



UPDATE – for period 24th July – 30th July 2004

1 Cattle Breeding - Large Prize is Available

- It is worth reflecting on the benefits that cattle breeding can deliver to Irish farmers. A well organized breeding scheme for just one breed, Holstein Friesians, is capable of increasing Irish dairy farm profitability by €100 million per year in 2014 when compared with historical rates of progress.
- To deliver this prize to dairy farmers, and there is a similar prize waiting to be claimed by beef farmers, the breeding industry must work very closely together, be very well organized and be very focused on removing obstacles to progress. Over the next few weeks there will be a lot of discussion about ICBF's strategic plan and ICBF's future priorities. As these discussions take place we must all focus on the breeding services that our industry provides to farmers.
- ICBF's service provider members are well placed to deliver the new and improved services that are now possible as a result of the database becoming fully operational. To make sure these service enhancements will be sought by farmers there is a need for farmer focused R&D and thorough testing prior to any new service being launched through our service provider members. The pilot milk recording service based on the new electronic meter is a good example of this process. If this service lives up to its initial promise it has the potential to make milk recording a routine and profitable part of good dairy farming practice.
- Another example of innovative farmer-focused R&D is the progeny test proposal that is under active consideration by the industry. Since the proposal was first distributed for discussion on Monday 12th July we have received a lot of feedback. The proposal is currently being revised to clarify that the national progeny test scheme will be very much a joint effort between ICBF and its members. The Board of ICBF at its next meeting on 19th August will consider the revised proposal.
- Elsewhere in this Update are reports of progress on mating advice services, and animal health services in collaboration with veterinarians. In each of these, ICBF's focus is to identify, research and develop improvements in services that our service provider members can provide to Irish farmers. By working together and being very innovative we can ensure our industry delivers the big prize that cattle breeding makes possible. A large increase in farm profitability.

2 Tully

- Applications for the next intake to Tully are returning and are up by 25% for Charolais, Limousin and Simmental and by 80% for other breeds.
- Inspections will take place from the 16-08-04.
- There has been a lot of interest in the December '03 intake of bulls. 15 bulls have been sold pending the passing of the TB test that will be read on the 06-08-04.

3 Database Update

Newly Live Herdbooks

- 366 new attempted pedigree registrations received during the past week.
- 29 new Beef Herds added to the database.
- Work is continuing on streamlining the DNA process with feedback from the herdbooks now being incorporated.
- Testing is continuing around the issuing of birth acknowledgements for the Limousin Society directly from IRIS.
- The weekly BLUP run for Limousin, Charolais, and Simmental animals was executed and the results will be available on Monday.



- A development, which will streamline the input of ET data by herdbooks, will be available for testing next week.

Other database activities

- The NRS Sire Mating Advisory program, which will be an extension to the IRIS application, will be delivered next week. It is expected that this application will be installed, tested, and ready for use prior to the Autumn AI season.
- The technical strategy for publishing database information through the internet (e.g. Herdbook enquiries through herd book websites) will be finalised next week.
- Arising out of a meeting with Vet Ireland this week, the design of a number of reports will be finalised at the end next week and the building of those reports will then be finalised over the coming weeks.
- A second issue of concentrate reports is planned for next week for those who have returned June and July feed input figures, along with any of those herds who were not picked up in the first run.

4 Milk Recording

Number of Herds Milk Recorded in IRIS YTD = 6,023

Progressive	2,008
Dairygold	1,580
Kerry	1,088
SWS	963
Tipperary	146
Connacht Gold	120
Nenagh	118

Weekly Update – Number of herd tests processed in last 7 days = 1,012

Progressive	321
Dairygold	270
Kerry	195
SWS	162
Tipperary	33
Nenagh	24
Connacht Gold	7

5 Genetic Evaluations - Dairy

- Calving interval and survival proofs have been forwarded to Interbull for the next International test evaluation for Longevity traits. Changes made in this evaluation include the inclusion of calving interval records up to 800 days and the use of new parameters. The new results will be presented to the industry and made official if acceptable. The main effect was been an increase in variance of calving interval and survival proofs.
- New evaluations of calving difficulty under the new evaluation system have been completed. Results will be distributed next week.



- The Interbull international evaluation of production and linear traits is in progress. Results are expected on 9th of August.

6 IRIS Update

The development of IRIS and its use in various countries is regularly reported on by NRS in their IRIS Newsletter. The latest is attached to the email and paper versions of this update. Copies are available from Monday 2nd August at <http://www.ais.cr-delta.nl/>.

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