



## **UPDATE for period 2<sup>nd</sup> July – 8<sup>th</sup> July 2005**

### **1 Important Dates**

- **Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> September.** Beef & Dairy Genetic Evaluation Consultation meetings in Abbeyleix Manor Hotel.
- **Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> September.** ICBF Board Meeting.
- **Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup>, Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> & Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> September.** Ploughing Championships, Middleton, Co. Cork.

### **2 Beef Genetic Evaluation Consultation Meeting**

The consultation meeting on Thursday was attended by some 65 people representing all sectors and of the beef industry. In the last eight weeks, since the meeting on May 4<sup>th</sup> a great deal of progress has been made. The key outcomes of the meeting included:

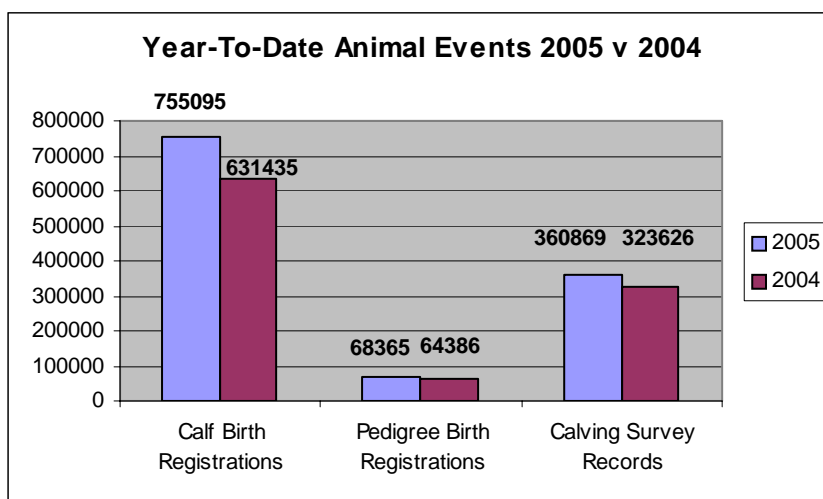
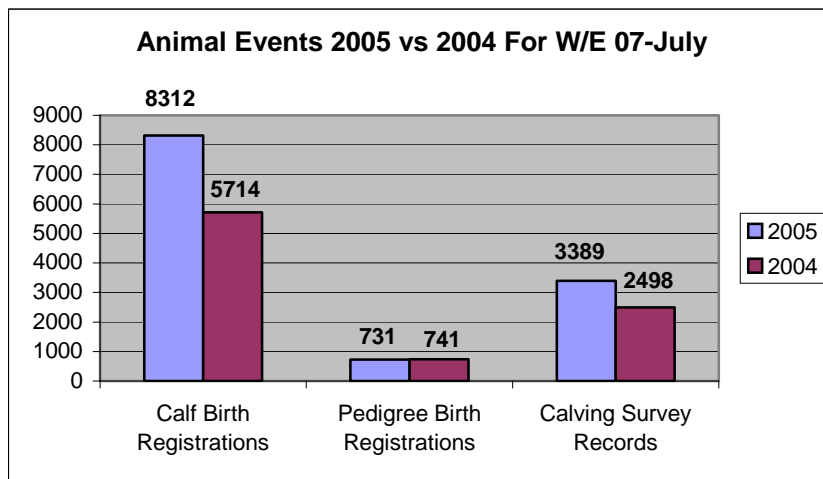
- Further work by Peter Amer has refined the economic values to be used in the Sub Indexes with recommendations that changes be made for carcass conformation, carcass fat score, weaning weight, calving difficulty, gestation length, cow survival and age at first calving. The impact of these changes on beef production sub-index (BPSI) and the beef calving sub-index (BCSI) is relatively small.
- Animal model, as opposed to sire model, evaluations have been produced for some three million animals. The advantage of the animal model is that it makes full use of information on all animals, males and female, to determine the genetic merit of all animals. This means evaluations are produced simultaneously for all live animals (bulls, cows and young stock) and their ancestors.
- Seven of the beef linear scored traits have been used as predictors of carcass traits in the latest animal model test run.
- An analysis of the results of the latest test-run show relatively small changes for AI sires compared with the April evaluations. Also, genetic trends indicate that progress over the last 20 years has been modest for the important carcass traits.
- Further work identified during the meeting included;
  - ICBF should meet with DAF and the meat processors to discuss access to cut data (via mechanical grading machines). This would greatly increase the accuracy of the genetic evaluations for beef carcass traits, thereby ensuring a higher value beef product for farmers and the Irish meat industry.
  - ICBF should continue work on improving the weaned calf sub-index. This work would include; Linear scoring & weight recording of higher numbers of commercial weanlings (and pedigree animals), and access to data from marts (weights & prices).
  - ICBF should commence work to develop new PTA's for key linear type traits (including functionality traits). This work would also help ICBF establish a core set of traits for linear scoring of commercial cattle.
  - ICBF should continue to review replacement costs in the beef herd (currently set at €250/replacement).
  - ICBF should continue work on maternal traits, including the retrieval of "missing sire" information from beef herd-owners.
- The implementation strategy was agreed at the meeting was;
  - Release test evaluations for cows, bulls and young-stock (early August).
  - Receive industry feed-back (August).



- Meet to discuss the new indexes (7<sup>th</sup> September) with a view to making them official before the winter AI season.

### 3 Database Update

- 83 New Herds added to the database in the past week.
- Comment from the staff in the Animal Events (AE) office: *"Calf registrations are down at the low levels one would expect at this time of year. New herd permission forms were up this week, with Kerry AI returning quite a few forms."*
- 4,976 Teagasc ICBF permission forms have now been returned by Teagasc clients.
- Training of the Linear Scorers on the new linear scoring application will take place in Tully next week. Feedback so far has been positive.
- Work on the generation of Sales and Show Catalogues from the database is being finalised and will be on demonstration at the Kildalton IT day next week.



- Feedback forms on the beef calving reports continue to return at a strong rate, and the positive feedback has continued with over 90% of those receiving the reports finding them Useful (4) or Extremely Useful (5).
- Work has begun this week on a number of extracts of Herd Health related data from the database to support Simon More at UCD and his team with the National Herd Health initiative.
- Work on a female 'Lifetime Performance Sheet' has been completed for the Limousin society and these should be issued to the Limousin society today.
- A number of developments are beginning on the Genetic Evaluations extracts and imports, which are supporting the on-going work by the genetics team.
- Usage of the ICBF's website services has developed rapidly. Over the last three months 428 farmers have accessed 3,168 herd reports. In this same period 77 Teagasc advisors have accessed 3,209 herd reports for clients who have authorised Teagasc to access their herd reports.

### 4 Milk Recording

- A campaign to attract more farmers to use the Electronic DIY (EDIY) milk recording service is being organised jointly by Donegal Creameries, TEAGASC and ICBF. Attached is a copy of the invitation



that will be distributed to suppliers of Donegal Creameries in the next week and an information sheet that lists the features of the EDIY milk recording service.

- The following two table provide show milk recording activity in 2005 compared with 2004.

Milk Recording Organisation	2005	2004
	Herds Recorded Week 01/07/05 - 08/07/05	Herds Recorded Week 02/09/04 - 09/07/04
Progressive	389	410
Dairygold	233	259
Kerry	211	218
SWS	168	168
Tipperary	22	22
Connacht	15	29
Arrabawn	30	15
Others (Donegal, OAD)	7	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,075</b>	<b>1,121</b>

Milk Recording Organisation	HERD Count		COW Count	
	2005 No. Herds Owners Year to Date Jan 01st - Jul 08 <sup>th</sup>	2004 No. Herd Owners at Year End	2005 No. Cows Year to Date Jan 01st - Jul 08th (All)	2004 No. Cows at Year End (Min 2 tests)
Progressive	2,066	2,233	141,414	156,588
Dairygold	1,509	1,620	93,249	102,778
Kerry	1,063	1,098	65,005	66,886
SWS	934	964	52,837	56,753
Tipperary	141	147	8,994	9,268
Connacht	110	121	6,852	7,597
Arrabawn	107	120	6,764	7,369
Others (Donegal, OAD)	31	0	3,106	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,961</b>	<b>6,303</b>	<b>378,221</b>	<b>407,239</b>

## 5 Tully

### Centre Report

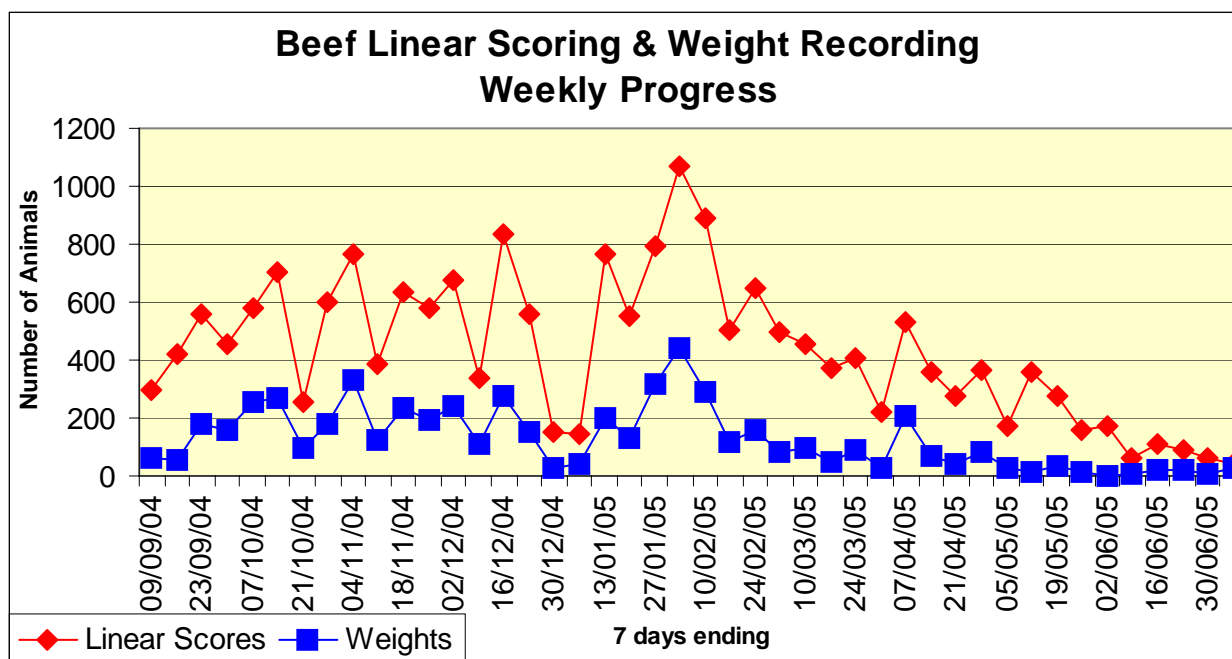
- Applications for the next intake of bulls to Tully will be sent out by the 15<sup>th</sup> July. This intake is for bulls born from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2004 to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2005, for a sale on the 4<sup>th</sup> of March 2006. A decision will be made early next week as to criteria that will be used in inviting breeders to nominate bulls.
- The April sale at Tully in 2006 will now be held on the 6<sup>th</sup> May 2006.
- A group of 20 beef suckler farmers from Galway will visit Tully on the 14<sup>th</sup> of July.



## Consultation Meeting

- A meeting of interested parties was held on Thursday following the Beef Genetic Evaluation Consultation meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to ensure the impact of the new beef evaluations was considered prior to the next intake being selected. The decisions made included;
- In inviting Breeders to submit bulls for selection every effort will be made to ensure best use of the latest available information on the new and old indexes.
- When the final selection of Bulls is being made, close attention will given to their new economic beef indexes.
- The new beef evaluations for the current crop of bulls at Tully will be released as test evaluations as soon as they are available.
- ICBF and Herd Books will participate in meetings with samples of breeders to ensure the new evaluations are fully understood and error free prior to the September 7<sup>th</sup> Consultation meeting.
- An education campaign for the new economic beef indexes will be organized to coincide with their official release.

## 6 Beef Linear Scoring & Weight Recording



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July 25th, 2005

## NEW ELECTRONIC DIY MILK RECORDING SYSTEM NOW AVAILABLE TO ALL DONEGAL MILK SUPPLIERS!

Dear Milk Supplier,

In Spring 2005, Donegal Creameries and ICBF successfully piloted a new **Electronic DIY Milk Recording System**. Some 30 Donegal Dairy Farmers were part of the pilot group. The pilot proved a success with the system scoring favourably in the 3 main assessment criteria;

- ✓ **Ease of Use by Farmer** – farmers liked the system! Full training is given, farmers found it easy enough to pick up, with most farmers up to speed after 1<sup>st</sup> milking.
- ✓ **Right Cost** – For up to 50 cows it only costs €100 per visit! For herds > 50 cows it's €100 + €1.50 per cow after that! e.g. 60 cows would cost €115 per visit! **Very competitive!**
- ✓ **Usefulness of Information** – know your cow's worth! As well as milk yield and composition (Protein, Fat), special SCC control reports are provided. For stock value and breeding you get the EBI, Breeding & Fertility Reports. All these reports are issued timely and in formats you want e.g. reports available on the internet, by email, and hard copy, also SCC text updates.

As a result of the pilot's success Donegal Creameries/ICBF have trained and equipped a full time Donegal based Technician, **Mr. Roy Graham**, (086-8174542) to offer the Electronic DIY Milk Recording to all Milk Suppliers in the county.

For those Donegal Milk Suppliers not Milk Recording, we are offering two tests in the autumn of 2005. If you are interested, Roy can be contacted for further details, he will take you through what's involved, getting started, etc. This will give farmers an opportunity to see and use the system as well as get test day and management reports.

## INVITATION TO COME AND SEE THE LATEST TECHNOLOGY!

ICBF / Teagasc / Donegal Creameries have organised the following **Farm Open Days** where we will be discussing how Milk Recording & Breeding Strategies combine to bring you more profit. The new Electronic DIY meter will be on display.

<b><u>When</u></b>	<b><u>Time</u></b>	<b><u>Where</u></b>
<b>August 02nd (Tue)</b>	<b>7.30pm</b>	<b>Patrick Carlin's Farm, Upper Dungorman, Castlefinn</b>
<b>August 03rd (Wed)</b>	<b>7.30pm</b>	<b>Ivan Ferguson's Farm, Swilly View, Craigtown, Fahan.</b>
<b>August 04th (Thu)</b>	<b>7.30pm</b>	<b>Maurice Graham's Farm, Craig House, Momeen, St Johnston</b>

Speakers include Andrew Cromie (ICBF Geneticist), Martin Burke (ICBF Milk Recording), Pat Clarke (Teagasc Dairy Specialist), as well as representatives from Donegal Creameries. Please take time out to visit the open day closest to you, where you can look, listen, and learn the latest in Dairy Breeding and Recording technology.

Looking forward to seeing you on the day,

Martin Burke (ICBF)                      David Nesbitt (Donegal Creameries)                      Seamus Culhane (Teagasc).



Donegal 



## ICBF / Teagasc Campaign

### “Electronic DIY Milk Recording – the new paperless system”



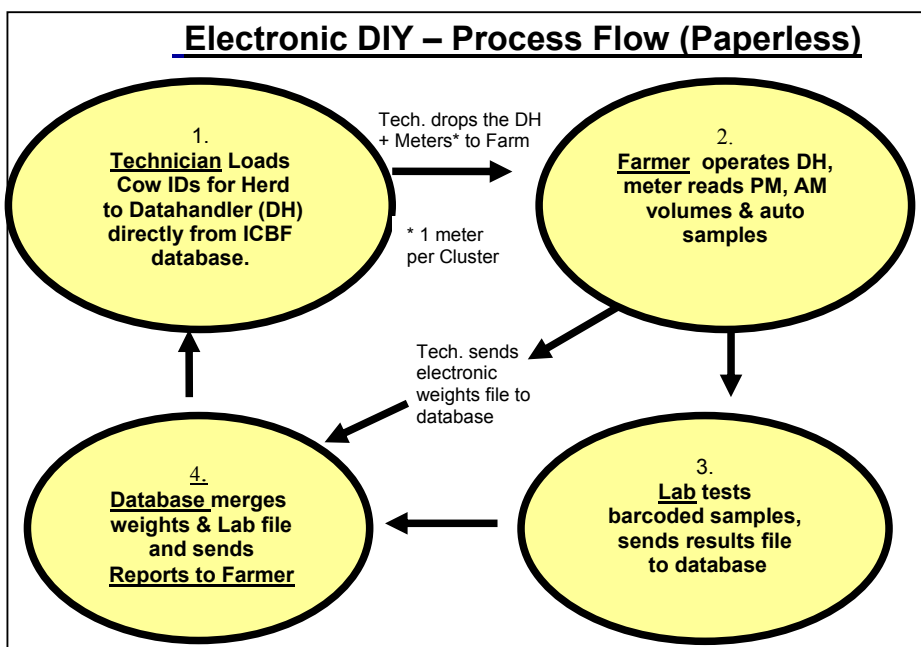
RF Communication  
Link



Sample  
Bottle

- **Cows' IDs loaded direct from database**
- **Meter Records Milk Volume Electronically**
- **Meter automatically agitates & takes sample**
- **Barcoded vial, no writing, more accurate**
- **Milk Yields electronically loaded to database**
- **Lab results electronically loaded to database**
- ➔ **Meters delivered - No Capital Purchase required**

## How the system works – Process Flow;



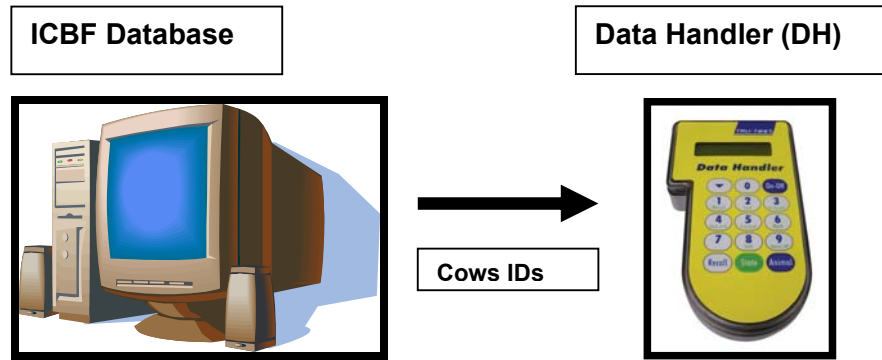
### Comparison Manual versus EDIY Milk Recording

<u>Criterion</u>	<u>Manual Recorder (Existing)</u>	<u>Electronic DIY (New)</u>
Cost of Meter/ Utilisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Large Upfront Capital for farmer as he has to buy manual meters &amp; only uses once/month at best.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ No upfront cost for farmer – this removes a major impediment /reason for not taking up Milk Recording. Also Meter utilisation is better as it's used every day versus once a month!</li> </ul>
Cost of Recorder Labour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One recorder per herd test – cost expected to increase year on year ! Nat. Average is 10 herds/recorder.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ One Technician can do approx 5 herd tests/day. With E-DIY some 150- 180 herds per technician!</li> </ul>
Accuracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manual sampling – sometimes inadequate agitation can lead to composition inconsistencies.</li> <li>Meters in the field may not always be calibrated/maintained 100%.</li> <li>Statistically higher chance of figures misread, mistyped when writing &amp; keying large amounts of data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Meter auto agitates + auto samples - no possibility of error due to human variance.</li> <li>✓ Meters are annually calibrated by ICBF.</li> <li>✓ Figures are captured and transferred electronically.</li> </ul>
Cost of Office Keying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Every herds' milk volumes have to be keyed by Office staff from handwritten results provided by the recorder.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ No keying in EDIY, so office staff can be redeployed as data is electronically transmitted to database.</li> </ul>
Service Quality – field staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Difficult to recruit/retain &amp; manage 600-700 recorders nationally - not sustainable in future</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Select high quality technicians – easier to manage &amp; motivate small groups.</li> </ul>
Service Quality – turnaround time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More steps between farm &amp; dbase means average turnaround is approx 7 days.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Less steps from farm to dbase – huge opportunity to get turnaround down to 2 - 3 days.</li> </ul>

## PROCESS STEPS

### Step 1: Herd Set up

Once the herds' Freeze brands are in the database the technician can download the IDs from ICBF Database direct to the Data Handler.



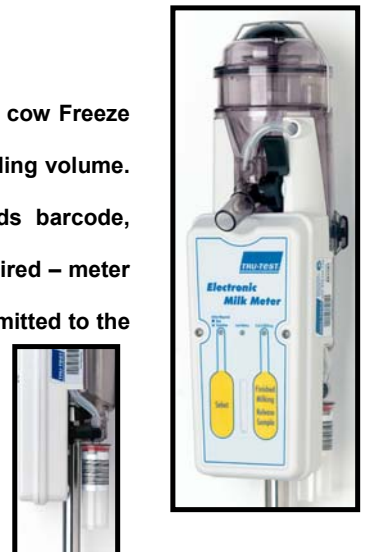
### Step 2: Drop off & set up Meters

Technician transports required no. meters\*, the loaded DH and tray of sample bottles to the farm prior to PM milking. \* e.g. Milking parlour with 10 units gets 10 meters dropped off. Connecting Hoses are supplied on first visit and left on farm.



### Step 3: PM Milking

Put the cluster on cow as normal and as she starts milking, the Farmer keys in cow Freeze Brand number to DH so it knows which cow is milking. The meter begins recording volume. At end of milking press "Finish milking" and the meter automatically reads barcode, agitates and takes sample for Lab. There is no writing or manual sampling required – meter has all details of cow no. volume and sample barcode no. All this data is transmitted to the DH. Farmer then simply removes bottle, caps it and replaces with empty bottle ready for next cow. At the end of PM milking put meters through hot wash.





#### **Step 4: AM Milking + Final Wash**

In the morning milking again put cluster on cow as normal and as she starts milking, the Farmer keys in cow Freeze Brand number to DH. In this, the second milking the process is easier as we are just measuring volume - no sample is required to be taken. ICBF can predict the morning composition from the PM sample (as we have the cows' exact times and interval of milking, her days in milk, her parity and age. Reference ICBF web site [www.icbf.com](http://www.icbf.com) for relevant publications and papers). At the end of the second milking the meters **MUST** go through a hot wash – this is **MANDATORY** as the meters are moved from one farm to the next. The wash cycles itself and does not need supervision - cows can be let out.



#### **Step 5: Data Upload & Results**

At the end of the second milking the technician returns to farm to pick up the DH, the samples and the meters. Before he goes he prints 24hr wgt's directly from DH and leaves print out with the farmer. At the technicians home he sends uploads results directly to the ICBF database via the intranet. Samples are sent by courier to LAB.



The Lab also send the composition results to the ICBF database electronically, where they merge with the weights. That night the cow/ herd results are calculated. Reports are automatically generated at this point.

#### **Step 6: Herd Reports – 3 Reports with each test;**

**1. Milk Recording Animal Report** – gives each cows' Milk yield, P, F, L, SCC & EBI. Report also gives Lactation yield to date and Predicted 305 day figures.

**2. Mastitis Incidence Report** – lists cows whose SCC > 250K cells in the test. Puts the cows in order of highest SCC first. For comparison and tracking purposes gives history of SCC in previous tests in current lactation and the average SCC for last year lactation. A text of the worst 5 SCC cows is sent to the farmer.

**3. Milk Recording – Farm Summary Report** – gives overall Herd yields F,P,L, SCC and EBI. Includes summaries by Lactation groups and by Seasonal groups. Also contains year on year comparisons. Note: Farmers who have access to the internet can view their reports (current and historical) on [www.icbf.com](http://www.icbf.com) (password controlled so access is only allowed by farmer owner).