



UPDATE – for period 18th to 24th September 2004

1 Millstreet Dairy Event – Saturday 16th October

- In partnership IHFA, milk recording, AI and ICBF are organizing a joint stand at this year's Millstreet Dairy Event to provide dairy farmers with information on recent developments in cattle breeding.
- Dairy farmers are being offered a chance to see the future of cattle breeding at Millstreet this year. We are urging all commercial dairy farmers, farm advisers and veterinarians to make a special effort to be at Millstreet this year. Those that attend will experience three firsts for Millstreet.
- For the first time an entirely new way of milk recording will be on display. Featured will be the new electronic DIY milk recording system currently on trial on Irish farmers. This system has great potential to make milk recording a more attractive option for the many herds not currently realizing the benefits of the management information that is now part of milk recording.
- For the first time, the ICBF database that now lies at the heart of cattle breeding in Ireland will be at Millstreet. IHFA, Milk Recording and ICBF staff will be manning the computers and are looking forward to showing it to farmers and discussing any issues they have. The database is providing farmers with management information that is helping them make greater profits. Farmers no longer have to be on milk recording to start benefiting from the database. Every dairy (and suckler) farmer wishing to improve their profitability should now be signing up at least to use animal events.
- For the first time the impact of the EBI on bull selection will be on display. Over the last year Munster Cattle Breeding and Progressive Genetics have been working closely with ICBF to locate Irish bulls for progeny testing in 2005. Using EBI as the main criteria for selection a group of high EBI bulls have been chosen. The dams of some of these bulls will be at Millstreet on display. With EBIs all over +€80 these are the type of cows that Irish farmers can expect to see more of in the future.
- Attending will be members of the ICBF and TEAGASC scientific team who are working on further improving the EBI. This will be a great opportunity to meet with them and to have your questions answered in person.
- The developments that will be on display at Millstreet have the potential to add €100 million to dairy farmers' annual incomes.

2 Genetic Evaluations – Consultation Meetings 13th & 14th October

- Beef Genetic evaluation developments will be discussed at a consultation meeting with the industry on Wednesday 13th October in Port Laois. Invitations and the draft agenda were distributed this week.
- Dairy Genetic evaluations developments will be discussed on at a consultation meeting with the industry on Thursday 14th October at Moorepark. Invitations and the draft agenda were distributed this week.

3 Tully Beef Bull Performance Test Centre

- A group of students from Greenmount College will visit Tully on Tuesday 28th September.
- Applications for the November intake will be generated from the ICBF data base and sent out to breeders by 29-09-04. The closing date for applications is the 6-10-04. Inspections will start on the 11-10-04. The entry date is set for 20-11-04. A sale will take place in May 2005 if the quality and numbers are good enough.
- Preparations are nearly finished for the entry of the October intake. All sheds are disinfected and yards bedded with fresh bark mulch. The entry date for this intake is from the 30-09-04 to 9-10-04.

4 Database Update

- 1,383 new attempted pedigree (all breeds including Holstein Friesian) registrations received during the past week.



- 35 new herds added to the database
- Self-service management reporting for herdbooks has been released to all herdbooks.
- Work is currently underway to prepare for the October run of EBI reports to farmers.
- SMS text messages were issued to 1,200 farmers this week, asking for feed intake values for August and September (to be returned by text message). A new concentrate input report will be issued next week to these farmers, incorporating this data.
- A new Grade-Up form has been developed for the Shorthorn Society, which of course can be used by any society involved in grading-up animals. The advantage of this form is that it is generated from the ICBF database and incorporates any information that is already available on an animal, thus reducing the amount of data that needs to be recorded and removing the scope for errors. A copy of the form will be issued in next weeks update.

5 TEAGASC & ICBF Database

- A meeting with TEAGASC was held this week around the development of an on-line fertility reporting capability.
- It was agreed that ICBF and TEAGASC would work together to ensure that all TEAGASC clients (beef and dairy) are participating in animal events. This recruitment into animal events will be integrated with the overall programme for extending animal events to all farmers using artificial insemination.
- The arrangement for TEAGASC advisers to access on-line fertility and other management reports will be similar to that for Veterinarians and other advisers. That is, the farmer will decide who ICBF is to make the reports available to.
- TEAGASC scientists are also able to access the ICBF database in the course of their research. The arrangement is that the scientist makes a request to ICBF with details of the research proposed and the data requested. Where possible these requests for data are met. All data supplied for research use is subject to the data not being used for any other purposes and being kept confidential.
- This sharing of data between ICBF and TEAGASC is providing further cost savings and improving the quality of information being used for farmer decision-making.

6 Milk Recording

Summary of Milk Recording to date

Milk Recording Organisation	Herds Recorded in Last Week	Herds Recorded year to date
Progressive	493	2,199
Dairygold	279	1,594
Kerry	119	1,092
SWS	172	963
Connacht	13	120
Arrabawn	11	118
Tipperary	17	147
Total	1,104	6,233



Electronic DIY - Commercial Trial Update (24/09/04)

- **Background** - Based on the positive results from the Spring 2004 Pilot study in Dairygold, the ICBF Board gave a mandate to the Project team to ramp up one full DIY “Cell” using Tru Test Electronic meters. This DIY cell is to be run as a Commercial trial for the second half of 2004.
- **Project team** –Mary O Keeffe – Dairygold MR Manager, Brian Coughlan – ICBF- trainer, Carmel Hanley – Dairygold MR Office – trainer, Pat O Connor – Technician, Martin Burke, (ICBF). Donagh Berry (Teagasc), Eileen Lane (Dairygold MR Office), and Denis Kelliher (Field Recruitment).
- **Progress report** - We had already 18 herds from Pilot. We've switched and retrained the balance of Pat's herds = another 17. Dairygold have recruited another 70 new herds. Kerry Coop have recruited a further 15 herds. So to date we have 70+17+18+15 = 120 herds in the Cell.
- **Recruitment** - We sent a Dairygold field staff member out on the road armed with an information pack and a targeted regional list of Dairygold Suppliers who produce more than 35,000 gallons per year and who were not milk recording. His mission was to get farmers to sign up for two DIY tests this year and who would be interested in signing up for the 2005 season. Up to Sep 22nd here is his success rate:

No. Herds visited:	290
No. Herds Recruited:	70 (24% hit rate)
Average Herd size (recruited herds):	56
Average No Units/Parlour (recruited):	9



Figure 1. Mary O Keeffe, Brian Coughlan, Carmel Hanley, Pat O Connor in front of new van for delivering electronic meters.

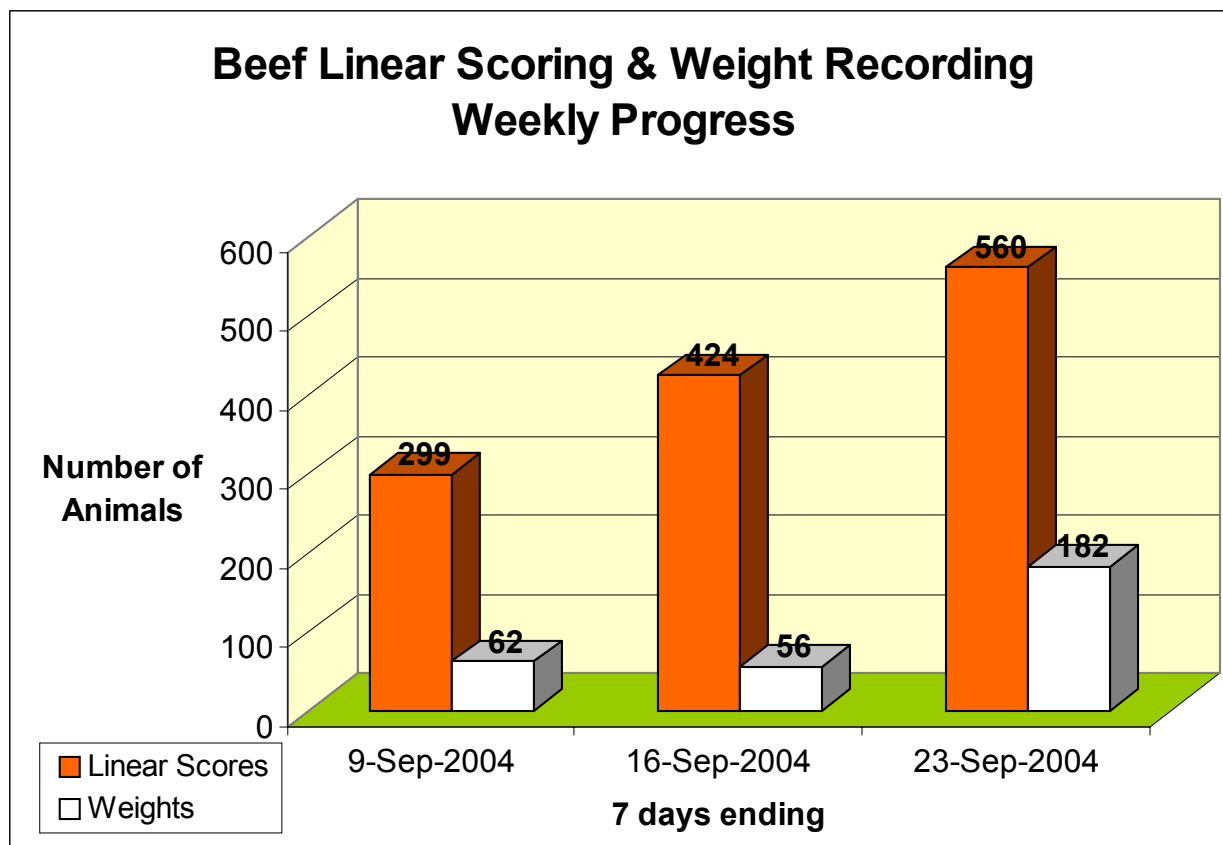
7 International Beef Genetic Evaluations meeting in Paris Friday 17th September

- **Attending:** Representatives from INTERBULL, MLC, Institut de l'Elevage, INRA, AGBU and ICBF.
- **Final Meeting of Pilot Project:** Final reports were provided by the two research groups – INRA and AGBU. Also a report from ICBF (based on work of Sandrine Antunes). Main conclusions of the project are:
 - International evaluations are practical for Charolais and Limousin breeds (and by implication any other beef breed) for countries with common sires and adequate performance records.
 - The level of connections (common sires) does not have to be great for evaluations to give meaningful results.
 - Priority must be given to resolving identification differences for common animals between countries. The model for doing this, as developed by ICBF, should be further refined and used as the basis for exchanging identification and ancestry information between countries both for historical data and all future imports and exports.
 - The preferred method for computing evaluations is to use actual performance data from all relevant connected populations in an appropriate genetic evaluation model with genetic correlations between countries of less than 1.



- Consideration should be given to providing the relevant herd books with a briefing on the outcome of the research. Something associated with the Agriculture show in Paris in early 2005 should be considered.
- **Meeting of ICAR Task Force on International Beef Genetic Evaluations:** This group is developing a business plan for the provision of international beef genetic evaluations. The first draft was considered and further work agreed. A final report is expected by December 2004.

8 Beef Linear Scoring and Weight Recording



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:+3532320222) Fax office +353 (0)23 20229 E-Mail bwickham@icbf.com ICBF Web site www.icbf.com Assistant: Mary Madden.

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