



## **UPDATE – for period 12<sup>th</sup> -18<sup>th</sup> January 2008**

### **1 Important Dates**

- ✦ **Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> January.** 10:30 to 13:00 at Tully. **Tully Advisory Committee.**
- ✦ **Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> January.** 10:30 to 13:00 at Comfort Inn, Portlaoise. **ICBF Board Meeting.**
- ✦ **Friday 8<sup>th</sup> February.** Publication of **updated dairy and beef genetic evaluations.**
- ✦ **Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> February.** 10:30 to 13:00 at Moorepark (conference room 3). **Dairy Genetic Evaluation Consultation meeting.**
- ✦ **19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> February.** Cork International Airport Hotel. **International Cattle Breeders Round Table.**

### **2 Dairy Cattle Reproduction**

The partners (Veterinary Ireland, UCD, AI Organisations, TEAGASC, ICBF and Intervet) who organised the *Fertility for Expansion* seminars held in December 2007 met on Tuesday. After reviewing farmer feedback a number of decisions were taken including:

- ✦ The partners will continue to work together with the aim of **achieving improved fertility in Irish dairy cows that allows a profitable and sustained future.** Further initiatives will be taken to address the reproduction problems experienced on Irish dairy farms. Work will be focused in three areas: **research, records and communication** with the immediate priority being given to the last two: **records and communication.**
- ✦ Members of the partnership will arrange discussions to explore issues associated with farm management for optimal reproductive performance in spring calving herds.
- ✦ Messages will be refined and summarized.
- ✦ A website will be developed to provide advisors and farmers with ready access to the latest technical information in a form that they can use. Copies of all of the presentations from the December seminars are now on the publications section of the ICBF website – [www.icbf.com](http://www.icbf.com).
- ✦ Options for learning from the lessons of similar collaborations in Australia and NZ will be explored.
- ✦ ICBF and UCD are collaborating in a research program to evaluate and develop further improvements to the reproduction components of the HerdPlus® service to farmers, veterinarians and advisors.

### **3 GENÉIRÉLAND®**

#### **Meeting with AI Partners**

- ✦ A meeting with AI organisations supplying the bulls to GENÉIRÉLAND® was held on Thursday. Topics addressed included: a. Review of 2007, b. Progeny testing 2008, c. Bull procurement, d. Service Terms & Conditions, and e. the Beef program.

#### **Dairy – Spring 2008**

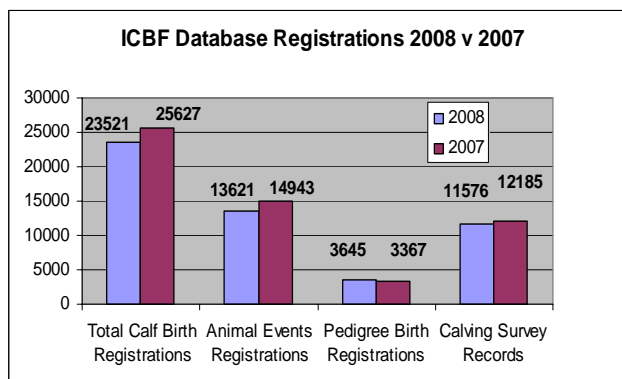
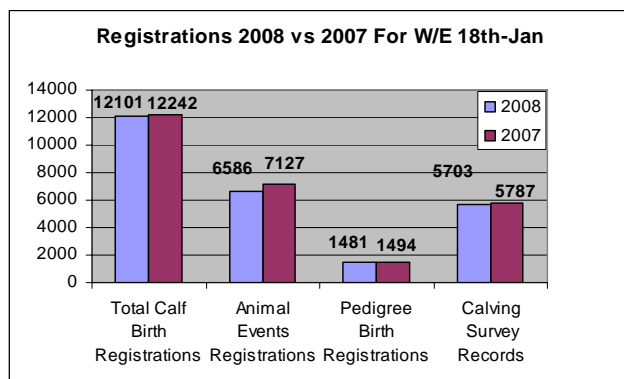
- ✦ The 2008 Spring programme is well under way, with a target of getting 70 young bulls tested.
- ✦ To date some 2,800 letters have been posted inviting farmers to partake in this years programme. Overall, we will be approximately 5,000 letters.
- ✦ Just under 100 sign-up forms have been received, with good interest in the crossbred pack.
- ✦ Two temporary staff have been trained and assigned for the two month recruitment drive.
- ✦ We plan to start dispatching straws early February, initially focusing on DIY herds that have signed up to the HOFR programme.



## Beef – Spring 2008

- ✚ The number of bulls and breeds available for the spring is currently limited (eight bulls and three breeds). Our ambition is to test forty beef bulls from all breeds with sufficient demand in 2008. However, this can only be achieved if there are enough bulls available and enough herds joining the GENEIRELAND<sup>®</sup> progeny test.
- ✚ Breeds wishing to have bulls included need to:
  - identify young untested bulls of high merit and ensure 700 doses of semen is available to GENEIRELAND<sup>®</sup>, and
  - ensure there are enough herds that wish to use semen from their breed as part of the GENEIRELAND<sup>®</sup> progeny test.
- ✚ The GENEIRELAND<sup>®</sup> progeny test is a very attractive proposition which coupled with the Suckler Cow Welfare scheme provides a great opportunity for forward thinking suckler herds. Now is the time for beef breeders and commercial suckler herds to collaborate by joining the GENEIRELAND<sup>®</sup> beef progeny test and thus ensure Irish beef breeding is world-class.

## 4 Database Update



- ✚ 8,469 inseminations have been received from the AI handhelds so far in 2008, compared with 6,494 in 2007 for the same period.
- ✚ A number of key updates to the hardware were completed this week, which should result in improved performance for users.
- ✚ ICBF have received around 13,000 suckler applicant details from DAF, which have been processed.
- ✚ A significant amount of development work is still on-going in relation to the Suckler Scheme.
- ✚ The design and implementation of some updates to the Gene Ireland application continued this week in advance of the Spring AI season.
- ✚ The generation of the Annual Milk Recording reports from the database has continued this week.
- ✚ Testing of the new loading solution for Animal Events Records will begin this week and will continue for a number of weeks.



Some of the thousands of animal events packs ready for sending to herds as they join the suckler cow welfare scheme.



## 5 Tully

- A bio security audit of Tully was held on the 16<sup>th</sup> of January.
- A meeting of the Tully advisory committee will be held on the 23-1-08 at Tully.
- A meeting of the Tully veterinary committee was held on the 16-1-08, and a report will be presented at the Tully advisory committee on the 23-1-08.

## 6 Genetic Evaluations

- The process of uploading the new evaluation files to the database has commenced.
- Test evaluations have been completed on the beef performance evaluation examining the consequences of integrating carcass sex classifications. Previously information on whether an animal was a steer or bull, heifer or cow was not available from the Department files but is now supplied with the carcass performance. Initial results show very good agreement with the existing evaluation for carcass weight, conformation and fat (correlations >0.97).
- Work is also in progress on development of conversion equations for the Jersey breed (milk and fertility traits) and also updating the existing conversions for the French beef breeds (beef performance traits) with the new figures.

## 7 HerdPlus

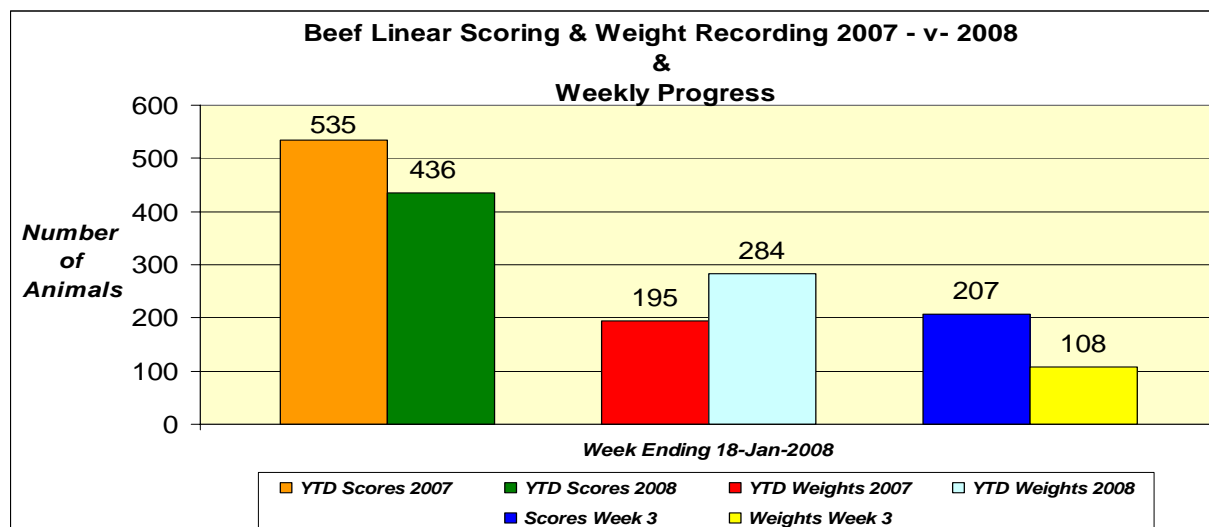
### BEEF

- New Suckler Cow Report has been developed and is under test. This will be issued to Beef HerdPlus clients with their notebook.
- New scheduling software developed for GROW laptops - this will give the scorers the ability to plan their visits via the web, providing them with visibility and more control of their schedule.
- Commercial suckler herds continue to be recruited for GROW

### DAIRY

- Expected Calving Reports and Pocket books have all been issued in readiness for the spring calving season

## 8 GROW – Linear Scoring & Weight Recording



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