



## **UPDATE – for period 7<sup>th</sup> April – 13<sup>th</sup> May 2005**

### **1 IFA Regional Dairy Seminars**

ICBF were invited to speak at this weeks IFA regional dairy seminars (Mallow, Kilkenny & Athlone), entitled "*Improving dairy farm profit: Inside and Outside the Farm Gate*". ICBF's remit was to cover "*the role of dairy cattle breeding in increasing farm profit*". The meetings were attended by some 500 farmers with very positive feedback on the three themes within the ICBF presentation;

- (i) Animal Events & the cattle breeding database,
- (ii) Economic Breeding Index and
- (iii) The G€N€ IRELAND program.

ICBF would like to thank IFA for their kind invitation to address these meetings as we collectively work towards increasing profit for dairy farmers.

### **2 G€N€ IRELAND**

#### **G€N€ IRELAND - Beef**

Letters were sent to some 650 beef herds inviting them to become involved in the G€N€ IRELAND beef program (a joint partnership involving ICBF, NCBC and Dovea AI aimed at improving the quality of our national suckler herd). Herds targeted were those involved in the cattle breeding database and with >25 births in 2004. The specific focus of the program for Spring 2005 is to progeny test 5 bulls for maternal traits (i.e., based on daughter performance in suckler herd Spring 2008). In addition to these 5 bulls, a further 10 bulls will be tested this Spring. These include 5 terminal bulls and 5 bulls suitable for use on young beef cows and in dairy herds. Attractive incentives are being offered with the program, including; free semen, free weight recording & linear scoring, and a €50 per replacement by a maternal progeny test sire. A copy of the letter and contract sent to these herd-owners is attached with this update. Any herd interested in the program should contact 1850 625 626.

#### **G€N€ IRELAND - Dairy**

Semen continues to be dispatched to G€N€ IRELAND dairy herds. To date over 150 herds have received semen from 20 bulls with some 8,500 doses in total dispatched. Although only 8 weeks old, the program is a major step forward in increasing genetic gain for Irish dairy farmers.

### **3 Tully Review Meeting. Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> May from 10:30 – 13:00 at Abbeyliex Manor Hotel**

Invitations were distributed today. The draft agenda is:

1. Report - Michael Barron
2. Feedback
  - bull acquisition and entry
  - testing process
  - bull sales and marketing
  - financial
  - public relations
3. AOB

In order to make the best possible use of our time together could you please communicate your feedback to Michael Barron (mbarron@icbf.com) by Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> May. Michael and Pat Donnellan will prepare a summary of feedback received and this will form the basis for the discussion at the meeting.



## 4 Milk Recording

The following tables show respectively milk recording processing this week compared with the same week last year and the total number of herds using milk recording so far in 2005 versus the total for 2004.

Milk Recording Organisation	2005 Herds Recorded Week 06/05/05 - 13/05/05	2004 Herds Recorded Week Ending - 14/05/04
Progressive	460	379
Dairygold	253	319
SWS	156	188
Kerry	170	200
Tipperary	27	34
Connacht	22	24
Arrabawn	17	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,105</b>	<b>1,157</b>

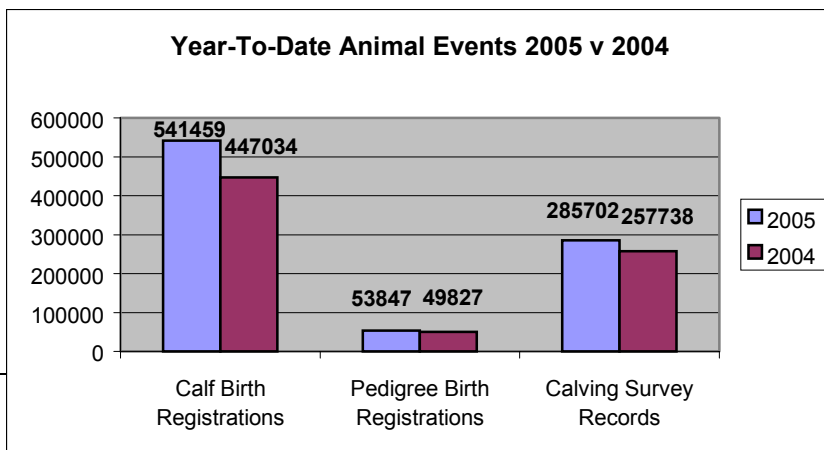
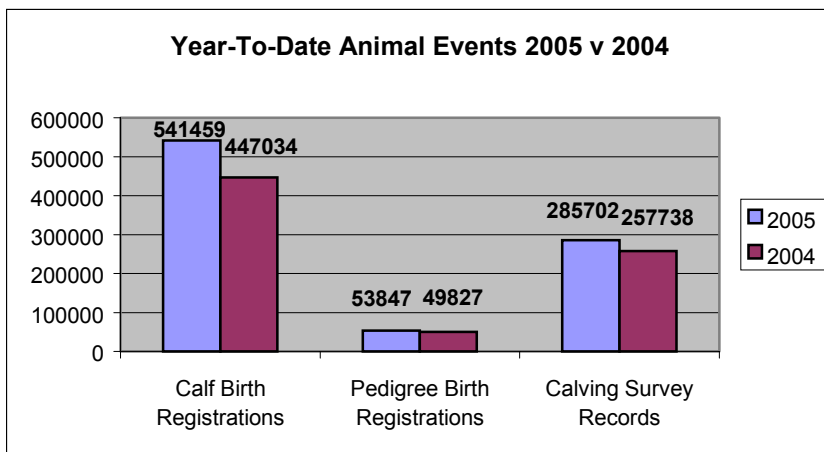
Milk Recording Organisation	2005 No. Herds Owners Year to Date Jan 01st - May 13th	2004 No. Herd Owners at Year End
Progressive	2,017	2,231
Dairygold	1,383	1,620
SWS	1,029	1,098
Kerry	926	964
Tipperary	134	147
Connacht	106	121
Arrabawn	100	120
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,695</b>	<b>6,301</b>

### EDIY Technician Support;

Tru-Test Technician Mr. Jerrod Yates is in Ireland for the next 4-6 weeks. He is providing technical support to Dairygold's two EDIY Cells. Jerrod has good experience with the Tru-Test Electronic Milk Meter (TTEMM), having spent the last 4 years working as a Field Application Technician in the R&D dept in Tru-Test. He specifically worked with the TTEMM, carrying out field testing for the Tru Test Development team, supporting farmers and feeding back field issues. With one week behind him we can already see Jerrods' knowledge has proven very useful and more importantly is being absorbed by the local team, boosting our own expertise further.

## 5 Database Update

- 28 new Herds added to the database in the past week.
- Comment from the staff in the Animal Events (AE) office: *"Number of AE sheets coming is continuing to fall. This week, new permission forms were at their lowest for a while."*
- Teagasc clients have now returned 4,819 Teagasc ICBF permission forms. The usage of the on-line reporting system has been low, with all Teagasc advisors focused on helping farmers with single farm payment applications.
- The redesign of the linear scoring application is moving forward with the first design documents being developed this week. This will continue for the next six weeks.





- The proofs for the May Dairy Genetic Evaluation run have been received and will be loaded over this weekend and next weekend.
- Work is continuing on the development to support the entry of Tully performance test data directly to the ICBF database.
- Final testing of the changes to the milk recording batch are on-going with SWS and Kerry milk recording staff participating in the testing.
- A second set of test data for the Aberdeen Angus herdbook is expected today and will hopefully be signed off early next week.
- Work has begun on the 2005 Calving reports and this should be completed within two weeks.

## 6 Tully

- Health testing of bulls for the next intake has commenced and results are due back from the 19-5-05. Bulls will enter Tully from the 21-5-05.
- Plans for the September intake, which is the sale intake for March 2006 are under way and will be presented at the Tully review meeting on 25-05-05.
- A group of 10 French breeders will visit Tully on 17-05-05.

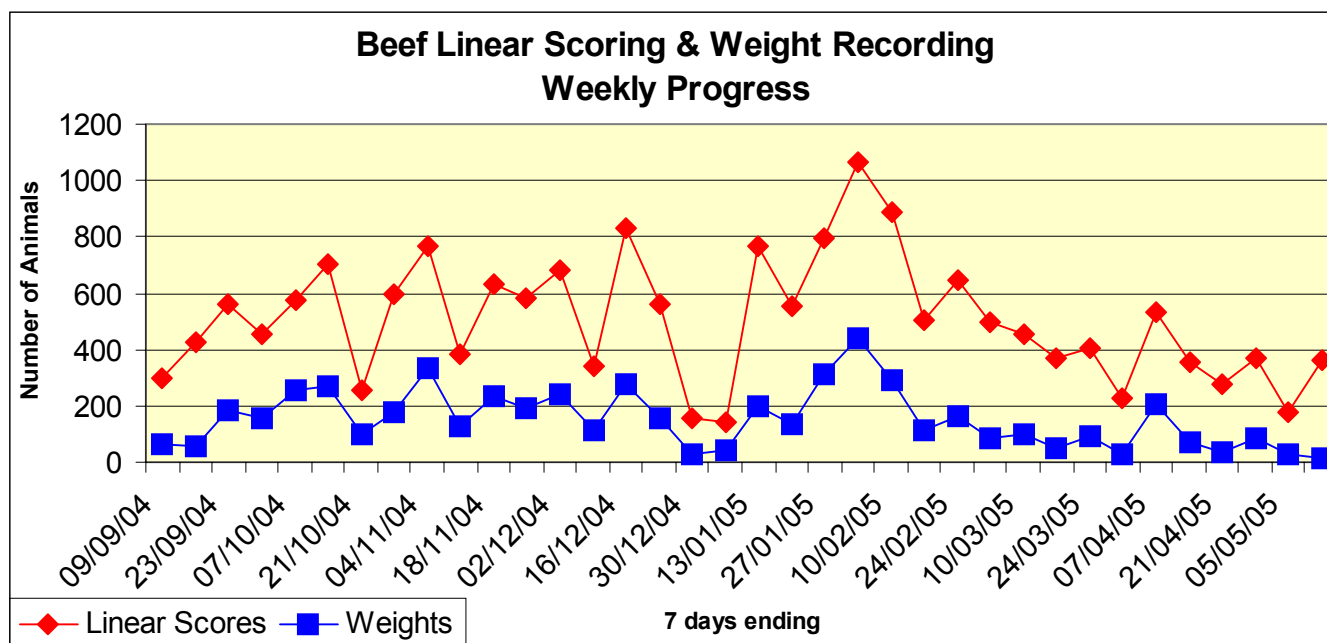
## 7 Important Dates

- **Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> May.** AM - Tully Review Consultation Meeting. PM - meeting of cattle breeding industry to discuss 2005 plans for Ploughing.
- **Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> June.** ICBF Board Meeting.

## 8 Staffing

Interviews for the two Geneticist vacancies commenced on Wednesday. Further interviews will take place next Tuesday.

## 9 Beef Linear Scoring & Weight Recording





## 10 Genetic Evaluations – Dairy

- Proofs from the May genetic evaluation run (Domestic and Interbull) have been loaded into IRIS. Further processing will continue over the weekend to generate pedigree index proofs for young stock.
- The usual files will be published on the website from Wednesday next week and for the first time, lists for other breeds of dairy cattle in Ireland will be available. The genetic correlation between the Irish Simmental and Montbeliarde population and the other countries that participated in the Interbull evaluation with these breeds is shown in the table below. These ranged from 0.77 to 0.92 across traits

Country	Milk	Fat	Protein
Switzerland	0.80	0.84	0.82
Germany	0.82	0.77	0.81
French Montbeliarde	0.86	0.83	0.92
Italy	0.79	0.76	0.76
Slovenia	0.79	0.79	0.79
French Simmental	0.90	0.87	0.83
Czech Republic	0.77	0.77	0.77
Hungary	0.79	0.76	0.76
The Netherlands	0.85	0.80	0.82

- The first official results for the International longevity evaluation were also received by Ireland this week. These will be reviewed in the coming week to facilitate a decision on their use as official proofs in Ireland.

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Name  
Example Herd  
Address

11<sup>th</sup> May 2005.

Dear Firstname,

***The “GENE IRELAND” beef program – More profit for suckler herd-owners.***

Welcome to the “GENE IRELAND” beef program - a new and exciting progeny test initiative, involving ICBF, the National Cattle Breeding Centre (incorporating Progressive Genetics, Dairygold, South Western Services and Kerry Co-ops) and Dovea AI. The new initiative is focused on delivering more profit for beef herd-owners, through genetic improvement in our national suckler herd (i.e., more milk, good fertility and high weaning weights).

As part of the initiative, we, the program partners, are inviting 100 beef herds to join the program as progeny test herds. These herds will be the “test-bed” through which bulls from the Spring 2005 program are progeny tested. In total, some 15 bulls will be tested as part of the program. Whilst the specific focus of the program will be on the “maternal” testing (5 bulls will be progeny tested for maternal ability) a further 10 bulls (5 terminal sires and 5 “link” sires suitable for use on young beef cows and/or dairy herds) will also be progeny tested.

Involvement in the program as a progeny test herd will bring the following benefits to your herd:

1. Access to high genetic merit young bulls (see attached listing of young bulls available through the Spring 2005 program).
2. Free semen for progeny test bulls.
3. Free linear scoring & weight recording of all weanlings (including progeny of other sires).
4. €50 cash payment for female replacements from maternal and link sires.
5. Complimentary beef management reports focused on increasing beef profit.

In order to avail of these incentives, participating herds will have to meet certain conditions regarding test bull usage and data recording. For example, herds will be required to bring a minimum of 6 replacements into the herd in 2008. A copy of the full set of conditions is given in the attached contract, which you are required to sign to apply for entry to the 2005 program.

If you require any further information on the GENE IRELAND beef program, then please contact Animal Events (1850 625 626) or alternatively email [geneireland@icbf.com](mailto:geneireland@icbf.com).

We look forward to working with you in this new and exciting initiative for Irish cattle breeding.

Yours sincerely

Brian Wickham  
Irish Cattle Breeding Federation

Bernard Eivers  
National Cattle Breeding Center

Dermot Cahill  
Dovea AI

## ***“G€N€ IRELAND” beef program 2005 - Application for membership***

**Farmer name**                 **Example Farm**  
**Address**                     **Address.**

***I the above named (or otherwise authorized person) apply to become a member of the G€N€ IRELAND beef program as a progeny test herd for the Spring 2005 AI season. I agree to be bound by the terms and conditions of the program as outlined:***

***Terms and conditions.***

- Sufficient test bull usage to ensure a minimum of 6 maternal female replacements in Spring 2008.
- Full participation in Animal Events recording including; (i) AI service data, (ii) birth data (ID & ancestry), (iii) calving data (e.g., mortality, calving difficulty), and (iv) health/management data (e.g., lameness, calf diseases).
- Progeny of test sires (and contemporaries) will be made available for weight recording & linear scoring at weanling stage (Autumn 2006).
- Surplus female replacements will be sold through specially arranged “G€N€ IRELAND” beef replacement sales.
- The program will not be liable for loss due to the use of bulls from the program.
- Entry to the program will be at the discretion of the program partners.

***Semen requirements for Spring 2005 AI season..***

1. How many straws do you require for breeding suckler herd replacements. Please note that the minimum number of straws that can be ordered is 30 straws, i.e., 30 straws are required to get a minimum of 5 maternal replacements and 1 replacement from a link sire (link sires will include bulls suitable for use on young beef cows – see attached listing)? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How many straws do you require from terminal sires? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How many straws do you require from “link” bulls (in addition to the above)? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Which of the following breeds would you not be prepared to receive semen from? (Angus, Belgian Blue, Charolais, Hereford, Limousin, Simmental)? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Are you on DIY AI? If so, please indicate your DIY license number? \_\_\_\_\_
6. If not, which of the program partners (Munster AI, PG or Dovea AI) will you be using for your test bull inseminations? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What is your mobile telephone number? \_\_\_\_\_

I ..... apply for membership to the G€N€ IRELAND beef program Spring 2005. Furthermore, I agree to the terms and conditions of the program as outlined above.

Signature of herd-owner.....:..... Date:.....  
(or authorized person)

***Please note that herd-owners interested in becoming involved in the Spring 2005 program should return the above application form by Friday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2005. Applications should be returned to G€N€ IRELAND Beef, Animal Events, PO Box 72, West Cork Technology Park, Clonakilty, Co. Cork.***