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## UPDATE – FOR PERIOD 31<sup>ST</sup> MAY - 4<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2004

### 1. Beef Breeding Plan Consultations

- In last weeks update, there was an omission in the attendees at the above meeting on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> May. The Irish Normande Cattle Society was also represented at this meeting.

### 2. Summary Herd Calving Reports - Spring 2004 – Farmer Response

- **Calving Interval Reports - Feed-back forms.**

Feed-back forms have now been received from some 1331 herd-owners. Of these 85% have indicated the reports as either useful or very useful.

- **Soilds Output vs. Concentrate Input Reports**

As a result of the very positive feed-back on the Calving Interval reports, we have been considering other reports that may be of interest to farmers. One such report is the "Solids Output vs. Concentrate Input Report". A random group of 50 farmers were selected and a sample report and cover letter sent to them (Monday this week). To-date 12 farmers have returned information on concentrate input/cow/month for the January to June period. Further information on concentrate input will be added to the database via mobile phone. On the basis of the very positive response (25% to-date), sample reports will be sent to all milk recording herd-owners. Having information on herd concentrate input will greatly enhance the value of milk recording (input vs output relationships) as well as providing useful data for genetic evaluations and for future research projects.

### 3. ICAR & INTERBULL Meetings

- ICBF attended a very successful ICAR/ INTERBULL conference in Tunisia this week. Presentations from Brian Wickham and Al Grogan were very well received. Key areas of interest that came out of the conference included:

- **Herd input recording**

The value of a detailed on farm recordings systems that go beyond mere recording of production was highlighted. An example was given from a prototype project where ALL farm inputs and outputs were recorded. Such records were shown to have great potential and essential in production systems in the future which will be required to be more environment friendly and have consideration for animal welfare in order to sustain our world.

- **International beef evaluations**

Support was given for an ICBF initiated proposal for an International beef evaluation setup that will function like the current INTERBULL. It was agreed that a technical committee would be set up to facilitate assistance from the INTERBULL in this regard.

- **Decline in Cow Fertility**

The worldwide decline in dairy cow fertility was widely acknowledged by all. At a special workshop dedicated to this topic, it was shown that poor cow fertility is a problem in all production systems and environments and for all breeds. Most INTERBULL countries including Canada and the USA now have national evaluation systems for this trait and INTERBULL is currently undertaking a study that will facilitate the introduction of an International evaluation of the trait. It was agreed that genetic evaluation and selection for this trait will at least prevent further decline in fertility.

- **Overall type evaluations.**

The INTERBULL is strongly considering the stoppage of evaluation of 'Overall Type' composite trait. This is because of the difference between countries in the definition, measurement and use of this trait. It was decided that it would be better for each country to derive the trait from a combination of



individual proofs for a choice of traits evaluated by the INTERBULL. A final decision on this is expected from the INTERBULL technical committee.

- **International evaluation for longevity.**

It was decided that a further test run be conducted in August 2004 to allow many countries prepare and join in the first official International evaluation that will be held in November 2004. Many countries did not participate in the previous test run because of development issues. However results from this test run were encouraging and accepted by all.

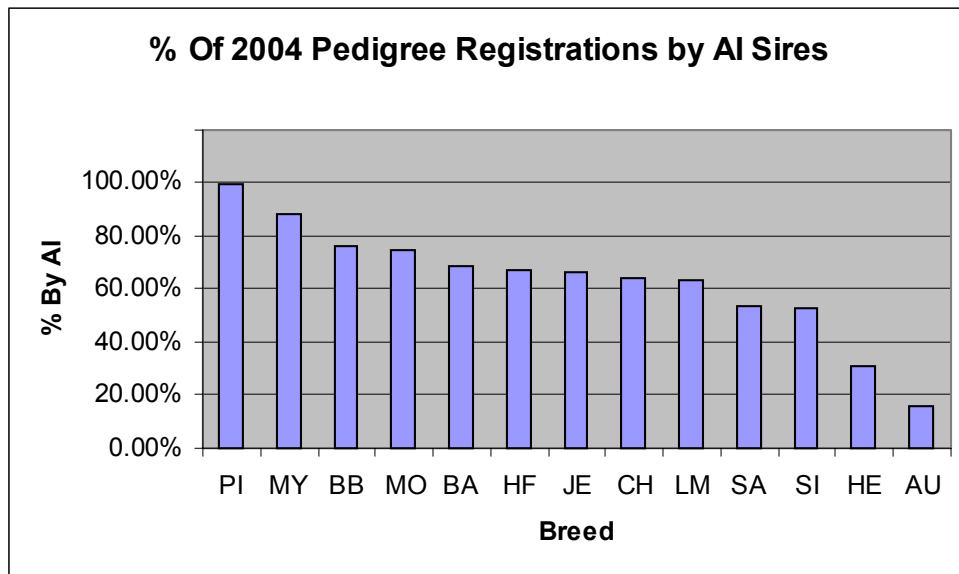
- A meeting of the ICAR Beef Working Group was held in conjunction with the ICAR/INTERBULL meetings. Al Grogan represents ICBF and Ireland on this group. This groups primary task is to addresses beef related issues in relation to recording and evaluation of concern to ICAR and its members.
- The Working Group meeting reviewed the latest biennial survey of beef recording activities worldwide, which has now been published.
- The first international set of beef recording guidelines edited by Al Grogan was submitted to and approved by the ICAR board. The working group was commended for the content of this first edition. This document will continue to undergo review and a latest version will be submitted for approved at each subsequent meeting of ICAR.
- The Beef Working Group is also providing a strong impetus to the efforts to move the international evaluation initiative for beef traits forward. This initiative has been promoted by ICBF, MLC and Institut D'Elevage with a number of other countries wishing to join as soon as possible.
- The international evaluation initiative received good support at the meeting. In response to this support INTERBULL has agreed to the creation of a task force, chaired by Hans Schild, former chairman of the Beef Working Group, to move the project forward.
- INTERBULL itself has agreed to widen its representation to reflect beef interests. INTERBULL has also agreed to co-ordinate the maintenance of the very important international reference file of internationally traded beef breeding animals and semen which is most important for this international beef evaluation project.
- Al Grogan presented a paper on the Irish experience with the application of PDA technology to beef recording in Ireland. There was very good interest in the Irish experience of applying of this technology to field recording and some interesting discussion followed. Few countries appear to as yet, have the integrated infrastructure to implement such a development as in Ireland. There was an interesting contrast with the recently upgraded French system, which was considered cumbersome with excessive intermediaries in the data chain from farm to central database. It was clear that unless an IT application could be developed quickly, new technology would make the application somewhat outdated and less efficient.

#### 4. Database Project

##### Newly Live Herdbooks

- 885 new attempted pedigree registrations received during the past week
- 25 New Beef Herds added to the database
- BLUP reports and Pedigree Certificates were issued to the Charolais, Limousin, and Simmental Societies

The following graph indicates by herdbook, the percentage of calves registered by AI sires:



**Other database activities**

- Over 1600 sire error forms have been returned from the recent distribution and these are now being updated to the database.
- Work on the Linear Scoring application and the mechanism by which herds are allocated to scorers is continuing, in an attempt to further streamline the uploading and downloading of herds from the database
- 6000 letters were distributed to farmers requesting feed input data, and the results will be keyed to the database as they are returned

**5. Milk Recording**

**Database Project - Milk Recording**

- **No. Herdowners Milk Recorded in IRIS since Jan 01st 2004 = 5,729**

Progressive	1,753
Dairygold	1,558
Kerry	1,083
SWS	958
Nenagh	115
Tipperary	143
Connacht Gold	119

- **Weekly Update - No. herd tests processed in last 7 days = 1,122**

Progressive	344
Dairygold	267
Kerry	245
SWS	187
Tipperary	30
Connacht Gold	28
Nenagh	21

- **Industry Test Results Turnaround Time, May 2004:**

<b>No. tests:</b>	4,381
<b>No. Animals:</b>	236,434
<b>Average No days:</b>	6.85 days



6.85 days is an improvement of approx 1/2 day reduction in turnaround time versus April figure which was 7.29 days - however we have more work to get to under 5 days. Each Organisation has sent their report and breakdown of where the time is lost.

The Organisation with the best turnaround time this month is **SWS** who tested 834 herds in the period with an average of **4.70 days turnaround** from recording date to print date.

• **Conference - DIY Electronic Milk Recording - Next Wednesday 09th**

As stated last week, next Wed 09<sup>th</sup> June is the day for our Milk Recording conference on Electronic DIY. Venue is Teagasc, Moorepark Fermoy. In the morning session we will be hearing how countries like Denmark and New Zealand operate the DIY Electronic system (both have over 80% of their Dairy herds Milk Recording!). In the afternoon we will review Irish DIY Electronic project and discuss operational model for Ireland. We are looking forward to a good discussion.

## 6. Tully

- Cleaning and disinfection will commence today in preparation for the next intake and will be finished by Friday the 11-06-04.
- Results are due back on Tuesday 8-06-04 for the next intake to Tully.
- The December 2003 intake of bulls were moved to the field on Thursday 3-06-04, they have settled very well and are getting 8 kg of meal per day. Performance test results will be available on Friday 11-06-04.



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