



UPDATE – FOR PERIOD 1ST TO 7TH MAY 2004.

1. Annual General Meeting

- The AGM will be held on Thursday 13th May starting at 14:00 at the Heritage Hotel, Port Laoise.
- A copy of the Annual Report has been distributed today to all ICBF members.

2. Board Meeting

- Papers for the Board meeting to be held on 13th May have been distributed.
- Agenda items for the Board meeting include:
 - (a) Evaluation of Proposals for Auditing Services.
 - (b) Membership application from Irish Shorthorn Society Limited.
 - (c) Modulation Funds Proposal.
 - (d) Future Strategy & Direction.
 - (e) EBI Extension & Education.

3. Dairy Genetic Evaluations

- Interbull evaluation has been completed for both production and conformation traits. Preliminary checks indicate no major problem hence results will hopefully be released officially as scheduled on Monday by the Interbull centre.
- Initial preparations have been completed this week to have all proofs from this run loaded to IRIS as soon as they are officially released. Preliminary results will be released to the industry as scheduled.
- Files have been requested from cooperating foreign countries to obtain the proofs required for conversion to Irish Calving Interval and Survival proofs. Most will start to be available from Monday so conversion and blending of fertility and longevity proofs for foreign bulls will commence on Monday.
- Preliminary work has been completed to facilitate the inclusion of Germany and Italy to the list of countries with converted fertility and survival proofs. This will be done next week if we get the required files from those countries on time.
- Preliminary results for the latest evaluation of calving difficulty and gestation length have been obtained from the research team. Results are being prepared and checked and will be made available to the industry next week.
- Official proofs are due for release on 14th May, 2004.

4. Database Project

a) Newly Live Herdbooks

- 1,168 new attempted pedigree registrations received during the past week.
- 52 new Beef Herds added to the database.
- BLUP reports and Pedigree Certificates were issued to the Limousin Society.
- A significant number of the items on Breed Society Task List's are going through final testing and should be able to go live next week.
- New registration billing files were issued this week to the Limousin and Simmental Societies, the Charolais file will be issued once the main batch of categorization changes are released early next week.

b) Other database activities

- Parallel testing of the revised 'New Herd's' process is ongoing.



- Extensive work is continuing on removing older records being held for correction in the IRIS front porch.
- An update is being made to the IHFA grade-up application to deal with herds that have multiple herd names for different breed societies.

5. Milk Recording

a) Database Project - Milk Recording

- No. Herdowners Milk Recorded in IRIS = 5,803

Dairygold	1,700
Progressive	1,698
Kerry	1,058
SWS	960
Nenagh	135
Tipperary	128
Connacht Gold	124
- No. Herd tests processed in IRIS = 23,833

Dairygold	9,586
Progressive	8,222
Kerry	2,075
SWS	2,669
Nenagh	454
Tipperary	215
Connacht Gold	612
- Weekly Update - No. herd tests processed in last 7 days = 906

Progressive	292
Dairygold	205
Kerry	190
SWS	162
Connacht Gold	26
Nenagh	18
Tipperary	13

b) Monthly Turnaround Time

- At the start of each new month we will report the average time it takes from Recording a herd to the time it's printed for the Farmer. Here is the result for **April**:
MRO Test Report turnaround, April 2004

No. Tests:	4,614
No. Animals:	222,857
Average No days:	7.29
- Further Breakdown of where the time is spent varies between Organisations but typically the make up of the 7.29 days is:

Recorder to Lab	4-5 days
Lab to Keying	1-2 days
Keying to Print	0-1 days
- Each Organisation has their own report with length of time taken for each step.
- The Organisation with the best average turnaround in April was **Dairygold** who tested 1,099 herds in the period with an average of **5.8 days** from recording date to print date.



6. Tully

- Quotations for fencing the field that has been found to hold the December intake have been received. A decision will be made and fencing will start the week of the 17-05-04.
- The performance test for the December 2003 intake will finish the week of the 17-05-04.
- A group of 30 Ag Science students from Aberdeen will visit Tully on the 14-05-04.

7. Looking to the Future – Working Together

Cattle breeding is a unique enterprise. It depends on a lot of different organisations and people working together and sharing data. The strength of ICBF's cattle breeding database is that it brings together data from farms, milk recording, artificial insemination, herd books, DAF, and slaughter plants. The benefits of this sharing of data are now evident to ICBF's member organisations and an ever-increasing percentage of farmers.

The database is a unique resource that has opened up many opportunities for providing Irish farmers with greatly improved cattle breeding services. Over the next few months ICBF is conducting a review of its priorities for the future and this will be carried out in consultation with our shareholders. As we go into this review it is important that our focus remains firmly on ensuring the delivery of increased benefits relative to costs to Irish cattle farmers, the ultimate owners of our shareholders.

Farming continues to be under severe economic pressure due to increasing costs and reducing product prices. This means that we must examine all possible means of either reducing the cost of cattle breeding services and or increasing their benefits. Last week I used the IHFA pedigree registrations as an illustration of how this could work – if we can increase the uptake of the service it can be provided at a lower cost. Everybody benefits.

For ICBF and its members to deliver improved cattle breeding services in the future we must work very closely together and be prepared to investigate all options thoroughly and with open minds. Now is the time to plan for a future in which Irish cattle breeding is making the greatest possible contribution to the profitability of Irish farming.

The very nature of our industry requires that we work together and for this reason it is just plain common sense that we should collaborate to plan for the future.

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