



UPDATE – for period 6th to 12th November 2004

1 Collaboration with TEAGASC

- Next week a major effort to both increase the number of herds using Animal Events and to provide TEAGASC advisors with electronic access to herd reports will be launched.
- This is an important milestone in the development of the cattle-breeding database and will enable many more farmers to benefit from the information contained in the database while at the same time both eliminating unnecessary costs and improving the quality of information available.
- TEAGASC and ICBF will be represented at the dairy conferences in Cork on Wednesday (17th Nov) and Cavan on Thursday (18th Nov) to answer any questions about this initiative.
- The key message is that by working together ICBF and TEAGASC can deliver increased profitability for Irish cattle farmers.

2 Audit & Finance Sub-Committee

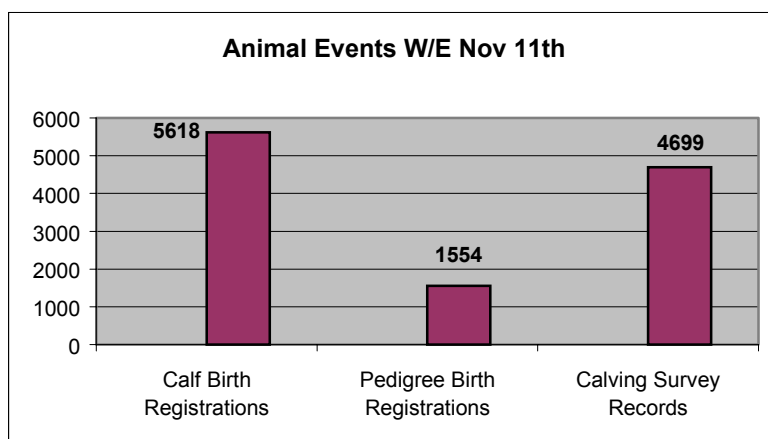
- Papers for next weeks Sub-Committee meeting have been distributed and include both a Forecast for year-end 2004 and a budget for 2005 based on the Strategic Plan recently adopted by the Board.
- The main issues to be addressed include:
 - How to fund the growth in uptake of Animal Events, and
 - How to fund the capital required for both the electronic DIY milk recording service and hand-held computers for AI Technicians.

3 Tully

- Performance test figures for the May '04 intake are finalised and will be posted out to owners by 17 Nov'04.
- Inspections for the December '04 intake have finished a total of 116 bulls have been sent for health testing. Health testing will start on 16-11-04 and the intake date is from the 2-12-04.
- A group of commercial beef farmers from Galway will visit Tully on 13-11-04.

4 Database Update

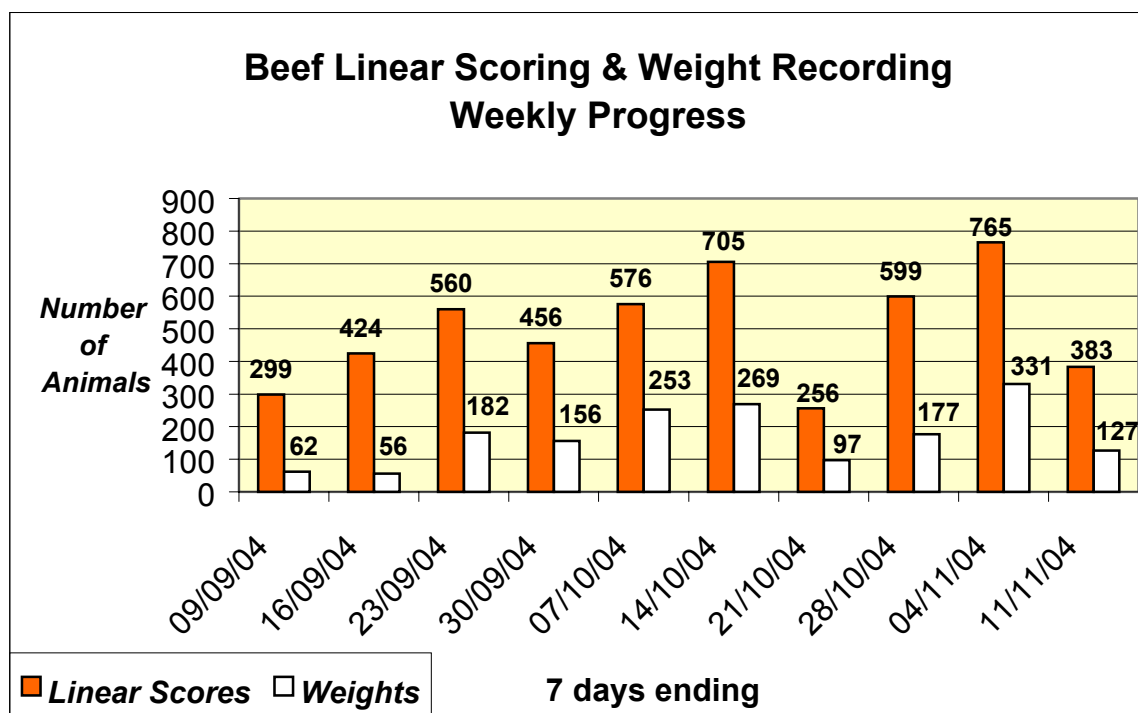
- 15 new herds added to the database.
- Development work on Beef Carcass reports that will be issued to all farmers at the end of next week is underway.
- Dry-off recording sheets continue to flow into the database at a very good rate.
- Work on changes to the publication of Dairy Genetic Evaluations from the database has concluded.
- Development is continuing on the solution that will make farmer reports available on-line to those whom the farmer grants access. A development web server has been purchased and will be delivered within the next two weeks.





- The first phase of testing on the AI handheld has been completed and the second phase of testing will take place in-house next week. It is then expected that the application will be released to a pilot group of AI technicians the week of November 22nd.
- The ICBF/Teagasc letters will be posted to farmers on Monday. A sample letter is attached.
- Due to SWS construction works on our building next weekend (Sat Nov 20th & Sunday Nov 21st), there is a slight possibility that the power will be off, and therefore access to the database will not be possible. We will confirm the exact position to the member organisations on next Tuesday.

5 Beef Linear Scoring and Weight Recording



6 Milk Recording Processing

Milk Recording Organisation	Herds Recorded Week 05/11 - 12/11	Herds Recorded year to date 2004
Progressive	474	2,223
Dairygold	211	1,616
Kerry	211	1,098
SWS	157	964
Tipperary	45	147
Connacht	17	120
Arrabawn	11	119
Total	1,126	6,287



7 NDP Application

- Applications for further refunds of part of ICBF's development expenditure from the NDP (National Development Plan) are currently being prepared. Each application requires detailed and comprehensive information on all qualifying expenditure.
- The three applications being prepared cover database development, milk recording system development and development of both beef and dairy genetic evaluations. In all cases these developments are significantly improving the information infrastructure for the cattle industry and farmers.
- It is anticipated that by the end of 2004 some €2.9 million will have been refunded by NDP out of a total allocation of €3.4 million. This support, which comes ultimately from taxpayers, has played a very important and positive role in ensuring the cattle breeding database has been successfully established.
- The cattle breeding industry is extremely grateful for the support provided by the NDP.

8 Dairy Genetic Evaluations

- The latest genetic evaluations for Holstein Friesian are being made official today. Bull evaluations have been updated on our website.
- All milk-recording reports from Monday 15th November will contain these updated EBI's.

9 IRIS Newsletter

Attached is a copy of the latest IRIS Newsletter from NRS. This provides some interesting information about developments in other countries where the IRIS database software is also being used.

Brian Wickham Chief Executive Irish Cattle Breeding Federation Soc. Ltd, Highfield House, Shinagh, Bandon, Co. Cork, Ireland, [Phone office +353 \(0\)23 20222](tel:+3532320222), [mobile +353 \(0\)86 826 9911](tel:+3532320229) [Fax office +353 \(0\)23 20229](tel:+3532320229) E-Mail bwickham@icbf.com ICBF Web site www.icbf.com Assistant: Mary Madden. © Irish Cattle Breeding Federation Society Limited 2004.

Name
Address 1
Address 2
Address 3

Dear Herd Owner/Teagasc Client,

15,000 herd-owners in milk recording and herd book activities have already signed up to Animal Events. We ask you to complete the attached form which will:

- Permit ICBF to have access to your herd details from the Department of Agriculture and Food
- Enable you to participate in Animal Events recording, if not already doing so
- Permit your Teagasc adviser to access information for your herd enabling improved advice and support

The rate of progress of breeding of Irish cattle will be vital in the future competitiveness of milk and beef production, now that product and animal based subsidy is reduced or gone.

The advantages for you are:

- Better use of information to identify problems and make decisions regarding the management of your herd.
- One recording system which serves many purposes, calf registration, A.I., sales, deaths and other animal events
- Ability to compare your herd to other herd averages, local discussion group averages and follow year-to-year progress.

The advantages for Teagasc are:

- Ability to generate reports for clients and give more specific technical/financial advice
- Less time will be spent gathering information and more time will be spent giving advice and tracking progress i.e. herd fertility, calving, breeding, mastitis, profit monitor.

The advantages for ICBF:

- Increased participation of herds will lead to faster genetic improvement for beef and dairy stock.
- Increased reliability of bull and dam indices.

Ultimately the benefits will come back to individual farmers in easier management, better stock and increased profits.

We urge you to complete the form and return it in the FREEPOST envelope as soon as possible – this is too important not to. If you have any queries please contact your local adviser.



Sincerely,

Tom Kelly, TEAGASC Advisory Services



Brian Wickham, ICBF



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iris
news
no. 4 November 2004

First things first

The first steps in cattle and herd improvement are cattle registration, the collection of performance data and processing of this data. This is a fundamental requirement when plans are made to boost cattle and herd improvement. I was very glad to hear from Mr. Wei Kejia, the secretary general of the Dairy Association of China, that he stressed efficient central data processing first, before starting on activities such as genetic evaluation and setting up efficient progeny testing schemes. It is a very good choice by the DAC to start with IRIS to accelerate the development of cattle and herd improvement in China. The plans are big, but realistic. China has the potential and the capability to increase the volume of milk fat and protein output substantially in the near future. IRIS will support this process.

Hans Wilmlink
Manager Animal
Information Systems



My Pocket IRIS - a PDA application for farmers

My Pocket IRIS, a PDA application for farmers with an interface with the central database, will soon make on-farm cattle recording easier.

When the possibility arose to participate in a pilot project on mobile communication with a subsidy for innovation of the ministry of Economic Affairs, NRS thought this would be the opportunity to develop a PDA for farmers. Together with KPN, the largest telecoms company in the Netherlands and Web Integration, a company that specialises in the development of PDA software, NRS applied for this subsidy. The project application ended number two out of fifty (!) and the development of My Pocket IRIS could start.

For the farmer it is easy to have an efficient way of recording the events he encounters during the day. It is even better to combine this function with a telephone, this way he will only need one device and can replace his mobile phone with a PDA. My Pocket IRIS software offers several possibilities to record data, e.g. inseminations, I&R and animal health data, which are sent wireless to NRS. After processing and storage of the data in the central database, the farmer receives attention lists on a ▼



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▼ daily basis on his PDA. The health data and the day-to-day attention lists have especially been welcomed by the farmers.

At this moment My Pocket IRIS is tested by a small group of farmers. The purpose of the pilot is both to test the technical aspects of a PDA and to learn from the comments of the farmers. Their feedback

will be used to improve the application and to come to a tool with a lot of added value.

Petra Keppel, Team leader AIS Services

Azorean team accomplished IRIS 3.3 course

AASM and AAIT in the Azores will soon start with IRIS-ASP. Part of the implementation project was an IRIS 3.3 course at NRS.

In August, five Azorean users were trained in the functionalities of the new system, which is very different to IRIS 2 that they had used before. The Azorean team commented: "One advantage of version 3.3 is that it is easier to introduce data automatically and you have a better control of the processes. A wider range of functionalities is available for the operator and more information can be retrieved as reports, which is the major objective of our associations. We discovered that the design of the programme is universal, allowing it, with small changes and adaptations, to be used in other countries such as China, the Czech Republic and Portugal. This possibility is clear proof that the programme is very good."

*Standing: Manuel Jorge Melo (AAIT), Ana Luísa Pavão (DRDA), Pilar Soares (AASM).
Sitting: Beatriz Afonso (AASM), Inês Rodrigues (interpreter).*



*Ana Luísa Pavão (DRDA)
Beatriz Afonso (AASM)
Pilar Soares (AASM)
Manuel Jorge Melo (AAIT)
Mário Afonso (APCRF)*

Customer profile

We like to introduce you to a new member of the IRIS User Group: Dairy Association of China (DAC), located in Beijing. Mr Wei Kejia (Secretary general of DAC) and Prof Zhang Yuan (professor of Animal Genetics & Breeding of China Agricultural University) give some background.

What kind of organisation is the Dairy Association of China?

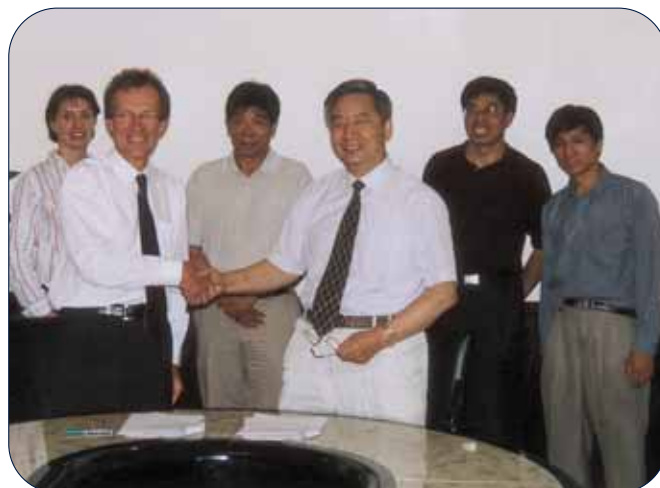
DAC is a non-profit organisation formed by China's dairy producers, processors, associated service industry and state operated enterprises. DAC's membership includes some 400 group members and over 600 individual members. The mandates of DAC include the registration of dairy cattle in China, promotion of dairy herd improvement and advancement of breeding and mating strategy. Next it plays a role in areas of animal health, as well as dairy food quality and safety. Guided by its mission, the DAC directs its services to the producers, processing industry, and government, making its contribution to the development of the industry in dairy cattle feeding, breeding, dairy processing, quality assurance, and distribution. DAC established a data center for central collection of cattle records. Currently 60.000 Holsteins are registered in this data center.

What are the characteristics of the cattle industry in China?

The dairy industry is a front runner with regard to economic development within the Chinese agriculture. By the end of 2003 the number of dairy cattle was almost 9 million, producing about 12 milliard kg of milk. According to the central planning of the government in 2015 20 milliard kg of milk will be produced and in 2030 70 milliard kg, to meet the increasing demand of the consumers. This will be achieved by expanding the cattle population and by increasing the milk production per cow. Milk quality control becomes more and more important. In a number of provinces milk recording is done, but a central information system lacks.

What are your plans for the future?

DAC's mission is to organise China's Dairy herd improvement and genetic evaluation programs. The data center is responsible to collect and process animal pedigree and phenotypic information from the whole country for the purposes of animal registration and genetic evaluation. Information output from the center will be fed back to the dairy industry and other relevant industries. For this purpose DAC needs a state-of-the-art information system and IRIS is the most universal and globally proven system in this field. Now that DAC has signed the IRIS Licence Agreement, IRIS will be implemented step by step.



Petra Galesloot (NRS), Hans Wilmink (NRS), Prof. Zhang Yuan (China Agricultural University), Wei Kejia (DAC), Zhang Shengli (Beijing Dairy Cattle Center), Prof. Zhang Qin (China Agricultural University).

Dairy herd in a Chinese milk collection center



News bulletin

New names and logos

CR Delta Vrv, the mother company of NRS, has a new name: CRV, and a new logo. At the same time the logos of its other subsidiaries were replaced. Through the expansion of the number of units in the last few years, a large variety of logos existed within the Holding. This was an opportunity to restyle and gain uniformity among the existing logos. All subsidiaries, including those abroad, now have a contemporary logo with a stylised bovine head. Also Holland Genetics will have a shorter name from now on: HG. The new logos are:



Trait related to durability investigated

A new trait as an indicator for durability is being investigated: "Farmer's satisfaction". For the next year, the type classifiers will ask the farmer to rank the heifers according to his total appreciation of the animal. In New Zealand this trait showed to be a good predictor of durability. "Farmer's satisfaction" will be scored on a scale from 1 (=low) to 9 (=high). After a year, the additional value of the trait will be evaluated.

On-line farmer's reports successful

The number of farmers that view their herd management information from NRS through the Internet increases. More than 2000 farmers view their Milk recording report on-line and use several other modules, such as registration of newborn calves and animal movements. For the farmer it means 24-hour access to up-to-date data, easy to use, no piles of papers, a complete archive and automatic control of registered data. This could save money and time. Last April a package of reports and services on-line was successfully introduced under the name "VeeManager". An advantage compared to on-farm software is that it doesn't require investments in hardware and software. The reports and services offered on-line will gradually be expanded.

NRS starts research into lactose

In 2005 a broad research project into the lactose content of milk will start. One of the topics to be investigated will be the relationship with animal health. The collection of lactose data has already started. Since April 2004, the lactose percentage per cow during milk recording has been collected. For a long time, the lactose content of milk has been a subject of discussion. Some people believe that lactose could offer important information for herd management and breeding, but a lot is unknown in this area. Questions like: Which factors influence lactose percentage? What is the variation of lactose percentage among cows and among herds? How are the differences caused? What is the relationship with a negative energy balance, reduced disease resistance, mastitis incidence, somatic cell count and fertility? If the research shows that lactose is an indicator of the health status of the cow, NRS will develop an application for farmer's use. This could be a new tool for herd management.

Spanish and Portuguese

More information about IRIS is also available in Spanish and Portuguese. Ask for the brochures or download the pdf-versions from www.ais.cr-delta.nl