



UPDATE – for period 17<sup>th</sup> July – 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2004

## 1. Linear Scoring for Dairy & Dual Purpose Breeds

- A meeting was held yesterday (22nd July) at the TEAGASC Ballydague research farm to discuss the linear scoring of other dairy and dual-purpose breeds. Some 25 people attended from ICBF, the various breed societies (Shorthorn, Jersey, Holstein Friesian, Normande, Montbelliarde and Rotbunte) and the AI organisations.
- The proposition centered on extending the current set of linear traits (as scored by Holstein Friesian), to incorporate the requirements of these other breeds (and cross-breeds). Live animals from a number of these breeds (including the Norwegian Red) were available for scoring, which was carried out by Rob Hancock, head of classification for Irish Holstein Friesian Association. After some initial concerns (in the earlier desk-based session), it became apparent that the traits (and scales) used by the Holstein Friesian breed could be applied for other breeds for most of the traits. However, it was acknowledged that some further work would be required for some of the traits, notably stature, fore udder attachment, rump width and some of the dual-purpose beef traits. The proposition for these traits was that the 1-9 scale should be extended to take in the full range of dairy "phenotypes" for these traits.
- At the end of the meeting a research project was proposed and agreed. The main elements of this proposal were as follows:
  1. **Breed societies to forward herd ID's for some 4 or 5 herds (50 heifers in total) to ICBF by 31st July.**
  2. **ICBF to schedule IHFA to carry out inspection visits in these herds in the August September period.**
  3. **IHFA to score the animals using the same scale as is currently applied for the Holstein Friesian breed but with extensions added to the scale as required for the various traits and breeds (e.g., -2, -1, 0 & 10, 11, 12 etc).**
  4. **Breed societies wishing to have a representative present for the linear scoring may do so.**
  5. **Data will be sent to ICBF, who will present the results from the work at a meeting to be convened in October. A proposition regarding the routine inspections of these other breeds and cross-breeds will also be presented at that meeting.**
- ICBF acknowledged TEAGASC for their assistance in the provision of facilities and cows for the meeting and to everyone who attended in what was an excellent session.

## 2. Database Project

### a) Newly Live Herdbooks

- 328 new attempted pedigree registrations received during the past week.
- 41 new Beef Herds added to the database.
- Work is continuing on streamlining the DNA process for the herdbooks.
- Work on the issuing of birth acknowledgements for the Limousin society directly from IRIS has been completed and a test run will be issued next week with a live run issued the following week.
- A run of herd BLUP reports was delivered to the Charolais Office this week.

### b) Other database activities

- A good response has been received on the Concentrate input report sent out last week - over 250 text messages with June and July feed input figures have been received from farmers. This is an extremely cost efficient way to get information from farmers.
- The development process for extending the Linear scoring application to cover dairy traits is under way and will be available for testing within two weeks or so. There are two components to the



software change: (a) the addition of extra traits (b) the modification of the software so that it can be used on a more robust handheld device.

- The entrance applications for bulls to Tully have been generated from the database for the Sept '04 intake and have been sent to breeders.
- A streamlining of the sire error reporting to farmers is taking place and will be completed next week.
- A technical strategy for publishing database information through the internet (e.g. Herdbook enquiries through herd book websites) is being finalised and is expected to be completed in the next two weeks.
- Some requests for information from suppliers in relation to the development of an AI handheld application have been received and are being reviewed. This application will be piloted during the autumn AI season with a full roll-out planned for the Spring 2005 AI season.

### 3. Milk Recording Operations

- No. Herdowners Milk Recorded in IRIS YTD = 5,993

Progressive	1,979
Dairygold	1,580
Kerry	1,088
SWS	962
Tipperary	146
Connacht Gold	120
Nenagh	118

- Weekly Update - No. herd tests processed in last 7 days = 1,070

Progressive	365
Dairygold	288
Kerry	187
SWS	147
Connacht Gold	28
Nenagh	28
Tipperary	27

### 4. Genetic Evaluations

#### a) Calving interval and survival

- A new method was used to derive conversion equations in this run. This de-regression method was introduced to correct the overestimation of the genetic correlation between countries and hence reliabilities of converted proofs by the least square method used previously, when the mean reliability of common bulls was low for a particular trait. The correlation between converted proofs with both methods average .99 so there was no major change in the converted proofs due to this new method.
- A change has also been made with the inclusion of calving interval records up to a maximum of 800 days (compared with 600 days previously) to accommodate recycled cows. This increased the total number of records used in the evaluation by 42,691 (5%). Phenotypic mean calving interval increased from 381±50, 380±48 and 378±47 for lactations 1, 2 and 3 respectively in the previous run to 395±80, 392±77 and 389±73 days respectively in the current run. Thus means the average calving interval increased by about 4% while the number of cows surviving across the three lactations increased by about 1%. The effect of this is a slight drop in the mean PTA for calving interval compared to the previous evaluation. A more detailed comparison of the old and new proofs will be prepared before the release of proofs.

#### b) Conformation traits

- Computation of domestic breeding values for conformation traits for bulls and cows have been completed.



- All proofs with the exception of the Interbull proofs are being prepared for loading to IRIS today. Our aim is to ensure that ICBF proofs will be released this time on 11<sup>th</sup> August, two days after the Interbull proofs are made official which is scheduled for 9<sup>th</sup> of August.

## 5. Tully

- A total of 1,800 applications have been sent out for the next intake (sale March 2005) to breed societies and breeders as follows: Charolais 712, Limousin 533, Hereford 273, Simmental 172, Saler 40, Belgian Blue 28, Aubrac 19, Blonde 17, Piemontese 3. Blank Application forms have been sent to the Angus & Parthenaise Society Secretaries. The closing date for receipt of applications is 9th August 2004.
- The December '03 intake will have their second TB test on Tuesday 3rd August. Following this they will be advertised for sale in the Farmers Journal.
- A group of Welsh Aberdeen Angus breeders will visit Tully on 29th July.

## 6. International Beef Genetic Evaluations

- Attached is a short report of the work Sandrine Antunes has conducted at ICBF for the Charolais and Limousin breeds. She has now started work on the other French breeds.
- The work reported is part of the ICBF lead initiative to develop operational systems for international beef genetic evaluations.
- Sandrine Antunes is a student from France working at ICBF for the summer of 2004.
- In time, as international beef genetic evaluations become fully operational the “501 file” referred to in Sandrine’s report will become a fully international file. Every country and breed participating in the international evaluations will use it to record and validate the identification of foreign-born animals and ancestors. It is planned that the file itself will be held by INTERBULL on behalf of the international community of beef cattle breeders and accessed over the Internet.

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Work on the “501 file”

**Sandrine Antunes, July 2004**

More than 10 % of the Charolais and Limousin calves registered in the Irish herd books (11,317 Charolais and 7,874 Limousin animals) were born in France (Figure 1). Further, many of the Irish born animals have French born ancestors (Figure 2).

Consequently, there is a lot of relevant performance data in France for these French relatives of Irish calves. In order to facilitate International Genetic Evaluations, it is essential to know which French animals have relatives in foreign herd books such as Ireland.

The aim of the “501 file” is to link the identification codes in the country where the animals or their relatives are producing and their identification in their country of birth. This makes it possible to create an international identification based on the identification code of the country of birth, which will, in the future, be the only one used to identify any animal all around the world for international genetic evaluations.

French animals in the Irish Herd Book files were identified by comparing the format of their identification codes with the French ones. The validity of the Irish codes was verified by checking their existence in the French database (SIG, Genetic Information System).

Where a match was found, the correct details of the animal were entered in the “501 file” and the animal was coded as ‘validated’. Where there was no match in the French database, the information from the herd book was entered in the “501 file” but the validation code was set to ‘Not validated’. The information for these animals was subsequently forwarded to the French herd book /database managers for clarification. It is intended that the Irish herd book will follow up on these non-validated animals.

Figure 1: French born calves registered in the Irish herd books

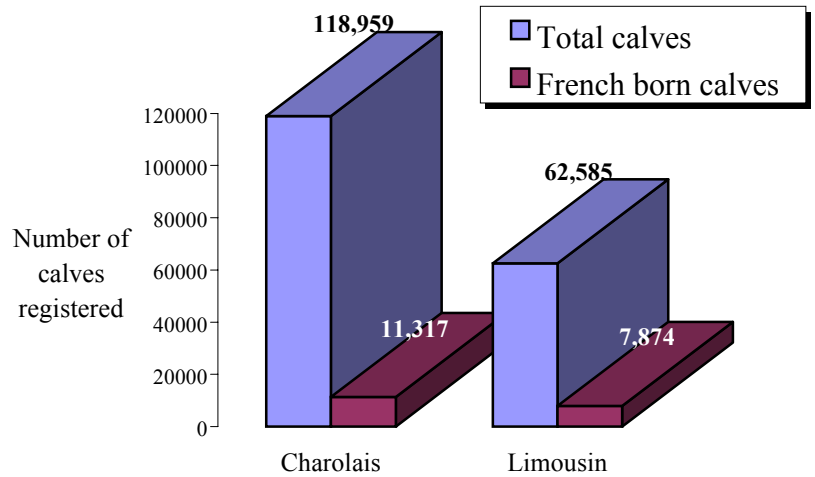


Figure 2: Irish born calves in the Herd Books

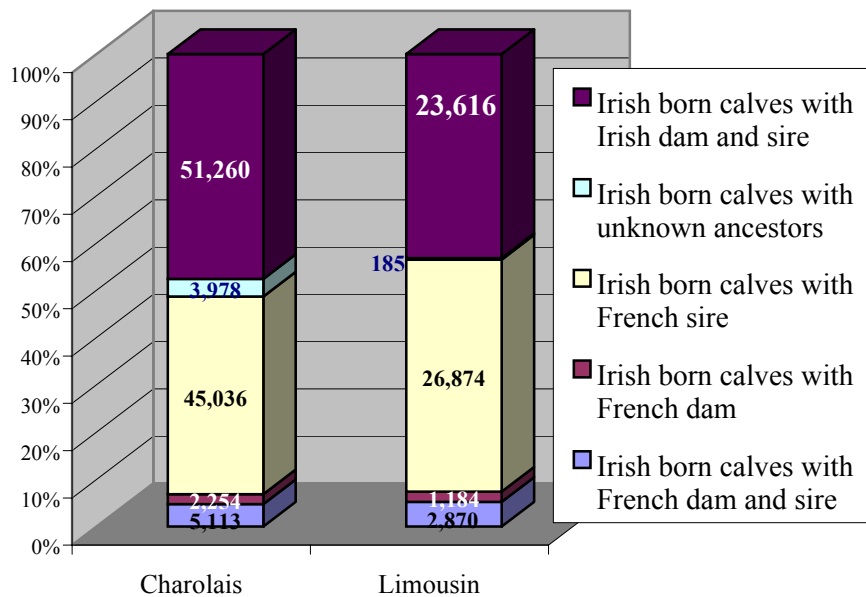
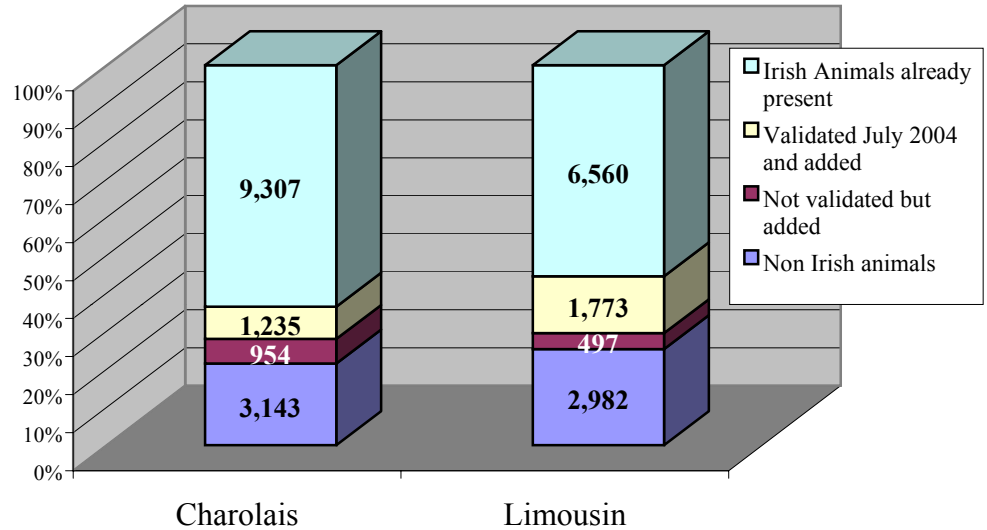




Figure 3 shows the composition of the “501 file” as at July 2004 showing the number of validated, non-validated and existing Irish animals in the “501 file”.

Some of the Irish codes could not be validated mostly because of typing mistakes in the identification codes (missing digits, added digits...). Moreover, in the Irish Herd Book files, more than 50 % of the French animals did not have any information about the ancestors, or the date of birth. Most of the time, the validation was based on the correspondence between the sex and name data in the French database and the Irish Herd Book files.

Figure 3: Composition of Latest Charolais and Limousin 501 file, July 2004



23<sup>rd</sup> July 2004