



UPDATE for period 25th February – 3rd March 2006

1 Important Dates

- **Saturday 4th March Tully Sale.** Show at 11.00am, sale commences at 12.00pm.
- **AI Promotion Workshops - Monday 7th March to Thursday 23rd March.** See attached schedule. Unless indicated otherwise these are open workshops to help all those people providing breeding advice to farmers. We have gone to some length to ensure the meeting times suit AI Technicians and are looking forward to a full attendance.
- **AI Promotion MART Events – first two weeks of April.** The tentative schedule is:
 - Nenagh Mart – Thursday 6th April.
 - Ballybay Mart – Friday 7th April.
 - Bandon Mart – Tuesday 11th April.
 - Killmallock Mart – Wednesday 12th April.
 - Dungarvan Mart – Thursday 13th April.
- **Thursday 23rd March 2006,** Audit & Finance Sub Committee meeting.
- **Thursday 30th March Board Meeting.**
- **Saturday 6th May Tully Sale.** Show at 11.00am, sale commences at 12.00pm.

2 Tully

- The Tully sale tomorrow marks a very importance step in the development of beef cattle breeding in Ireland. We now have a totally new system for evaluating the breeding potential of every beef animal, regardless of breed, to provide profits. This new system makes use of all available calving, weighting, feed intake, linear score and carcass data on both pedigree and commercial cattle to predict the genetic capability of every one of the Tully tested bulls. This means that the index values for the bulls in the sale is determined by a combination of his own performance and the performance of all his known relatives.
- This is a new system and there are bound to be teething problems. While we have done all we can to ensure the systems works well, we cannot be sure it is perfect. If you see anything that does not make sense to you please discuss it with one of the ICBF team. We will investigate and if need be make the necessary corrections.
- The indexes in the catalogue were computed over the weekend of 25th and 26th February 2006 using the data and methods relevant at that time. In the near future, we expect to obtain more data and to refine our methods with the consequence that the indexes may change for individual bulls. Buyers should take particular note that for all of the bulls tested at Tully the reliability of the indexes is low, of the order of 25%. This means that as more information become available the indexes are equally likely to increase or decrease. Only when the bulls are progeny tested on large numbers of progeny will the reliability increase to near 100%.

We would like to wish breeders and buyers alike a very successful sale.

3 AI Promotion 2006

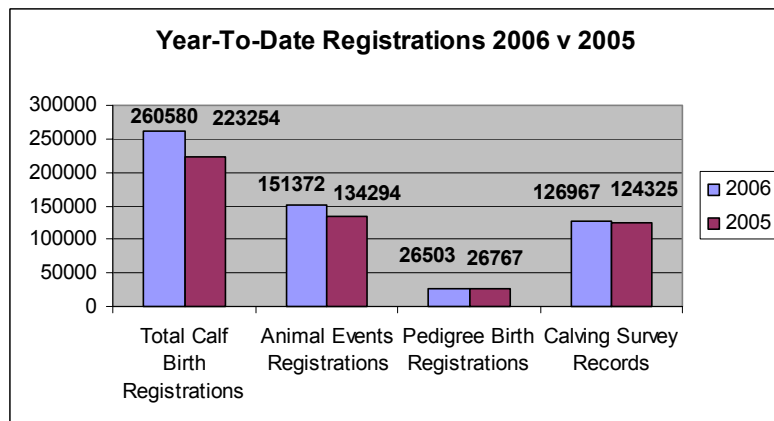
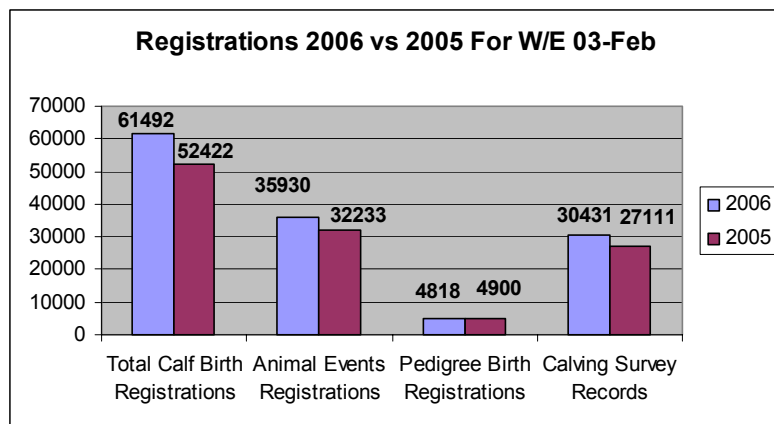
- The Minister of Agriculture announced support (refer to attached press release) for the campaign this spring.

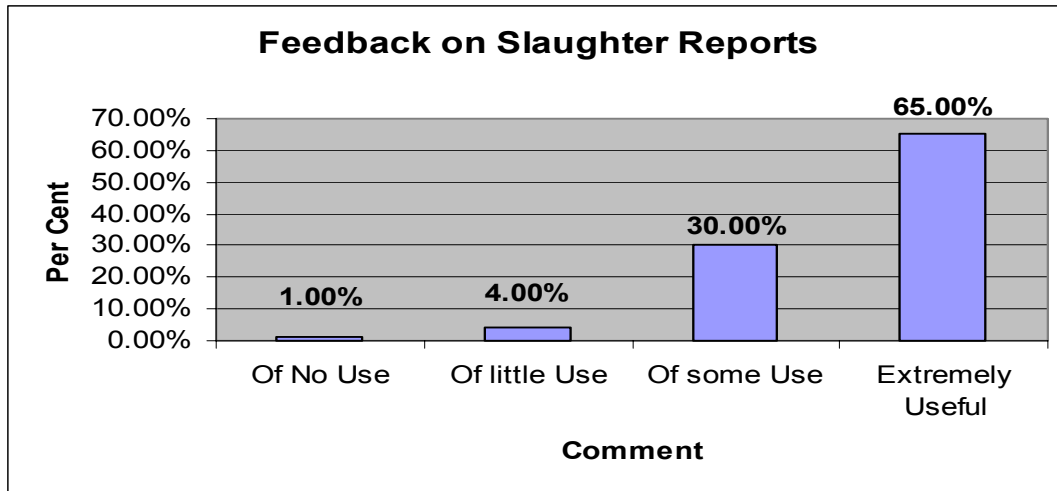


- The campaign commenced this week with the first advertisement (copy attached) appearing in the Farmers Journal dairy AI Supplement.
- The Workshops for all people in contact with farmers and dealing with breeding matters will commence on Monday next week. Attached is a copy of the meeting schedule. All meetings are open unless indicated to the contrary.
- The MART Event planning is proceeding. We have confirmation that Intervet and Pfizer will be joint sponsors. There will be a total of €17,500 in prizes for the groups of heifers with highest EBIs at each event. A call will go out next week for heifers to be entered in the sales associated with each event.

4 Database Update

- 147 new herds added to the database last week.
- The first round of training of AI technicians on the handhelds has now been completed in Dovea (35), Kerry (18), and PG (35). The majority of the Dairygold technicians (45 of 60) have been trained. Some technicians who have found the handheld training somewhat difficult will be receiving follow up training.
- The linear scorers will have updated handhelds delivered to them at the Tully bull sale tomorrow.
- The loading of new genetic evaluations will be completed this weekend and the new evaluations will be live on the production database from Monday.
- Development work to support the back end activities of the AI handheld are continuing.
- The new SCC herd health report has been completed and will be released next week.
- The latest files of Teagasc advisor allocations have been loaded for the viewing of reports of signed up clients through the web.
- Work has begun this week on the development of Fertility Reports for the coming AI season.
- 1100 Slaughter reports were issued to beef farmers two weeks ago. Along with the report, a feedback form was included. 150 of those were returned and the following graph gives the summary of the feedback.





5 Genetic Evaluations – Beef & Dairy

- The ICBF Active Bull List for B&W Dairy sires was published in this week's Irish Farmers Journal AI supplement. The listing contains the top 75 bulls ranked on EBI that are active (>1,000 doses available) and available for widespread use (i.e., free of major genes such as CVM).
- Proofs for the group of bulls being sold at tomorrow's Tully performance test sale were released this week. The proofs contain a number of new developments, compared to previous years;
 - Release of new beef EBI data for all bulls (including PTA's for beef performance & calving traits)
 - Release of new across breed linear type data for a further 15 linear type traits, including a new carcass trait (across breed carcass linear)
- Based on these (and additional within breed BLUP proofs), some 14 bulls have been approved for the NI beef quality initiative (top 1% of the breed).
- ICBF staff have been involved in 2 meetings this week; (i) a EU beef breeding meeting for accession countries, (ii) an Interbull workshop on international evaluations for fertility traits

6 Milk Recording Update

MR Stats week ending 3/03/06

Milk Recording Organisation	2006 Herds Recorded Week 24/02/06 - 03/03/06	2005 Herds Recorded Week 24/02/05 - 03/03/05
Progressive	276	301
Dairygold	158	149
SWS	128	116
Kerry	111	102
Connacht	14	28
Tipperary	9	11
Arrabawn	6	9
Others (Donegal, OAD)	0	0
Total	702	716



Milk Recording Organisation	HERD Count		7 COW Count	
	2006 No. Herds Owners Year to Date Jan 1st - Mar 3rd	2005 No. Herd Owners at Year End	2006 No. Cows Year to Date Jan 1st - Mar 3rd	2005 No. Cows at Year End
Progressive	1,446	2,087	115,069	154,992
Dairygold	457	1,529	24,769	98,832
Kerry	349	1,066	18,764	68,193
SWS	578	939	26,973	56,257
Tipperary	24	142	1,317	9,412
Connacht	82	110	5,331	7,359
Arrabawn	29	109	1,448	7,188
Others (Donegal, OAD)	4	57	325	4,837
Total	2,969	6,039	193,996	407,070

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MINISTER COUGHLAN LAUNCHES AI PROMOTION CAMPAIGN FOR SPRING 2006

The Minister for Agriculture and Food, Mary Coughlan T.D., today announced funding for a 2006 Spring campaign aimed at increasing the usage of artificial insemination (AI) in the Irish cattle herd. The Minister said that she was delighted to be in a position to provide €7,000, towards the cost of this initiative with matching funds coming from industry.

The Minister stated that the use of AI has declined dramatically over the past 10 years to a very low level in Ireland and that action was required immediately to reverse this decline. The Minister shares the concerns expressed by the AI industry, ICBF, the National Cattle Breeding Centre, Teagasc and others regarding this decline. The initiative being launched today follows directly from a meeting, convened by officials from her Department on 8th February 2006, at Moorepark, with the stakeholders in order to explore how best to address the decline of AI.

“AI is very important for breeding more profitable replacement stock. In simple terms, AI enables bulls of known superior genetic merit to be used to produce higher quality and more profitable cattle” she said.

Minister Coughlan welcomed the involvement of all parties across the industry in this unique initiative with the overall aim of increasing the competitiveness, quality and profitability of the Irish cattle farming industry and complimented all those involved in the partnership approach adopted.

Minister Coughlan outlined the main elements of the campaign which will involve:

- **Regional meetings for key industry personnel.** This will comprise of a series of eight regional one-day workshops for some 450 people involved in the industry such as AI technicians and sales personnel, Teagasc Advisors, Dairy Co-op trading sales staff and breeding advisors.
- **Knowledge building for farmers through targeted advertising.** This will be achieved through a series of press and radio advertisements.
- **Knowledge building for farmers through livestock marts events.** A series of five regional events will be held at local livestock marts which will include an information forum, AI trade stands, and a sale of high EBI dairy heifers.
- A survey of the outcomes from the campaign to measure its effectiveness.

Minister Coughlan concluded by wishing the promoters of the campaign every success with their efforts and said it represented *“an excellent chance for farmers to avail of superior genetics which will ensure future generations of farmers have access to the best quality animals possible”*.

ENDS

28th February 2006

ARE YOU A SERIOUS DAIRY FARMER? Then you are serious about **Profit!**

- In this world of changing milk prices, meat prices and EU reforms – one thing remains constant – your cows provide income and incur costs. How can you be sure your cows will maximise your profit by increasing your income through:
 - Higher protein and fat production
 - Better beef
- and minimise your costs through:
 - Higher fertility
 - Easier calving
 - Better udder health
 - Less lameness

**AI TO BE SURE
TO BREED HIGH EBI REPLACEMENTS**



BREEDING FUTURE PROFITS - A collaborative effort.

AI Promotion 2006

Workshops for AI Technicians and Farm Advisers

March Schedule

Date & Time	Venue	Catchment Area	Organiser
Monday 6th 9:45 to 16:10	Clonakilty Agric. College	West Cork & surrounds	J. McNamara / John Maher
Tuesday 7th 9:45 to 16:10	Earl of Desmond Hotel, Tralee	Kerry & surrounds	G. Courtney / John Donworth
Wed. 8th 9:45 to 16:10	Anner Hotel, Thurles	Tipperary & surrounds	T. O'Dwyer / B. Kelleher
Mon. 13th 9:45 to 16:10	Blarney Park Hotel	Cork & surrounds	B. Kelleher / J. Maher
Tues. 14th 18:30 – 22:30	Sligo Park Hotel	North West	P. Clarke
Mon. 20th 18:30 – 22:30	Teagasc Office, Longford	Longford & surrounds	T. Dunwoody
Tues. 21st 18:30 – 22:30	Dolmen Hotel, Carlow	Carlow & surrounds	G. Ramsbottom
Wed. 22nd 10:30 – 14:00	Kilcoran Lodge	Eurogene only	Joe Kirwin
Thurs. 23rd 10:30 – 14:00	Bloomfield House Hotel, Mullingar	Eurogene only	Joe Kirwin
Thurs. 23rd 18:30 – 22:30	Ardboyne Hotel, Navan	Navan & surrounds	G. Ramsbottom



BREEDING FUTURE PROFITS - A collaborative effort.