



UPDATE – FOR WEEK 23RD FEBRUARY TO 27TH FEBRUARY 2004.

1. Beef Recording Technical Meeting – Thursday

a) Database

- Excellent progress with authorization forms – 5,661 members of herd books have provided completed forms as at 25th Feb.
- 3,846 registrations have been processed through the database for the seven herd books, apart from IHFA, currently “live” on the database.
- 1,250 registrations attempted to date via animal events.
- Good progress has been made with: establishing a faster front end for phone queries, resolving issues with linear scoring system, distribution of BLUP reports, setting up accounting system interfaces, and catalogue developments.
- Changes to facilitate separation of keepers and owners due to go live no later than 15th March.
- Other priorities for the month ahead include: distribution of MS-Access “back-up” and automated MS Excel backup, regular reports for Breed Societies to highlight potential registration problems, “live” distribution of details for billing, establishment of plan to ensure AI details (**see below – recording inseminations**) are loaded to IRIS on a regular basis, resolution of CMMS issues, reduce time taken for SORD uploads & downloads and loading of older ET data.

b) Genetic Evaluations

- Results of latest test run discussed. Some concerns expressed about the level of difficult calvings for breeds and bulls.
- Historical data from herd book files shows no correlation with animal events based evaluations for any of the breeds. On this basis a decision has been taken to not make further use of this data.
- Further test run to be conducted using updated pedigree files and all available animal events calving data. Results will be distributed for comment but not for publication.
- Another week of linear scoring is expected to give 1,000 Charolais animals scored in new system so that work to compute BLUPs combining data from new and old scores can commence.

c) Field Services Development

- Linear scorers workshop held on 19th Feb. All scorers tested with results going to Linear Scoring Standards Committee.
- Method of collecting money for scoring and paying scorers is under active discussion. Three options being considered.
- Weight recording – divergence of opinions between herd books. Some prefer compulsory weighing with others favoring voluntary. Linear scorers will transport weigh cells and collect weight results. Farmer must provide platform and weight cattle while scorer focuses on linear scoring inspections.
- Sale catalogues – system for extracting data from database for catalogue preparation in herd book office is now operational. Training to be provided to relevant herd book staff. System used for Tully sale catalogue.

d) Tully

- 80 bulls for sale on 6th March. Advertising underway. Judging completed.
- December intake of 65 bulls under test.
- Recruitment for April intake has commenced.



2. Beef Linear Scoring Standards Committee – Wednesday

- Endorsed system developed for summarizing results of scorer testing. System examines consistency between inspectors, repeatability of each inspector and use of scale.
- Procedure for re-scoring agreed. Under taken at request of herd-book. All animals re-inspected by different inspector with new scores replacing all old scores. Cost paid by herd owner. Results reviewed by committee of three – 1 herd book, 1 ICBF and 1 independent. Committee of three to make decision on extent to which herd owners costs to be refunded.
- Good progress made with definition and training of inspectors for breed specific traits.
- Age window for scoring to be reviewed with recommendations for next meeting.

3. Genetic Evaluations

a) Publication of proofs for bulls with AI codes in Ireland

Official EBI proofs have been published on the ICBF website (<http://www.icbf.com>) for all bulls with AI codes in Ireland. Proofs for foreign sires will become official next week (Friday 5th March).

b) Official publication of EBI proofs in cattle breeding database.

Official EBI proofs for cows have been loaded to the cattle breeding database, along with proofs for stock bulls (and AI bulls - see above). Proofs for young-stock have also been recalculated. Thus all proofs are now appearing as official from the cattle-breeding database.

c) Active Bull List

The ICBF Active Bull List has been compiled and distributed to AI organisations for their comment. This list will become official next week and will be published on the ICBF website (Wednesday 3rd March). This is a single list and will be used as the sole dairy breeding reference list for the Spring 2004 AI season.

4. Database Project

a) Newly Live Herdbooks

- 257 new pedigree registrations received during the past week.
- 70 new beef herds added to the database and Animal Events materials have been issued.
- A new extract of files for Limousin and Simmental BLUPS will be done this weekend.
- Some clean up on the names of Montbeliarde animals was completed.
- A meeting with the Jersey herdbook took place this week. A plan for moving swiftly forward was agreed. Certificates were distributed for verification. Missing tag reports will be issued to Jersey breeders and the herdbook secretary will be set up with access to the database as a matter of priority.
- The adding of vendor label printing functionality to the Sales Catalogue was completed.
- The issuing of a back-up database on excel was completed with the larger breed societies.
- The MRI herdbook data was loaded to the test database and verification will take place next week before loading to the production database.
- Work on batching the linear score reports with the pedigree certificates at breed society offices was started and will continue next week.
- Test files for billing purposes were issued to the larger breed societies.

b) Other database activities

- Reports supporting the issue of the latest EBI results as well as the active bull list were worked on.



- Preparation for the set-up of the back up database this weekend continued.
- A further batch of milk recording annual reports was issued.
- There is continued support of the Beef Linear scorers – 2,839 animals have been scored since Jan 20th.
- A meeting took place with E-Feirm this week, agreeing the format of files to be received to Animal Events of the animal registrations from this newly approved online registration solution. The format of files will be the same as those received from other software providers.

5. Tully Report

- Plans for the Tully Sale 6th March 2004 are progressing well.
- Judging took place on Tuesday the 24th of February and the results were published in the Farmers Journal on Wednesday 26th of February.
- Performance test results and up to date BLUP figures are available on the ICBF website.
- The catalogue has gone to print and will be available from Monday the 1st of March.

6. Milk Recording

a) Database Project

- No. Herdowners Milk Recorded in IRIS = 3,851

Dairygold	1,609
Progressive	1,305
SWS	494
Kerry	199
Nenagh	124
Connacht Gold	120
- No. Herd tests processed in IRIS = 13,878

Dairygold	7,151
Progressive	5,070
SWS	741
Connacht Gold	379
Nenagh	295
Kerry	242
- Weekly Update - No. herd tests processed in last 7 days = 646

Progressive	206
Dairygold	220
SWS	112
Kerry	97
Connacht Gold	11

b) ICBF/Dairygold Project - DIY Electronic Meters

On 25/02 we recorded a 3rd herd with the Tru Test Electronic Milk meter. (180 cows recorded on the day) Before we record further herds, the Foss machine in the lab needs program alterations to read the Tru test sample bottle barcode. We hope to complete these changes next week. Farmer Feedback on functionality and user friendliness of the system in the parlour has been very positive. We have now identified 16 herds for the pilot and will be running these over the next months.



7. Technician Inseminations – Details that must be recorded

At the Beef Recording Technical Committee meeting on Thursday it became clear that the guidelines for AI docketts were not being widely followed. For some AI organizations only 40% of inseminations can be matched to a cow in the database. The single largest problem is that the AI companies do not have a NID or BTE code for the herd. As a consequence, the herd books are facing the prospect of writing to farmers and asking for copies of their AI docketts or increasing the level of DNA testing. Either way the cost to farmers is significant.

The AI docket is a very important document for cattle breeders. The information it contains, if correctly recorded, can save a lot of hassle when identifying the resulting offspring.

The docket must at the very least identify the **technician**, the **herd** where the insemination took place, the **cow** inseminated, the **semen** used and the **date**. ICBF has established a standard for identifying the **herd** the **cow** and the **semen**.

- **Herd identification:** NID herd code (**IE 14 12271** in example) where the insemination took place. If this is recorded then the AI company must provide a cross reference file that enables the BTE or NID code for the herd where the insemination took place to be provided to ICBF.
- **Cow identification:** either the **last five digits of the official yellow tag** (**40280** in example) or the animals **freeze brand** (only in milk recorded herds).
- **Semen identification:** **AI code** of the bull (eg **GMI** for Galtee Merci).

All AI organizations and Herd Books are urged to ensure that farmers provide, and AI technicians record, these details. This is just another example

of how careful work by one sector of the cattle breeding industry provides benefits to another. Working together in this way, we can all ensure a more efficient and more viable industry.



Figure 1. Example of official "yellow" tag showing herd and animal identifications.

8. Name of Building where ICBF Head Office is Located

Many thanks for all your suggestions. These are currently being considered.

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