



UPDATE – for period 6th – 12th October 2007

1 Important Dates

- ✚ **October 18th**, 10:30 to 13:00, Solas Room, Moorepark. Dairy Genetic Evaluation Consultation meeting.
- ✚ **October 20th**. National Dairy Show, Millstreet.
- ✚ **October 25th**. ICBF Board Meeting.

2 Genetic Evaluations

Edinburgh Meeting

A meeting was held on Tuesday this week in Edinburgh with the dual objectives of:

- a. creating a better understanding of the total merit indexes for dairy cattle used in the UK, the Netherlands and Ireland, and
- b. examining strategies of dealing with variation in farmers breeding objectives.

Participants in the meeting (see photo below) came from the animal evaluations units in the three countries and research groups involved in developing the science underlying the indexes.

Conclusions from the meetings included:

- ✚ Despite considerable differences in production systems between the three countries there is strong agreement on the traits that are considered in the respective indexes.
- ✚ All three countries place negative emphasis on milk volume, and strong positive emphasis on protein yield.
- ✚ Fertility is an important trait in the indexes of all three countries. The emphasis on fertility has increased.
- ✚ There are differences in the indexes used in each country and there is considerable potential benefit, for all countries, from a greater sharing of knowledge about these differences.
- ✚ A single total merit index is highly desirable within each country. Tools are available in each country to enable farmers to identify the most suitable sires according to their own breeding objectives.

Over the next few weeks research will be conducted to assess the impact of using UK and Netherlands weightings on the ranking of bulls and herds in Ireland relative to the EBI.



Back row, left to right:
Eileen Wall (SAC),
Andrew Cromie (ICBF),
Duncan Anderson
(AFBI), Sinclair Mayne
(AFBI), Gerben de Jong
(NRS), Raphael Mrode
(SAC), Alistair Carson
(AFBI), Laurence
Shalloo (TEAGASC).

Front row, left to right:
Brian Wickham (ICBF),
Marco Winters (MDC),
Mike Coffey (SAC),
Roel Veerkamp (WUR),
Donagh Berry (Teagasc).



Pedigree files

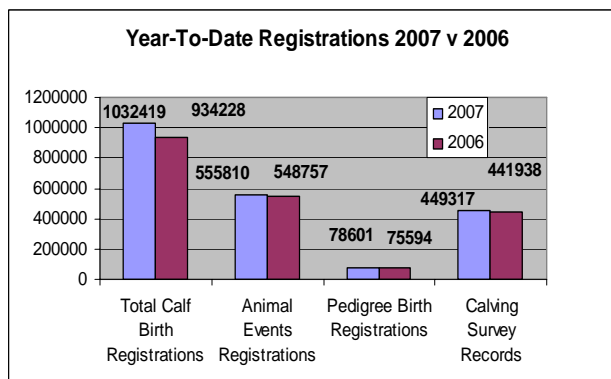
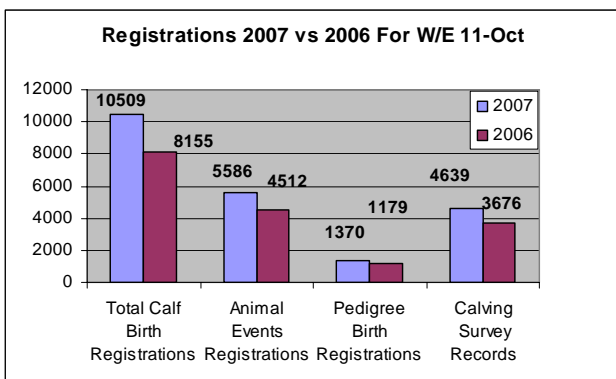
Work is continuing on various aspects of the pedigree file used for dairy and beef evaluations including the development of algorithms to recover the maximum amount of breed information possible from an animals back pedigree. The algorithms will also help to identify irregular pedigree data.

Work also continues on defining heterosis and recombination in such a way that will it will lead to better estimates of the interactions in specific crosses between breeds in the genetic evaluations.

3 HerdPlus

- ✚ We did a feature on the HerdPlus BEEF service in this weeks Irish Farmers Journal. Response has been good on 1 850 600 900.
- ✚ Copies of Euro-Star Reports were sent to herdbook secretaries so they can see what their clients received - so they can help explain and answer any queries.
- ✚ We are generating Euro-Star reports for balance of beef herds on database for issue in next 2 weeks – these are mainly commercial suckler herds. (The first batch reports sent on 24/09/07 were to pedigree owners)

4 Database Update



- ✚ 352,726 inseminations have been received so far in 2007, compared with 155,163 in 2006 for the same period.
- ✚ Refinements of the Eurostar reports have been completed, in preparation for the issue of a further batch of reports to those herds who have not yet received them.
- ✚ Progress continues on the redesign of the Animal Events file processing which will be completed over the coming months.
- ✚ Preparations are continuing in order to be ready for the commencement of the Suckler Cow Welfare Scheme, which will have a significant impact in terms of data volumes coming into the database, with Animal Events being the means of data recording.
- ✚ Work is continuing on the Sire Advice module for the new season.
- ✚ The implementation of the new hardware solution and database upgrade is on-going. This will take another 4-6 weeks of work. The main impact will be increased storage capacity, and more timely updates of genetic evaluations to the production database.



5 Gene Ireland - Dairy

SPRING

- ✚ After a small delay, payments for recorded inseminations from the Spring programme will commence next week.
- ✚ We are happy to report we have now reached the 80% mark for recorded inseminations in relation to straws dispatched.

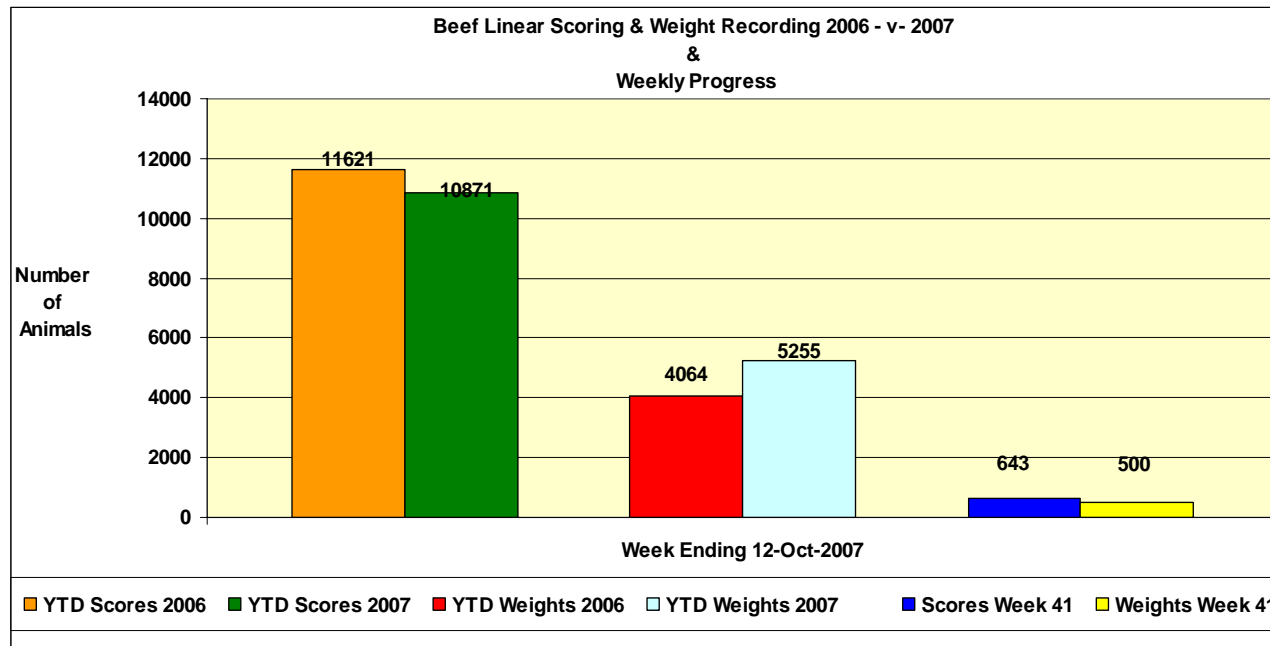
AUTUMN

- ✚ Letters were sent to targeted Herd-owners last week inviting them to participate in the forthcoming Autumn programme. Included was a catalogue of the bulls, which can also be viewed on the ICBF website, under the GEN€IR€LAND section.
- ✚ Sign-ups for the Autumn programme began earlier this week. To date we have 32 herds signed up to use of total of 1,215 straws. Our target is currently 4,200 straws.

6 Tully

- ✚ The closing date for applications for the next intake to Tully is the 12-10-07.
- ✚ Inspections of potential bulls for Tully will commence on the 17-10-07.
- ✚ The meeting Between UCD vets and Tully staff, Tully vets and DAF vets will take place on the 12-10-07 to discuss the Tully health protocol. The Tully health protocol document will be finalised after this meeting.

7 Beef Linear Scoring & Weight Recording





8 Milk Recording Processing – this week and year to date

National Milk Recording Statistics - Herds, Cows & EDIY 12/10/07						
Milk Recording Organisation	Total Herds Recorded YTD 12/10/07	No. EDIY Herds YTD 12/10/07	% Herds EDIY	Total No. Cows Recorded YTD 12/10/07	No. EDIY Cows YTD 12/10/07	% Cows EDIY
Progressive	2,131	657	31%	165,715	50,267	30%
Dairygold	1,589	554	35%	110,900	40,288	36%
Kerry	1,033	70	7%	71,593	5,663	8%
SWS	932	109	12%	60,417	7,071	12%
Tipperary	170	71	42%	12,260	5,225	43%
Arrabawn	167	126	75%	11,902	9,086	76%
Connacht	154	68	44%	10,052	4,301	43%
Donegal	43	43	100%	3,901	3,901	100%
Total	6,219	1,698	27%	446,740	125,802	28%

Recorded Cows by Milk Recording Organisation - Year on Year Comparison				
Milk Recording Organisation	YTD 2005 Cows Recorded 01/01/05 - 12/10/05	YTD 2006 Cows Recorded 01/01/06 - 12/10/06	YTD 2007 Cows Recorded 01/01/07 - 12/10/07	2007 vs 2006 Year on Year Difference (%)
Progressive	148,811	156,005	165,715	5.9%
Dairygold	97,353	103,161	110,900	7.0%
Kerry	67,059	69,910	71,593	2.4%
SWS	54,522	59,196	60,417	2.0%
Tipperary	9,325	11,776	12,260	3.9%
Arrabawn	7,130	11,012	11,902	7.5%
Connacht	7,325	9,007	10,052	10.4%
Donegal	3,606	5,264	3,901	-34.9%
Total	395,131	425,331	446,740	4.8%

Brian Wickham Ph.D. Chief Executive Irish Cattle Breeding Federation Soc. Ltd, Highfield House, Shinagh, Bandon, Co. Cork, Ireland, Phone office +353 (0)23 20222, mobile +353 (0)86 826 9911 Fax office +353 (0)23 20229 E-Mail bwickham@icbf.com ICBF Web site www.icbf.com Assistant: Mary Madden.