



UPDATE – for period 4th to 10th December 2004

1 2004 Progress

As we approach the end of the year it is worth briefly considering some of our achievements over the last twelve months. Irish cattle breeding has moved forward a considerable distance in this time. The highlights include:

- **Herd Books.** This year 14 herd books joined in using the cattle breeding database to support their registration activities as well as accessing the full range of performance records and genetic evaluations. Beef, dairy and dual-purpose breeds are all now making full use of Animal Events to simplify pedigree registrations for Irish farmers.
- **Genetic Evaluations.**
 - **Calving Ease, Gestation Length & Calf Mortality.** A new system has been developed and results will be published early in 2005. This system makes full use of all relevant historical data as well the wealth of data now being collected through Animal Events. This system provides evaluations for all breeds of cattle in Ireland.
 - **Carcass wt, Carcass Conformation, Carcass fat, Cull cow wt, Weaning wt, and Live weight.** Research leading to the development of genetic evaluations for these and other beef traits is well advanced with the first official results expected early in 2005. Data being used includes all the relevant historical information as well as a large amount of data collected from Meat Factories and Marts. The evaluation system is will provide results for all breeds of cattle in Ireland
 - **EBI.** 2004 was undoubtedly the year that the EBI had a dramatic impact on dairy farmers breeding decisions. Modifications to the weighings in the EBI were introduced early in 2004. These resulted in greater emphasis being placed on calving interval. The Active Bull List has now become the industry standard.
- **Beef Linear Scoring.** The team of ICBF contractors are now covering the whole country and all breeds.
- **Tully.** Despite the outbreak of TB earlier in 2004, Tully has made great progress is ensuring only the best bulls are now entering the performance test. For the first time in many years Tully will be full to capacity for Christmas.
- **Electronic DIY Milk Recording.** The team from Dairy Gold and ICBF have made wonderful progress with the evaluation of the new electronic meter and establishing the associated infrastructure. We now have one full cell operating and are planning substantial expansion in 2005.
- **Electronic AI Technician Recording.** The hand held computer for use by AI Technician is undergoing field tests with encouraging results.
- **Strategic Plan.** This year has seen the database project completed and a decision to move ICBF's focus towards increasing farmer uptake of cattle breeding services such as milk recording, herd book registration and artificial insemination.
- **National Stud.** The amalgamation of Muster and Progressive Genetics AI Centres is well advanced with considerable potential for reducing overhead costs and delivering greater rates of genetic gain.

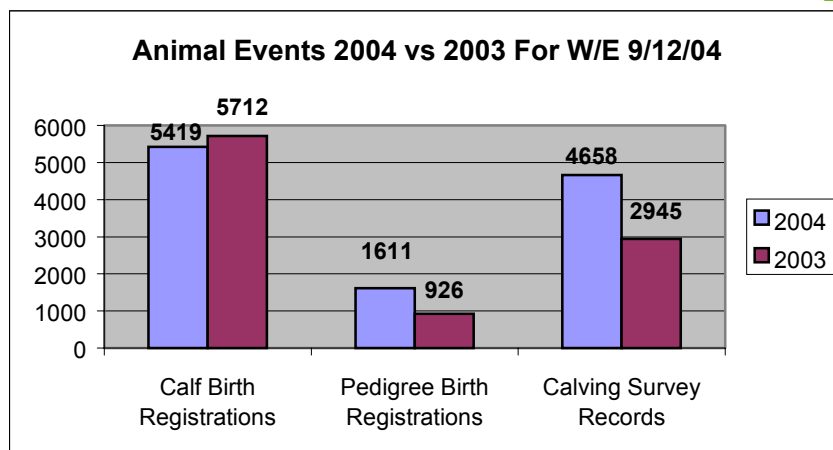
2 Genetic Evaluation Consultation Meetings – Wednesday 8th Dec

The outcome of these meetings will be reported in next weeks update.



3 Database Update

- 91 New Herds added to the database.
- Some modifications to the AI handheld application were made last week, based on feedback from the SWS AI technician, and these were well received when the application was back out in the field this week.



- The further handheld units to support the pilot have been received today and will be commissioned on Monday and Tuesday.
- 1936 Teagasc ICBF permission forms have now been returned by Teagasc clients. The rate of return was surprisingly good in the past week, with around 300 forms received. Development is continuing on the solution which will make farmer reports available on-line to those whom the farmer wishes to have access.
- Some minor changes to the Milk Recording annual report were made this week and are in the testing process.
- An issue arose with the reporting of slaughter data, whereby the bulls and steers were not distinguished - we have since received data from DAF which allows us to make that distinction and this has now been incorporated into the beef carcass reports.
- Further work is on-going on beef herdbook tasks and some minor changes around the milk recording laboratory interface.

4 Tully

- Health test results for the December intake are returning. 24 bulls from this intake are now in Tully and 54 more bulls are due in over the weekend.
- A group of 35 commercial beef farmers from Roscommon will visit Tully on 15-12-04.
- The October intake will be tested for TB on 14-12-04.

5 Important Dates in 2005 – Please put them in your Diary

We are planning the following meetings in early 2005:

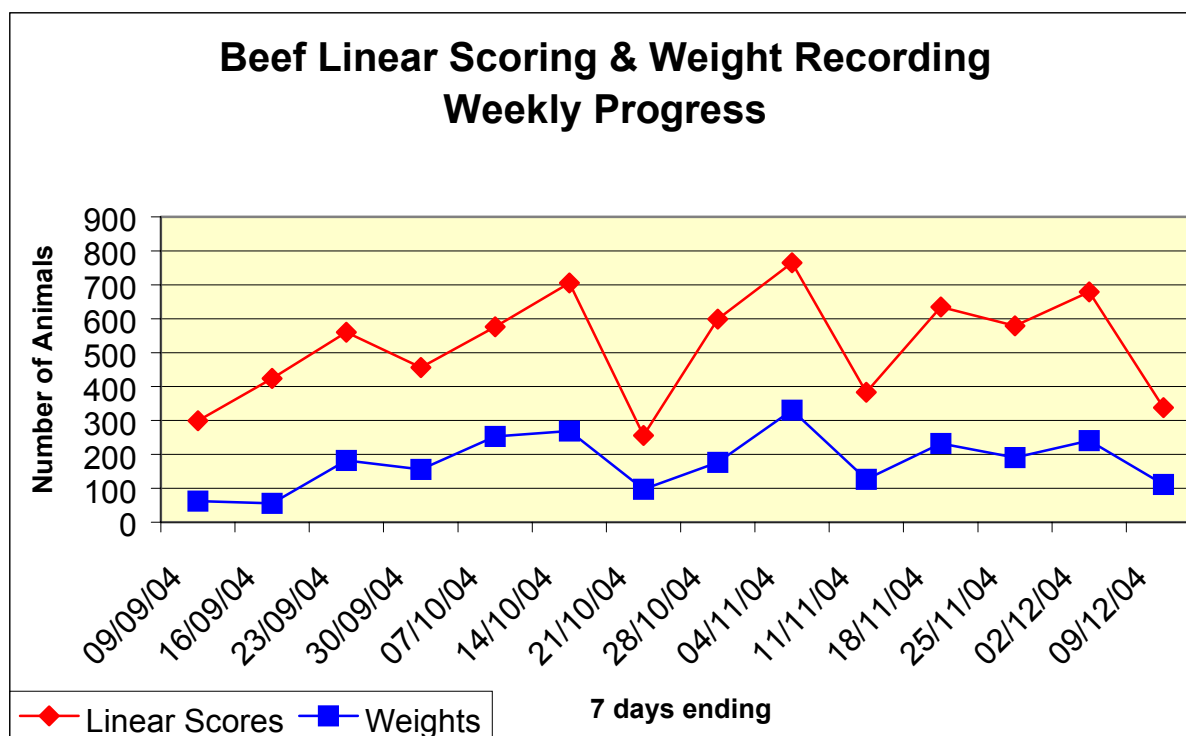
- **Genetic Evaluation Consultation Meeting – Beef and Dairy. Tuesday 25th January.** Venue either Port Laois or Kilkenny depending on availability of a suitable room.
- **Milk Recording Operations Review Meeting. Wednesday 16th February at Moorepark.** This meeting will be particularly relevant for staff involved with providing the milk recording service.
- **Herd Book Operations Review Meeting. Wednesday 23rd February at Moorepark.**
- **Audit & Finance Sub-Committee. Wednesday 23rd March at Cork Airport.**



6 Milk Recording Processing

Milk Recording Organisation	Herds Recorded Week 03/12 - 10/12	Herds Recorded year to date 2004
Progressive	459	2,230
SWS	142	964
Dairygold	95	1,617
Kerry	81	1,098
Connacht	18	121
Tipperary	17	147
Arrabawn	4	120
Total	816	6,297

7 Beef Linear Scoring & Weight Recording



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