per year for the next five years starting in 2005. On a show-of-hands some organizations were opposed for similar reasons to the opposition to the first element.
- **ICBF is focused on the genetic improvement of the national herd. It has established the EBI as the best available measure of the sort of dairy cattle desired by Irish dairy farmers. Essential and significant elements of the EBI are the traits - calving interval and survival. Further, most other dairy countries have also established indexes similar to the EBI that place a similar amount or more emphasis on fertility and survival traits. Irish research and farmer experience, as measured by ICBF's genetic evaluations in Ireland, are in complete agreement – fertility and survival have a genetic component that can be exploited to reduce the cost of these problems on Irish dairy farms.**
- **It is clear from the views expressed at this consultation meeting that a significant number of people and organizations involved in the breeding of Holstein-Friesian cattle in Ireland have not yet accepted that fertility and survival under Irish conditions are of fundamental importance to Irish dairy farmers. The best way forward is undoubtedly to work together to establish a progeny testing scheme in Ireland that guarantees Irish farmers will in the future have the choice of high reliability (>70% on EBI) proven bulls with good production, good fertility and good survival.**

3 Herd Health Initiative - Database Reports and Herd Health

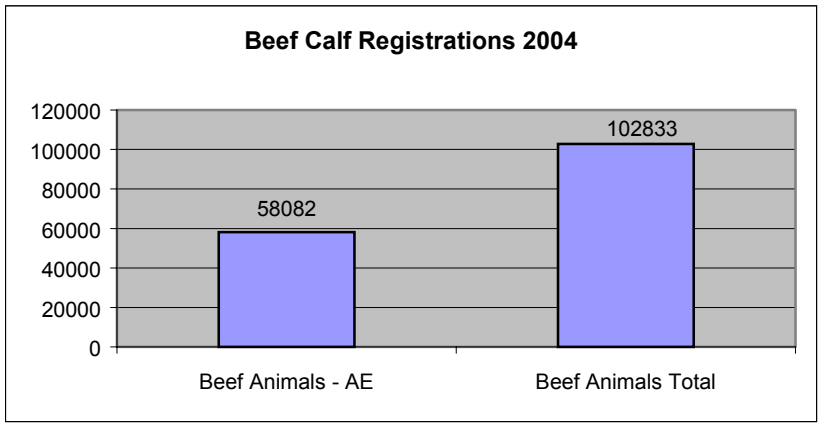
- This week saw the launch of an initiative by Veterinary Ireland into Herd Health Planning. Veterinarians, ICBF, DAF, the Centre for Veterinary Epidemiology & Risk Analysis at UCD and UCD's Faculty of Veterinary Medicine are all co-operating in this important initiative.
- ICBF's involvement is primarily through the use of the Cattle Breeding Database to provide farmers with information they can share with their veterinarian and other advisers to both diagnose and monitor a range of animal health issues in their herd. The database and its associated low cost computing power saves the farmer and his veterinarian time and money in compiling the information needed to support good animal health management decisions.
- Attached are examples of some of the reports that ICBF has developed specifically for this purpose. Please note that these examples contain real data from two different herds and are still being refined.
- It is important to note that the herd owner will at all times control who has access to the database reports for their herd.
- On next Wednesday and Thursday a workshop is being held in Moorepark and on a dairy farm to further consider the best way of ensuring the herd health initiative delivers the maximum possible benefit to farmers. A number of ICBF staff and Board members will be participating with the other partners.

4 Database

Database Update

- 294 new attempted pedigree registrations received during the past week.
- 25 new herds added to the database
- A meeting with the Irish Shorthorn Society was held in order to iron-out some issues around the linking of herd book numbers to tags. A strategy for accelerating progress has been agreed.
- The tracking of transfers of herd book animals was highlighted as a priority at the beef technical meeting this week and this will be worked on next week.

- The graph indicates the numbers of beef calves (beef dam and beef sire) registered in ICBF herds in 2004. The challenge is to increase the number of calves being registered through animals events (currently 56% for beef calves) so that more useful data (sire information, calving surveys, etc) can be obtained on the ~40k animals registered in 2004 using white cards. All 102,833 animals were registered on farms to which an Animal Events book had been provided.



- Work in the installation of the NRS Sire Mating advisory program is continuing - it is hoped that a working version will be available for review by the end of September.
- Extracts of data supporting the new beef indices were provided to the Beef Index project team.
- The development of an initial suite of reports, along with the website development which will support Herd Health Initiatives has been largely completed. A sample of these reports is included in this update.
- Meetings will all relevant AI organisations have now been held regarding the design of an AI handheld application. The feedback has been incorporated into the design that is being finalised.

5 Milk Recording

No. Tests Processed in the last 7 days = 1073.

Progressive	411
Dairygold	239
SWS	187
Kerry	172
Tipperary	41
Connacht Gold	16
Arrabawn	7

No. Herdowners processed in IRIS since Jan 1st 2004 = 6182.

Progressive	2,161
Dairygold	1,584
Kerry	1,090
SWS	963
Tipperary	146
Connacht Gold	120
Arrabawn	118

Industry "Test Turnaround" performance for August 2004.

No Tests:	4,785
No Cows:	261,871
Average No. Days:	6.12 days

- 6.12 days is an increase of 0.29 days in turnaround time compared with last month. The July figure was 5.83 days.
- The Organisation with the best turnaround time in August was SWS with an average of 4.31 days.

- Each Organisation gets a "Herd Test Turnaround Analysis" Report via the ICBF intranet – gives breakdown where time is lost each month. We are working with them to isolate and correct the source of the deterioration last month.

6 Genetic Evaluations

- Most of this week was spent in uploading beef performance data into IRIS, and further testing of extraction scripts. Both data and pedigree files have now been generated for the development work on Beef production evaluations as well as an across breed evaluation of calving interval and survival.
- Following some problems identified during the week, the INTERBULL longevity test evaluation was repeated this week and new data was transferred to all participating countries.
- A total of 16 countries/populations participated in the evaluation including 2 populations from Denmark and of course Ireland. Correlations and conversion equations were developed for direct longevity. That is, no use of indicator traits.
- The correlation between Ireland and the different populations based on the results of the INTERBULL test and from our conversion work of the past are presented in the table below.
- These results show that:
  - Participating in the INTERBULL evaluations will allow us to get longevity proofs from many more countries than at present.
  - Genetic correlation between Ireland and most other countries was higher than correlations from our previous conversions. France and Holland are exceptions. The reason is under investigation.
- These proofs will be reviewed and compared to converted proofs. INTERBULL policy is that results from test evaluations are not publishable.
- INTERBULL is planning an official run in November 2004. Ireland plans to participate in this run. A decision has not yet been taken on how these results will be incorporated into the ICBF evaluations for survival.

Country	INTERBULL	Conversion*
Australia	0.48	na
Canada	0.73	na
Switzerland	0.45	na
Germany	0.71	0.42
Denmark	0.56	0.45
Danish Red	0.68	na
Spain	0.38	na
Finland	0.49	na
France	0.44	0.69
Great Britain	0.68	0.56
Isreal	0.3	na
Italy	0.49	0.2
The Netherlands	0.51	0.68
Sweden	0.73	na
United States of America	0.65	0.54
New Zealand	na	0.52
* For the same data and model as used in test run		

Brian Wickham Chief Executive Irish Cattle Breeding Federation Soc. Ltd, Highfield House, Shinagh, Bandon, Co. Cork, Ireland, Phone office +353 (0)23 20222, mobile +353 (0)86 826 9911 Fax office +353 (0)23 20229 E-Mail bwickham@icbf.com ICBF Web site www.icbf.com Assistant: Mary Madden.

Fourth Breeding Report for Spring 2004
Final Pregnancy Rate

Herd Owner:

Herd Number:

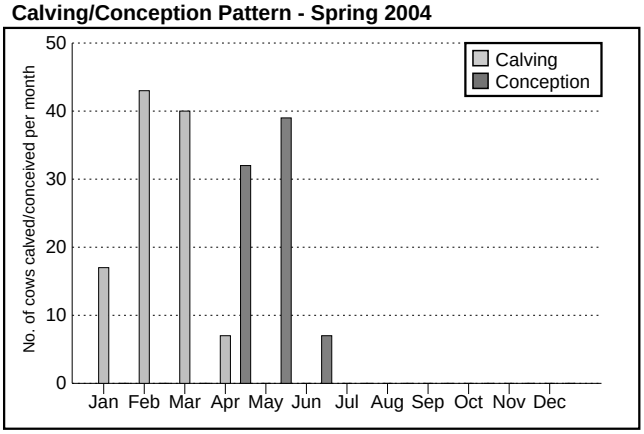
Date : **03-SEP-2004**

1. Summary Data

Report is a summary for all cows with a calving record during the last 280 days (*from end calving date*). Maiden heifers are not included. For these indices, animals are considered pregnant if there is a record (*in Animal Events*) of calving within the last 280 days, and of subsequent insemination and pregnancy diagnosis.

Start calving date	**21-Jan-2004**
End calving date	**26-Apr-2004**
Median calving date	**26-Feb-2004**
- Total cows calved in period	**108**
- Total cows calved outside period	
- Calving interval (days)	**405**
- % cows calved by 6 weeks	**83**
Mating start date	**20-Apr-2004**
Length breeding season	**83**
- Cows calved and served	**106**
- Number of serves	**177**
- Cows calved, served and pregnant	**78**
Herd F + P Yield (305 days)	**456 kg**

Calving/Conception Pattern - Spring 2004



2. Problem Solving - Pregnancy Rate Indices

		Cows	Pregnant	%	Btm 15%	Achievable	Top 15%
					30%		*85%*
1. Pregnancy Rate - Overall	**Herd**	**106**	**78**	**74%**			
% cows pregnant (as a proportion of all cows calved and submitted for AI)	*Herd National Average*			75%			
	Herds with similar F+P yield			78%			
		Cows	**Pregnant**	**%**	*30%*		*60%*
2. Pregnancy Rate (1st service)	**Herd**	**106**	**53**	**50%**			
% cows pregnant to 1st service (as a proportionof all cows calved and submitted for AI)	*Herd National Average*			55%			
	Herds with similar F+P yield			52%			
		Cows	**Pregnant**	**%**	*30%*		*85%*
3. Pregnancy Rate (6 week)	**Herd**	**106**	**73**	**69%**			
% cows pregnant within 6 weeks of mating start date (as a proportion of all cows calved and submitted for AI)	*Herd National Average*			68%			
	Herds with similar F+P yield			65%			
				No.	*2.8*		*1.4*
4. Serves/conception	**Herd**			**2.3**			
Average no. of serves per confirmed pregnancy	*Herd National Average*			2.2			
	Herds with similar F+P yield			2.5			

Explanatory Notes.

Performance statistics for your herd are expressed relative to other herds in milk recording (minimum 30 calvings and 10 cows served during period). For example, the pregnancy rate for your herd is currently 74%. This compares with 75%for the average of all herds and 85% for the top 15% of all herds in milk recording.

Fourth Breeding Report for Spring 2004
Final Pregnancy Rate

Herd Owner:
Herd Number:
Date : 03-SEP-2004

3. Problem Solving - Pregnancy rate & Serves/Conc. by age, BCS, calving history and days calved

Report is based on cows with a calving record in the last 280 days (from end calving date). Pregnancy data is based on cows with a calving record in the last 280 days (from end calving date) and subsequent insemination and pregnancy diagnosis data (recorded via Animal Events). Pregnancy data for maiden heifers is not included on the report.

	Preg. rate (overall)			Preg. rate (1st Serve)			Preg. rate (6 weeks)			Serves/conception		
	Cows	Preg.	%	Cows	Preg.	%	Cows	Preg.	%	Serves	Preg.	No.
Overall	**106**	**78**	**74%**	**106**	**53**	**50%**	**106**	**73**	**69%**	**177**	**78**	**2.3**
Lactation Number												
1	28	23	82%	28	11	39%	28	21	75%	48	23	2.1
2	18	15	83%	18	10	56%	18	14	78%	28	15	1.9
3	16	9	56%	16	9	56%	16	9	56%	28	9	3.1
4	18	10	56%	18	9	50%	18	10	56%	31	10	3.1
>4	26	21	81%	26	14	54%	26	19	73%	42	21	2.0
BCS at Mating												
High	0	0	0%	0	0	0%	0	0	0%		0	0.0
Med	0	0	0%	0	0	0%	0	0	0%		0	0.0
Low	0	0	0%	0	0	0%	0	0	0%		0	0.0
Calving History												
Difficult	3	3	100%	3	3	100%	3	3	100%	3	3	1.0
Not Difficult	103	75	73%	103	50	49%	103	70	68%	174	75	0.0
Days calved												
<42 days	26	17	65%	26	9	35%	26	14	54%	45	17	0.0
42-84 days	71	55	77%	71	39	55%	71	53	75%	118	55	0.0
>84 days	7	6	86%	7	5	71%	7	86	86%	11	6	1.0

Keys

BCS at Mating
Body Condition Score at time of Mating
High = >2.75
Med = 2.25 - 2.75
Low = <2.25

Calving History
Calving history in most recent lactation
Difficult calving = Scored 3 or 4 for calving performance
Not difficult = Scored 1or 2 from calving performance

Days Calved
Number of days between last calving date and mating start date
< 42 days = less than 42 days between last calving date and mating start date
42-84 days = between 42 and 84 days between last calving date and mating start date
> 84 days = more than 84 days between last calving date and mating start date

Fourth Breeding Report for Spring 2004
Final Pregnancy Rate

Herd Owner:

Herd Number:

Date : **03-SEP-2004**

4. Action Lists

The cows on this report are cows with calving/fertility related problems on your farm. You should decide on a course of action for each of these cows. Do not return this sheet to the Animal Events Office.

Animals Not Yet Submitted for AI

Cow ID	Parity	Calving Date / Days in Milk	Problems					Findings	Treatments
			Twin	Dead Calf	Difficult Calving	Retained Placenta	Cystic Ovaries		
63 VJB817793	9	30-Apr-2004 124	■	■					
647 IE151531030647	1	01-Apr-2004 153		■					
65 DKL748395	8	26-Feb-2004 188							
650 IE151531010620	1	22-Feb-2004 192							
675 IE151531070675	1	10-Mar-2004 175							
738 DKL623975	8	24-Feb-2004 190	■	■					
782 ZZZ837056	7	27-Mar-2004 158		■					
78W IEQRPR0078W	6	16-Feb-2004 198							
840 DJL272285	6	21-Apr-2004 133							
881 DJL272239	6	12-Mar-2004 173		■	■				
90H IEQRPR0090H	6	03-Mar-2004 182							
96 VDB793775	11	25-Feb-2004 189							
 DKL750946	21	23-Feb-2004 191							
 WSA674426	18	13-Mar-2004 172		■					

Animals Not Yet Pregnant (after 3 or more services)

Cow ID	Parity	Calving Date / Days in Milk	Problems					Serves	Findings	Treatments
			Twin	Dead Calf	Difficult Calving	Retained Placenta	Cystic Ovaries			
575 IE151531060575	1	29-Feb-2004 185						3		

Animals for Pregnancy Diagnosis

Herd Owner:
Herd Number:
Date : **03-SEP-2004**

Report is a summary of all cows to be pregnancy diagnosed. These animals have all been inseminated more than 4 weeks ago but not yet diagnosed pregnant. *For each animal, please indicate whether she was confirmed in-calf at the time of the test by circling the Yes/No box in the column provided. Please provide additional information (i.e. weeks in-calf) if this is available at the time of the test, and return the report using the free-post envelopes provided.*

FB No.	Tag Number	Parity	Calving Date	Calving History					Serves	Date of Last Service	Confirmed in calf ? Please circle		Weeks in calf ? Approx.
				Twin	Dead Calf	Difficult Calving	Retained Placenta	Cystic Ovaries					
035	IEKRHD0170V	4	10-Feb-2004						3	02-Jul-2004	Yes	No	
039	IEKRHD0158K	5	26-Apr-2004						1	13-Jun-2004	Yes	No	
044	IEKRHD0175K	5	31-Mar-2004						1	24-Jun-2004	Yes	No	
049	IEKRHD0185G	4	03-Mar-2004						1	25-May-2004	Yes	No	
051	IEKRHD0165N	5	02-Mar-2004						3	23-Jun-2004	Yes	No	
052	IEKRHD0161W	4	04-Feb-2004						3	20-Jun-2004	Yes	No	
102	IE371169830293	4	03-Mar-2004						1	14-Jun-2004	Yes	No	
103	IE371169890299	4	26-Mar-2004						3	07-Jul-2004	Yes	No	
104	IE371169840303	4	03-Mar-2004						3	09-Jun-2004	Yes	No	
108	IE371169830277	3	27-Feb-2004						2	23-Jun-2004	Yes	No	
120	IE371169810283	4	31-Mar-2004						2	04-Jul-2004	Yes	No	
123	IE371169830310	4	03-Mar-2004						4	01-Jul-2004	Yes	No	
200	IE371169870413	3	05-Mar-2004						3	07-Jul-2004	Yes	No	
216	IE371169890464	3	08-Mar-2004						4	01-Jul-2004	Yes	No	
219	IE371169810465	3	27-Feb-2004						3	22-Jun-2004	Yes	No	
221	IE371169820466	3	20-Apr-2004						2	17-Jun-2004	Yes	No	
229	IE371169830491	3	17-Apr-2004						2	20-Jun-2004	Yes	No	
231	IE371169830500	3	28-Mar-2004						3	08-Jun-2004	Yes	No	
262	YJA164456	13	17-Feb-2004						2	22-May-2004	Yes	No	
333	IE371169820573	2	19-Feb-2004						2	13-Jun-2004	Yes	No	
357	IE371169810622	2	28-Feb-2004						3	12-Jul-2004	Yes	No	
359	IE191210210133	2	24-Mar-2004						1	12-Jun-2004	Yes	No	
435	IE371169830748	1	09-Mar-2004						3	15-Jun-2004	Yes	No	
436	IE371169840757	1	24-Mar-2004						1	03-May-2004	Yes	No	
445	IE371169880760	1	23-Feb-2004						3	22-Jun-2004	Yes	No	
446	IE371169850741	1	10-Apr-2004						3	10-Jul-2004	Yes	No	
453	IE371169820672	1	26-Apr-2004						2	26-Jun-2004	Yes	No	
515	YMA905684	10	26-Jan-2004						4	13-Jun-2004	Yes	No	

Fourth Breeding Report for Spring 2004
Week 12 : Submission Rate

Herd Owner: Example
Herd Number:
Date : 03-SEP-2004

3. Problem Solving - Pregnancy rate & Serves/Conc. by age, BCS, calving history and days calved

Report is based on cows with a calving record in the last 280 days (from end calving date). Pregnancy data is based on cows with a calving record in the last 280 days (from end calving date) and subsequent insemination and pregnancy diagnosis data (recorded via Animal Events). Pregnancy data for maiden heifers is not included on the report.

	21 day submission rate			14 day submission rate			7 day submission rate		
	Cows	Preg.	%	Cows	Preg.	%	Cows	Preg.	%
Overall	**91**		86	**63**		59	**106**		33
Lactation Number									
1	26	22	85	19	16	84	11	9	82
2	16	15	94	10	10	100	6	6	100
3	12	8	67	8	5	63	2	1	50
4	15	9	60	11	7	64	8	4	50
>4	22	19	86	15	14	93	8	8	100
BCS at Mating									
High	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Med	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Low	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Calving History									
Difficult	3	3	100	2	2	100	0	0	0
Not Difficult	88	70	80	61	50	82	35	28	80
Days calved									
<42 days	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
42-84 days	10	5	50	7	3	43	3	1	33
>84 days	81	68	84	56	49	88	32	27	84

Keys

BCS at Mating
Body Condition Score at time of Mating
High = >2.75
Med = 2.25 - 2.75
Low = <2.25

Calving History
Calving history in most recent lactation
Difficult calving = Scored 3 or 4 for calving performance
Not difficult = Scored 1or 2 from calving performance

Days Calved
Number of days between last calving date and mating start date
< 42 days = less than 42 days between last calving date and mating start date
42-84 days = between 42 and 84 days between last calving date and mating start date
> 84 days = more than 84 days between last calving date and mating start date