



UPDATE – for period 12th – 18th February 2005

1 ICBF Priorities – Greater Profit for Irish Farmers

Cattle breeding in Ireland is rapidly becoming the envy of much of the world. This is due to its fully integrated cattle breeding database, the ease with which farmers can provide data and access information, the removal duplication of effort and the links with DAF's calf registration and CMMS systems. ICBF and its members are working in a unique partnership to deliver substantially more profitable cattle to Irish farmers.

Over the next few years ICBF will be focusing its attention in a number of areas including:

- In increasing the number of herds making full use of Animal Events recording in partnership with all its members and the wider industry. Our goal is to add another 8,000 herds in 2005 and to reach at least 60% of calves born by 2008.
- In partnership with our Milk Recording members, rolling out the electronic DIY milk recording service as part of an overall plan to increase the level of milk recording by 10% per year for each of the next three years. Two new cells (van, driver, and meters suitable to service 150 to 200 herds each) are being established by Dairygold for spring 2005 and several other Milk Recording organisations will also implement the service in 2005.
- Working with our AI members (and the National Stud) to locate the best possible team of young bulls for progeny testing in Ireland. The database, genetic evaluation system and Tully are key elements of our strategy for 2005 and future years.
- To establish a targeted-herd progeny test scheme for both dairy and beef bulls in partnership with our AI members (and the National Stud). Immediate priority is the group of bulls ready for test inseminations in spring 2005.
- Implementing the use of handheld computers linked to the ICBF database for AI technicians contracted by our AI members. A group of some 25 technicians will use these for the spring mating season in 2005 and many more are planned for the autumn of 2005.
- Implementing new profit-focused genetic evaluations for beef cattle. Our plan is to introduce these for AI bulls in the next two months and to extend them to pedigree herds later in 2005. Further enhancements will be made as the data recorded in the database improves in quality and quantity and our links with beef populations in other countries develop.
- Continuously improving the EBI, our profit-focused evaluation system for dairy cattle. Our priority for 2005 is udder health and making best use of linear traits.
- Extending the use of the database to provide better information for use by advisors and veterinarians to assist cattle farmers in increasing their profitability.

This list of priorities is all part of our overall plan to ensure Irish cattle farmers have the benefit of a world-class breeding system. The amount of farm profitability at stake is enormous. For example, moving from current progress of €6, per lactation per year, to the optimal rate of €23, per lactation per year, for the Holstein breed is equivalent, over a ten year period, to an increase in milk payment of more than 10 cents / gallon. Similarly large returns are achievable from beef breeding.

In summary, we are facing an unprecedented opportunity to improve farm profitability. This requires that the cattle breeding industry works together in partnership and makes full use of the very best science and technology available.

2 Cattle Breeding – Important Dates

- **10:30 – 13:00 on Thursday 24th February**, at the Abbeyleix Manor Hotel. Beef Genetic Evaluation Consultation Meeting. ICBF will present the outcome of its ongoing work to develop profit-based genetic evaluations for beef cattle. This meeting is open to representatives of ICBF member organisations and to representatives of private AI Organisations.

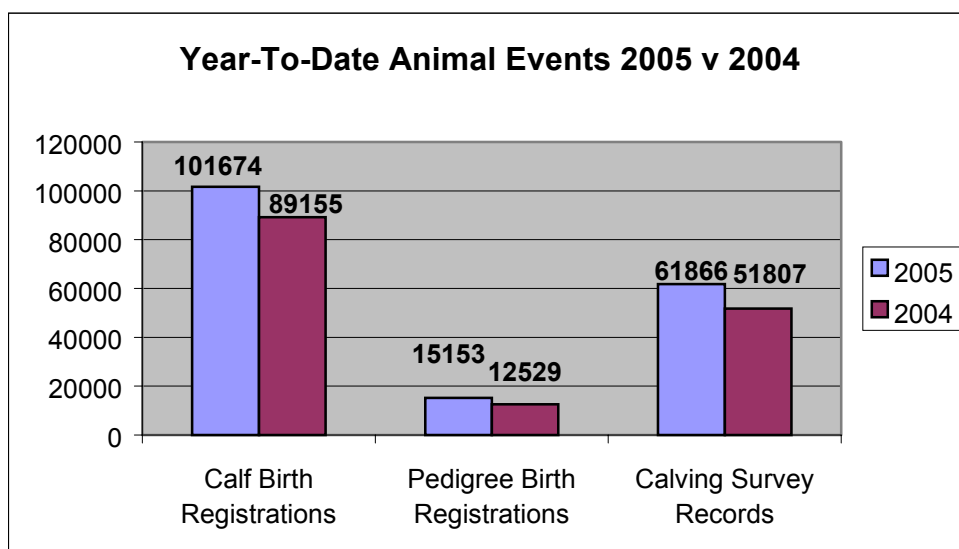
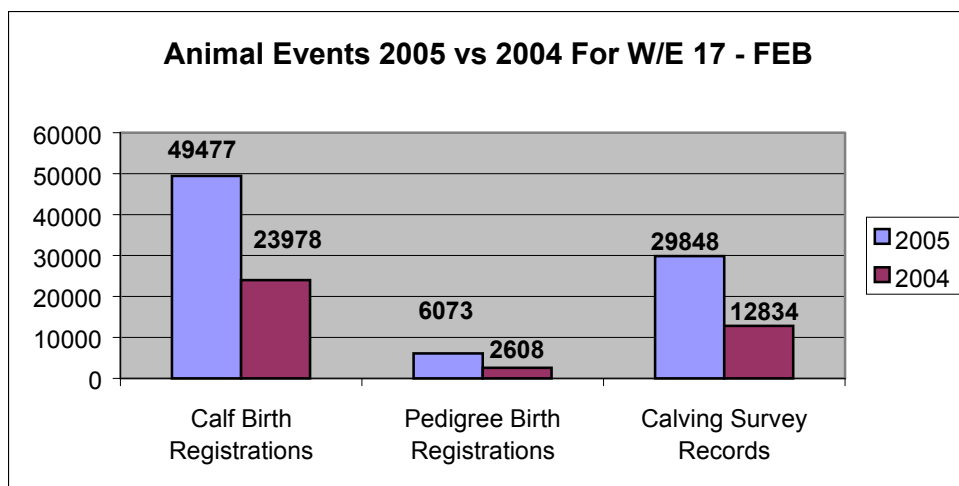


Agenda items include:

- a) Developments in genetic evaluations for beef production traits, including feed intake - Roel Veerkamp.
- b) Developments in genetic evaluations for cow survival and fertility - Roel Veerkamp.
- c) Economic Indexes for AI sires, including bull listings - Andrew Cromie.
- **8pm on Wednesday 2nd March**, at the Blarney Park Hotel, Blarney. The Cork Holstein Friesian Club has invited speakers from ICBF and the cattle breeding industry to discuss a number of topics including the enhanced EBI and its implications for breeders. This meeting is open to all interested in Holstein Friesian breeding.
- **10:30 – 17:00 on Saturday 5th March**, at Tully, Kildare. Performance tested bull sale. Sale commences at 12:30. 105 bulls on sale.

3 Database Update

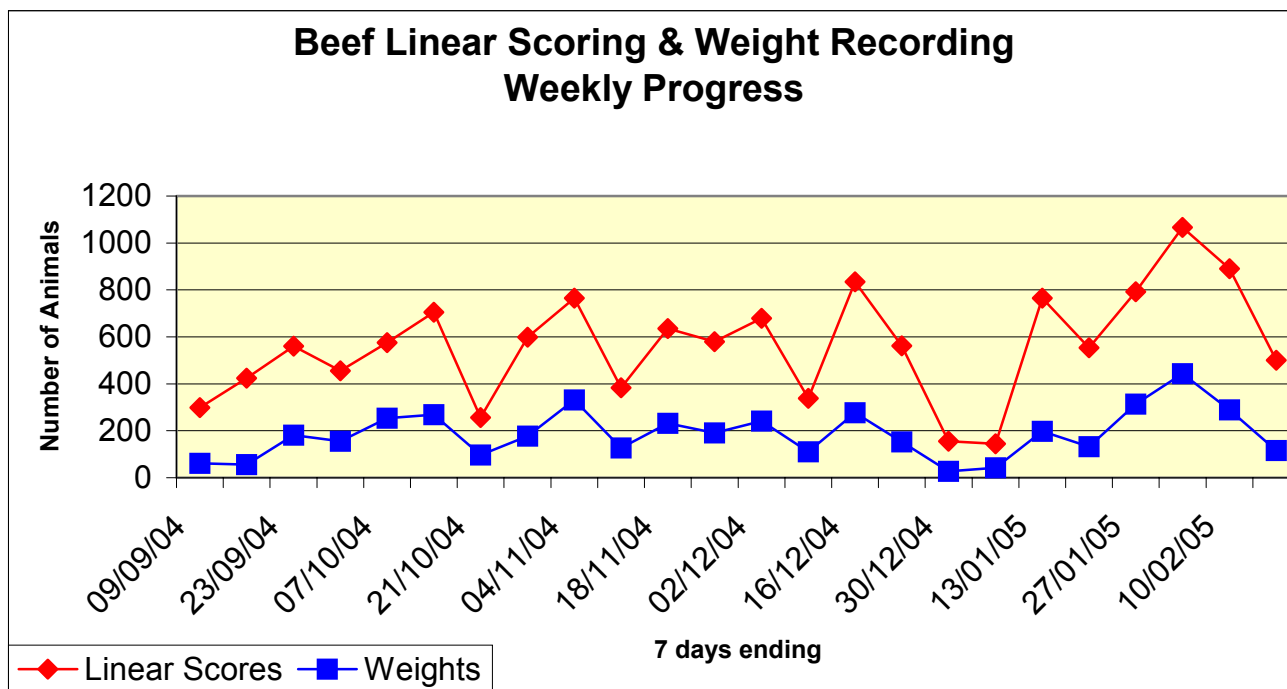
- 103 new herds added to the database.
- Comment from the staff in the Animal Events office:
"Very busy here this week. A lot of Animal Events sheets coming in and nearly all full with Calf registrations (i.e. 10 calvings per sheet). New herd Authorisation forms down on last week and very few dry-off sheets coming in."
- 3,002 Teagasc ICBF permission forms have now been returned by Teagasc clients. A meeting with Teagasc this week has mapped out a process to have all advisor/client relationships finalised by the end of January. A similar process has now begun for the Teagasc beef clients and 8,500 Teagasc beef clients will be receiving letters next week.
- The process of loading of the latest dairy genetic evaluations began last weekend and is on-going.
- The remaining Annual Milk Recording reports have been generated this week and are being sent to the milk recording organisations
- Work on the generating complete statistics from the database for 2004 is on-going.
- Modifications to DNA label processing for herd books should be completed this week.





- Work on the full integration of SMS text messaging to the database is continuing.

4 Beef Linear Scoring & Weight Recording



5 Milk Recording Processing

Milk Recording Organisation	Herds Recorded Week 11/02/05 - 18/02/05
Progressive	316
SWS	129
Dairygold	109
Kerry	64
Connacht	14
Tipperary	8
Arrabawn	8
Total	648

6 Genetic Evaluations – Dairy

- The first results from the February 2005 genetic evaluations for Holstein Friesians have been distributed today.
- New formula for EBI** - the new formula for EBI includes information on calving performance and beef traits. This data has been derived from the cattle breeding database (some 850,000 calving performance records have now been recorded through the Animal Events system) and from factories (some 300,000 slaughter records/year). Whilst the relative importance of these new traits is relatively low (i.e., 2% for



beef and 6% for calving compared to 63% for milk production and 29% for fertility - see attached listing of the top 30 bulls), they still have an impact on overall farm profit. It is for this reason that ICBF took the decision to include these new traits in the EBI. Further work is continuing on other traits, e.g., udder health, mastitis, functional type and lameness with a view to incorporating these traits into future versions of the EBI.

- **Information on sub-indexes.** Four sub-indexes have been identified and are published for the first time. These sub-indexes include information on the relevant traits weighted according to their economic values. The four sub-indexes are;
 - a) milk production (comprising of milk kg, fat kg and protein kg),
 - b) fertility (comprising of CI days and Survival %),
 - c) calving performance (comprising of direct calving difficulty, maternal calving difficulty, gestation length and calf mortality), and
 - d) beef performance (comprising of carcass weight, carcass grade, carcass fat score and cull cow carcass weight).

Summing each of these values (for the relevant sub-indexes) results in the EBI value for the individual bull. The new sub-indexes are a major step forward for the dairy industry and will quickly allow farmers identify the strong and weak points of any given bull. For example, the bull **NHS** has a high EBI (€90), due to the very high value of the milk produced by his daughters (€85) rather than any noticeable improvement in their fertility, calving or beef performance.

- **Information on new traits related to calving and beef performance.** Again for the first time, farmers have access to new genetic evaluations (Predicted Differences) for calving performance (calving difficulty, gestation length and mortality) and beef performance (carcass weight, grade, fat score and cull cow carcass weight). These new values, derived from the cattle breeding database, have now replaced existing values for these traits. Where a bull had no records in Ireland for a given trait, e.g., a recently imported bull, then parent average proofs have been calculated (based on $0.5 * \text{Sire} + 0.25 * \text{MGS} + 0.125 * \text{MGGS}$) where possible for the bull.
- **Feedback on the new changes.** Feedback on the new changes has been very positive with farmers expressing satisfaction that the EBI is now more clearly identifying "*solid functional cows with high milk solids and good fertility*". ICBF are continuing to meet and discuss the changes through the current Teagasc/ICBF initiatives on "Breeding for Profit" and would welcome other opportunities to meet and discuss the changes with other farmer/industry groups.

7 Tully

- Official BLUPs for the bulls for sale on the 5-3-05 will be up on the ICBF web site by the 19-2-05.
- The performance test for the October intake will finish on the 23-2-05, and results will be up on the ICBF web site on the 25-2-05.
- Judging of the FBD prize winners will take place on the 25-2-05.
- An open day will be held at Tully on 19-2-05, all are welcome.

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Table 1. EBI evaluations for Holstein Friesian AI Bulls - February 2005 (minimum reliability = 50% and DOB > 1st Jan 1988). Top 30 on EBI.

Bull Details		EBI & Sub Indexes						Milk Production							Fertility		Calving					Beef					
Rk	Code	EBI	Rel	Production	Fertility	Calving	Beef	Recs	Herds	M Rel	M kg	F kg	P kg	F%	P%	CI Days	SURV	Recs	% CD	M CD	GL	Mort	Recs	C Wt	C Conf	C Fat	Cull Wt
1	HNN	€129	80	€58	€60	-€2	€13	185	90	96	71	9.5	9.5	0.12	0.12	-6.4	1.3	15	-0.2	1.0	0.2	0.0	10	11.7	0.5	0.0	4.0
2	UYC	€123	88	€74	€49	€7	-€7	975	167	99	62	17.5	10.0	0.26	0.14	-3.6	2.2	3023	-0.8	0.6	-1.4	0.3	299	-5.9	0.0	0.2	-12.2
3	BWZ	€120	60	€83	€11	€21	€6	0	0	75	257	23.4	13.2	0.25	0.09	-0.3	0.8	229	-2.5	0.8	-2.6	-1.0	0	5.4	0.1	0.0	4.3
4	RUU	€120	73	€50	€53	€12	€5	77	52	91	166	14.5	8.0	0.14	0.04	-4.7	1.8	33	-0.6	-0.6	-1.7	-0.7	0	4.5	0.2	0.0	2.9
5	SPW	€108	89	€73	€21	€16	-€2	450	89	98	-7	11.5	10.5	0.21	0.19	-1.7	0.9	153	-2.9	1.7	-2.4	0.3	90	1.5	0.3	0.6	-14.5
6	MAU	€105	98	€59	€30	€7	€10	15245	3649	99	192	11.0	11.0	0.06	0.08	-3.3	0.6	450	0.1	-1.3	-1.0	-0.4	761	9.2	0.3	0.0	3.5
7	HCM	€103	77	€55	€35	€13	€1	0	0	94	678	15.0	16.6	-0.18	-0.10	-2.4	1.6	0	-3.3	0.8	-1.0	0.1	0	1.8	0.2	0.3	-3.1
8	ERC	€101	79	€77	€25	-€11	€9	225	81	95	180	19.5	12.0	0.21	0.10	-2.2	0.9	255	1.4	-0.3	1.1	0.8	70	8.7	0.3	0.0	1.2
9	OJI	€100	52	€77	€14	€5	€4	0	0	69	555	21.0	17.3	0.00	-0.02	0.5	1.6	29	-1.5	0.3	-0.4	0.2	0	4.4	0.2	0.1	0.1
10	DVJ	€99	55	€36	€56	€7	€0	0	0	71	104	12.7	4.8	0.16	0.03	-5.2	1.8	58	-3.1	0.3	0.0	0.5	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
11	ZRR	€99	93	€77	€1	€12	€9	774	304	99	238	20.5	12.5	0.19	0.08	-0.5	-0.2	88	-1.8	0.5	-0.9	-1.4	83	8.6	0.0	-0.1	10.6
12	QGZ	€98	56	€85	€12	€1	€0	35	25	78	204	19.0	14.0	0.19	0.12	-0.2	1.0	10	-0.1	-0.5	0.2	-0.2	7	-0.7	-0.2	-0.1	1.2
13	AXA	€98	78	€56	€34	€9	-€2	139	90	95	253	14.5	10.5	0.08	0.04	-2.6	1.5	14	-2.1	0.5	-0.8	-0.2	0	-1.9	0.0	0.1	-3.3
14	BWH	€97	55	€43	€53	€3	-€2	0	0	70	126	12.6	6.5	0.15	0.04	-4.9	1.7	87	-0.5	0.0	-0.1	-0.4	0	-1.3	0.1	0.2	-6.3
15	SRH	€96	93	€10	€84	€11	-€9	834	304	99	292	3.0	5.5	-0.13	-0.07	-6.9	3.3	604	-2.4	0.4	-0.4	-1.1	63	-7.7	-0.5	0.0	-2.6
16	WAL	€96	57	€67	€25	€6	-€2	0	0	74	188	18.9	10.2	0.22	0.07	-2.0	1.0	40	-2.3	0.7	-0.1	0.0	0	-1.6	0.1	0.1	-3.8
17	THG	€96	55	€63	€33	€0	€0	0	0	74	190	11.8	11.6	0.09	0.10	-3.1	1.0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
18	HZO	€95	54	€75	€18	€1	€0	0	0	67	519	12.2	18.8	-0.13	0.03	-0.1	1.6	232	-0.9	0.0	0.1	0.4	0	0.4	0.3	0.1	-5.1
19	FYG	€94	69	€47	€44	€8	-€5	0	0	77	-11	16.5	4.1	0.32	0.09	-4.9	0.9	36	-2.2	0.8	-0.6	0.1	24	-4.1	0.1	0.2	-7.2
20	HMB	€94	78	€75	€9	€16	-€6	136	66	95	161	23.5	10.0	0.29	0.08	-0.4	0.6	53	-0.8	-0.7	-2.3	-0.9	26	-3.7	-0.2	0.2	-7.0
21	HKC	€94	51	€61	€33	€0	€0	0	0	72	294	14.7	12.0	0.07	0.04	-3.2	0.9	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
22	WDH	€94	91	€54	€32	€0	€8	1242	448	99	-125	8.5	6.0	0.24	0.19	-2.5	1.4	9	-1.3	0.1	0.8	0.2	55	6.9	0.4	0.0	1.6
23	HTP	€94	78	€74	€26	€1	-€7	146	98	95	151	22.5	10.0	0.28	0.08	-1.6	1.4	23	0.2	-0.2	0.0	-0.4	16	-5.9	0.0	0.2	-9.4
24	KTE	€93	64	€72	-€2	€13	€10	72	53	87	90	23.0	8.5	0.33	0.09	0.3	0.1	38	-1.1	-0.2	-1.9	-0.4	22	9.1	0.3	-0.1	4.6
25	JRF	€92	65	€50	€50	-€7	-€1	0	0	83	206	10.3	9.8	0.05	0.06	-3.6	2.3	0	1.6	-0.6	0.8	0.1	0	-0.1	-0.2	0.0	0.7
26	WAU	€91	54	€44	€38	€13	-€3	0	0	68	-26	8.5	5.5	0.18	0.12	-3.1	1.5	99	-3.4	0.8	-0.8	-0.3	0	-2.9	0.3	0.1	-7.2
27	NHS	€90	82	€86	€1	€4	-€1	232	137	95	130	17.5	13.5	0.21	0.15	0.3	0.3	4236	-0.8	-0.7	-0.3	0.2	226	1.1	0.0	0.3	-4.8
28	LBO	€90	98	€52	€43	€6	-€10	7960	1471	99	339	14.5	11.0	0.03	-0.01	-2.9	2.1	1570	-1.1	-1.0	-0.3	0.1	822	-6.7	0.0	0.6	-11.5
29	SLW	€90	59	€41	€43	-€1	€6	0	0	70	5	10.8	4.8	0.20	0.09	-4.1	1.3	388	-0.7	-0.3	0.2	0.9	13	4.1	0.3	-0.2	2.8
30	DRH	€89	78	€54	€34	-€4	€4	215	83	95	54	13.0	7.5	0.19	0.10	-3.6	0.9	231	1.2	0.2	0.3	-0.5	67	3.5	0.1	-0.1	2.2