



Update for period 18th - 24th November 2006

1 Important Dates

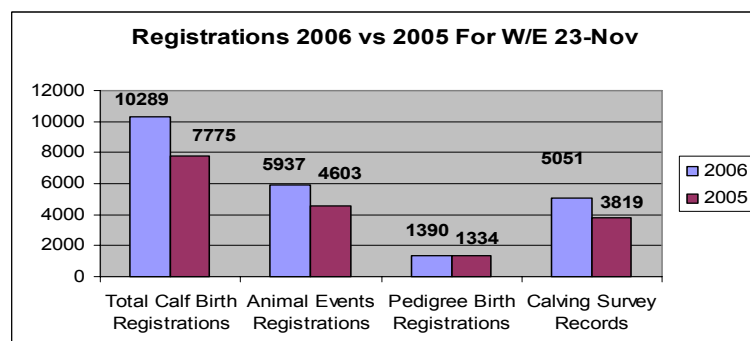
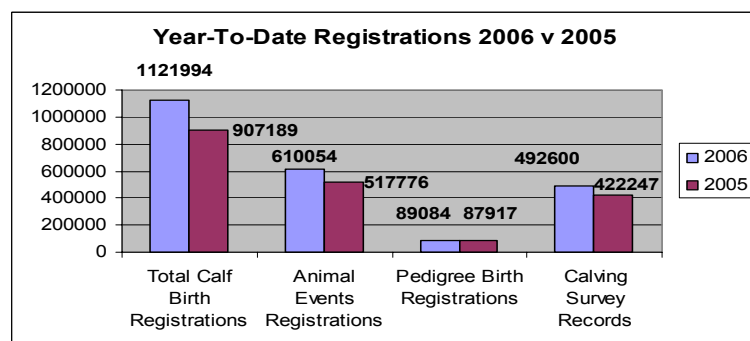
- **Tuesday 28th November**, Audit & Finance Sub-Committee.
- **Wednesday 29th November**, 10:30 – 16:00. Beef Genetic Evaluations Consultation meeting, Abbeyleix.
- **Thursday 30th November**, ICBF Board Meeting in Bandon.
- **Thursday 7th December**, 10:30 to 13:00. Tully and Linear Scoring Consultation meeting. Comfort Inn, Portlaoise.

2 Tully

- The first Autumn sale of Tully bulls took place on Saturday 18th. The sale report for the November Tully Performance Tested Bull Sale is available to view on the ICBF website at <http://www.icbf.com/services/tully/index.asp>.
- 128 bulls on the October/November intake were scanned for fat and muscle depth on Monday and Tuesday by a team from UCD. A follow-up scan will be carried out in 100-days.
- Health Test forms for the December intake of bulls were sent to breeders on Wednesday 22nd.
- A group of Limousin breeders from the LIMO project at Greenmount, Antrim visited Tully on Thursday 23rd.
- 128 bulls on the October/November intake were weighed for the second time on Friday 24th and vaccinated against Blackleg virus.

3 Database Update

- 37 new herds added to the database last week.
- 161,910 inseminations have now been recorded on the AI handhelds.
- Dryoff sheets are coming in at a good rate and are currently being keyed. The online dryoff notification method is also getting steady usage this week. Some modifications to make this function more user-friendly are underway and should be in place by the middle of next week.
- The first batch of final fertility reports will be issued next week, based on insemination data and pregnancy diagnosis information in the database.





- Work has continued on the 2006 Milk Recording Annual Reports, with testing taking place in a number of milk recording organisations.
- The first drafts of the personalised Animal Events notebook for farmers should be available at the end of next week. A trial run will be done, before a larger issue is completed.
- Work is continuing on the web-enabled herdbook processing application and on the background infrastructure of the platform for other applications to be migrated to the web. We will be contacting some herdbook organisations next week with a view to obtaining initial feedback.

4 Genetic Evaluations

Dairy

- The final steps of the processing for the November run for the Dairy EBI are currently being done. New proofs and the bull search should be available early next week

Beef

- During the week proofs for beef calving, performance, linear, and maternal were sent to the industry for feedback. These indexes will be discussed at next week's beef industry meeting. We thank those who have sent us feedback to date and look forward to receiving more prior to the meeting.

International Beef

- Conversion equations between Ireland and France for Charolais and Limousin are currently being developed for weaning weight, carcass traits, muscle and skeletal linear traits, feed intake and calving traits. It is anticipated that these will be used until full international evaluations are available for these traits. A presentation on this work will be given at next week's beef industry meeting.
- Simmental pedigrees have been updated in IRIS and work will now commence on the development of conversion equations for the breed between Ireland and the UK.

5 HerdPlus

- All HerdPlus farmers received a text message reminding them to send their Serves/Preg Test data to us if they had not already done so that we could generate Fertility reports for them.
- The difficulties some farmers were experiencing in logging on to the web site have now been identified and resolved.
- A number of test Notebooks will be sent to farmers next week for final proofing.
- Work has begun on updating the PC Download file to include the EBI Sub-Indexes for farm software clients on HerdPlus.
- 73% of farmers signed up to date are using the Electronic version.



6 Milk Recording Update

Milk Recording Herds and Cows Year To date 2006 versus Year to date 2005

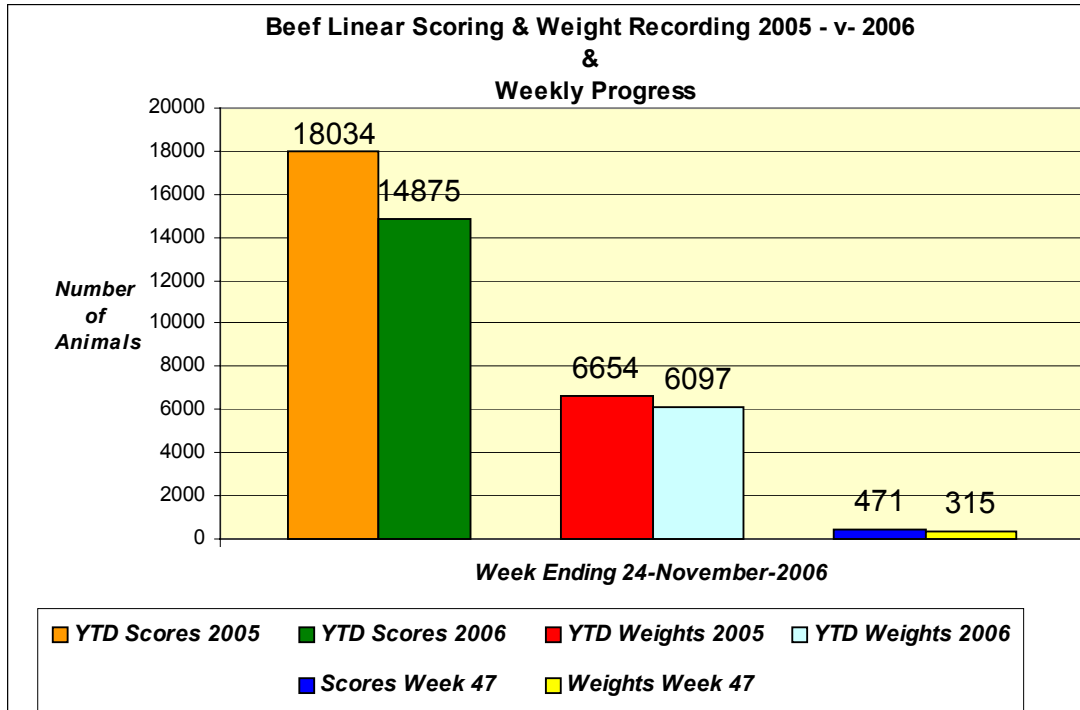
Milk Recording Organisation	YTD 2005 Herds Recorded 01/01/05 - 24/11/05	YTD 2006 Herds Recorded 01/01/06 - 24/11/06	Year on Year Herds Difference(%)	YTD 2005 Cows Recorded 01/01/05 - 24/11/05	YTD 2006 Cows Recorded 01/01/06 - 24/11/06	Year on Year Cows Difference(%)
Progressive	2,084	2,109	1%	153,011	160,392	5%
Dairygold	1,529	1,551	1%	98,625	104,102	6%
Kerry	1,065	1,075	1%	67,763	70,472	4%
SWS	937	958	2%	55,600	60,137	8%
Tipperary	142	168	18%	9,464	11,869	25%
Arrabawn	109	159	46%	7,140	11,068	55%
Connacht	110	140	27%	7,448	9,315	25%
Donegal	55	58	5%	4,337	5,274	22%
Total	6,031	6,218	3%	403,388	432,629	7%

Milk Recording Stats week ending 24/11/06

Milk Recording Organisation	2006 Herds Recorded Week 17/11/06 - 24/11/06
Progressive	326
Dairygold	179
Kerry	147
SWS	146
Arrabawn	27
Connacht	17
Donegal	4
Tipperary	2
Total	846



7 Beef Linear Scoring



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IRIS news

no. 4 November 2006

A word from NRS

Steady growth

Over the years CRV has gradually developed from a Dutch into a more international company. Satellite companies are now established in Brazil, Germany, Spain, New Zealand and the Czech Republic. Currently, 25% of the CRV turnover comes from outside the domestic market, which consists of the Netherlands and Flanders, and this percentage will grow steadily. Thanks to this international growth, CRV is able to maintain its high level of investment despite a shrinking domestic market. Therefore, we value our IRIS customers and partners highly. We aim to continue developing the system into a new version and to reinforce the marketing activities. On behalf of the board of directors, I would like to assure you that we are fully committed to continuing our planned course of internationalisation, and this includes the IRIS activities.

Jan Jansen
CEO CRV,
Managing director
Information and Support



Next IRIS generation

IRIS is the vehicle for processing raw cattle data into information. We have developed the next IRIS generation according to market needs.

There are basically two groups of customers who require information from IRIS: the cattle farmer and suppliers of services to the farmer. Regarding information for cattle farmers, we have seen a number of developments. Real time data input into IRIS by the use of mobile equipment has become more common. There is more demand for electronic information, rather than on paper. Volumes of data input and output have increased. More traits are automatically measured in dairy cows. The demand for information to support herd management and breeding has increased. Finally the use of a central database via the internet will increase for Questions & Answers and to support herd management.

Regarding information for suppliers of services to farmers, we see the following. It has become easier to share information via the internet with extension officers or veterinarians who support the farmer. Of course, it is the farmer who authorises others to use information from his farm. But the technology is there to make more widespread use possible.

These developments will lead to a shift in the skills of employees



of cattle improvement organisations. Tasks like data entry and data maintenance will migrate to the farmer. The organisations will need less staff, but with high skills in technical support, account management and sales. On the software development level, there will be a movement to use more standard software. The main ▼



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► reason is that it is too costly for individual organisations to develop and maintain their own software.

With this in mind, we decided to develop an IRIS 5, which is the next major release of IRIS. IRIS 5 will be web based and the architecture will be open. The latter means that the organisation that uses IRIS can develop his own user interfaces and reports, deviating from the standard



options. The IRIS 5 core, which is the standard software, will consist of the database, the business model and the standard user interfaces and reports. At this point, some developments have already been made. We will involve our IRIS customers in a customer feed back group. Communication will be via an (internet) forum and a number of meetings.

*Hans Wilmink
Manager Information products*

New structure of CRV

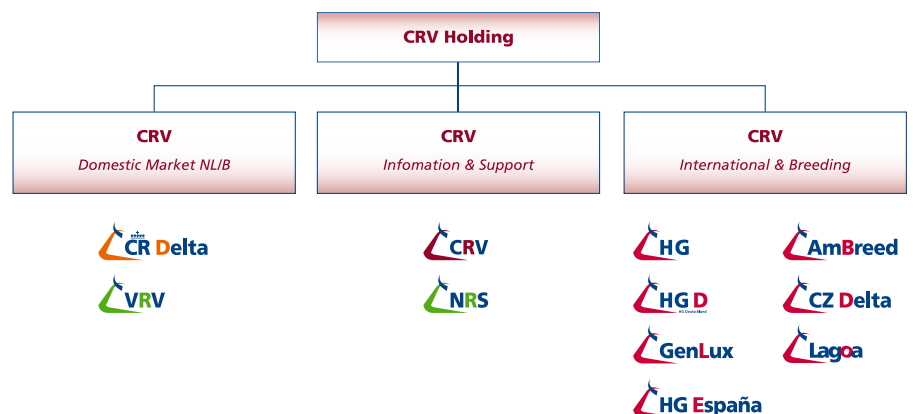
Foresight is the essence of government. CRV has reflected on the future and decided to adapt a new organisation structure.

In the coming five years, technological innovations will continue, while the number of cows and dairy farms in the domestic market will decrease. Data recording has become more and more automated. The internet has broken through as a tool for dairy farmers for herd management and for purchasing. To maintain the competitive strength of the company, working processes will be streamlined and CRV will focus its outlook more abroad. Therefore a new organisation structure has been set up. The old structure with four regional organisations and the product divisions of NRS and HG is transformed into a new structure with three divisions: 'Breeding and International', 'Information and Support' and 'Sales and Service Netherlands and Flanders' (see figure).

the 'Information and Support' division under the leadership of managing director Jan Jansen. The activities related to development, support and sales of the IRIS system are ranged under the 'Information products' department of Hans Wilmink. The IT department, under the management of Klaas Horneman, will take care of the IRIS-helpdesk and Application Service Provision of IRIS to our ASP-customers. In the new structure, the

teams of programmers working on IRIS for internal and for international markets are brought together.

As a result of the changes the pool of software developers is larger and more knowledge and capacity has become available to support the IRIS system for our customers. The new organisation structure guarantees the continuous development of IRIS so that it will maintain its high quality standard now and in the future.



IRIS

The activities related to IRIS are part of

Customer profile

In the Henan province of China, NRS has helped the Henan Huahuniu Group (HHG) to set up a milk recording service, with financial support from the Dutch government.

Why this project?

The aim of the project is to establish a self-financing organisation providing a milk recording service to their provincial dairy farmers, who own at least 10,000 dairy cows. A challenging objective, but not unrealistic, as milk recording organisations already exist in other provinces of China. The Dutch government has supported the initiative in the framework of the PSOM programme. The philosophy behind this programme is to stimulate local business in developing countries in order to relieve poverty. Local production creates jobs, and as a result incomes rise, children can go to school etc. In this project the employment will be limited, but it will raise the income of farmers, as they will get a better price for their milk production. The project can also have a positive effect on the dairy industry as a whole, through modernisation and development of the dairy industry. Further it is a win-win situation for HHG and NRS. Both companies get a better market position as a result.

What is the status of the project?

Currently the technical implementation is finished: the complete milk recording process is up and running. Fifteen farmers with 600 dairy cows between them are participating on a trial base. The farmers put eartags in the cattle to identify and register them in IRIS. Staff from the dairy factory of Henan Huahuniu Group record the milk production and take samples every month. A laboratory has been established to analyse the milk samples for fat%, protein% and somatic cell count (SCC). The milk recording results are processed in IRIS into Chinese reports. Dairy specialists

have been trained and advise the farmers after every recording.

Gradually these first dairy farmers are learning the meaning of the figures and gaining experience in how to use the information on their farm. Extension and training play a key role. The dairy specialist, who brings the reports, is a walking encyclopedia for the farmers who lack any agricultural education. The reports are a stepping stone for a wide range of questions, from mastitis treatment to feeding issues. The milk recording results show a big difference between the results of the farms, indicating that there is a lot of room for improvement, even within the limited means that the farmers have. The main interests of the farmers is somatic cell count, especially when they have experienced cattle with a high somatic cell count that get mastitis some days later. This helps them to treat the diseased cow at an early stage with a better chance of a quick cure. The first training session held at a milk collection center was about udder health.

What are the next steps?

The most exciting part is still to come. In the coming months we are going to roll out the milk recording service to over 600 dairy farmers. More training will follow, to teach them how to increase milk quality and production. In the end of the project we have to evaluate the commercial feasibility for continuation of the milk recording service. Questions like "How many farmers will participate?" and "How much are they prepared to pay for the service?" have to be answered. Or another party needs to be found to ensure to continuation of this wonderful project.

Holstein cattle in Henan province



Lower price for milk recording

CR Delta has substantially reduced its charges for milk recording, allowing farmers to take advantage of increased efficiency in data processing. This price reduction is made possible by changes to the working practices for milk recording. These are related to the far-reaching automatised data processing and have led to savings that go directly to the farmers. A large majority of milk recording herds choose a 4-weekly interval between recordings, and the charge for 4-weekly milk recording reduces from € 0.75 to € 0.66 per cow milked, which is more than 13 percent. In addition, the base cost per herd test (€ 11.80) has not increased for the fourth year in a row. Savings as the result of a more efficient method of working are passed straight back to the customers.

Link with process computers

In cooperation with Nedap and Wageningen University, NRS has been investigating how to connect local computers on-farm with the central database. The goal is to combine both data-sources to enhance the management information for the farmer. Nedap develops and supplies sensors that support farm management, e.g. sensors for milk conductivity and milk temperature that help to detect mastitis and pedometers to detect cows in heat. Sensors are like an extra pair of eyes for the farm manager. As farms get larger, the need for sensor data grows. NRS can combine the sensor data with other sources in the central

database and generate more effective analysis. In a pilot project, an infrastructure for the central collection of sensor data via the internet from local computers was applied on two dairy farms. Models running on the central database generated up-to-date, reliable analysis of heat and mastitis. The first results of the pilot are very promising. The project has been done with financial support of the province of Drenthe (www.icctender.drenthe.nl).

New record of semen export

In the past financial year (Sep '05 - Aug '06), HG exported more than 1.5 million doses of semen. In the leading years 2000 and 2001, about 1.6 million doses were exported, including sales in Flanders, which is now counted as the domestic market. In the following years, exports decreased slightly as a consequence of FMD. Now, growth is more than 13% compared to the year before and a new record has been set. The sales was realised broadly across the width of breeds and countries. According to HG farmers worldwide are increasingly choosing to breed economic, durable cattle; the breeding goal of HG fits this perfectly. This year the main export markets were: Germany, Spain, Czech Republic, USA, Mexico, Japan, South Africa and Brazil. New markets were Russia and Jordan. The most popular bulls for export were: Fabian, Reno, Olympic, Canvas, Win 395, Classic, Skoatterlan Delta Sunflower and Newhouse Worldline.

Fast increase in longevity

The longevity of Dutch dairy cows has risen again according to the annual statistics from NRS. Dutch dairy cows remain on farm for 42 more days compared to the year before. Their average lifetime has now climbed to 2109 days. The NRS statistics (see www.nrs.nl) also include the production figures per breed. Black & white Holsteins are on top of the league with production of 9,562 kg milk at 4.35 % fat and 3.49 % protein in 354 days. Based on 305 days, this is a gain of over 150 kgs milk compared to last year. Red & white Holsteins are second on the list with production of 8,490 kg milk, 4.54% fat and 3.57% protein in 341 days. Based on 305 days, their production has increased by over 200 kgs compared to last year.