IRISH CHAROLAIS NEWSLETTER

Irish Charolais Cattle Society

Irish Farm Centre · Bluebell · Dublin 12 · Ireland

TEL. 01/501166

May 1979 No. 11.

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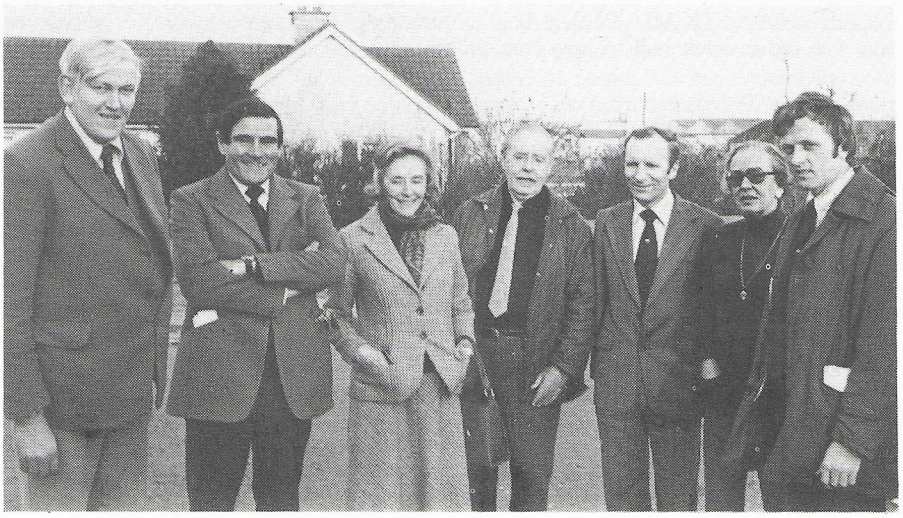
Representative of Dept. of Agriculture, Dr. A. Mescall.

All calves born in the 1979 year will carry the letter P in their ear.

P — 1979 Year Letter



MEMBERS ATTENDING THE 13th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Left to right: Mr. Pat Raleigh, Co. Limerick, Mr. Ted Curtin, Co. Kildare, Countess of Dunraven, Co. Limerick, Mr. Conor Carrigan, Co. Tipperary, The President, Mr. Sean Fitzgerald, Miss Louise Carrigan, Co. Tipperary and Mr. John Dillon, Co. Limerick.

STUDYING FORM AT GOFFS

Mr. Finbarr Twomey, Glanmire, Cork with his wife Kathleen and Mr. Michael Mitchell of Kilcock. Mr. Twomey increased his pedigree Charolais herd by purchasing an in-calf heifer.

PERFORMANCE TEST RESULTS OF CHAROLAIS BULLS AT TULLY 1978-79

Hereunder are the performance test results of bulls which were tested at Tully during 1978-1979. There were three separate intakes of bulls, the first in June, the second in August and the third in October. Bulls for performance test at Tully were selected for entry on the basis of weight for age, conformation and pedigree from herds participating in the Department's on FarmWeight Recording Scheme. Bulls chosen for entry to Tully were eight per cent superior to their contemporaries in the herds from which they were selected for pretest growth. Bulls were approximately 200 days of age when they entered the test station and they were evaluated under uniform conditions of feeding and management. Each bull was penned individually and fed ad libitum. The diet consisted of rolled barley, unmilled grass and Soya bean meal combined together in a single cube with the required minerals and vitamins. The diet had the following composition – crude protein (DM) 16%, digestibility (DOMD) 76%. A limited quantity of hay (approximately 4 pounds per day) was fed to each bull to help rumination.

The following test results are provided for each bull.

1. Age at start of test and average daily gain from birth to start of test.
2. Relative average daily gain on test, adjusted final weight, food conversion and height at the withers. These were estimated as follows:

The superiority or inferiority of a bull for each trait was expressed as a per cent of the breed average and was added to or subtracted from a 100, whichever was appropriate. Above 100 indicates bull is so many percentage points better than the average and below 100 indicates the reverse.

(a) Average daily gain on test: The first 28 days on test were excluded.
(b) Adjusted final weight: All bulls were adjusted to a constant age. This age varied for the different intakes and it was approximately the average age at which bulls of the different breeds completed test.
(c) Adjusted food conversion: Gross food conversion was estimated from the weight gain and feed intake during test, excluding the first 28 days. This gross food conversion was adjusted for variation in weight at the start of test.

TOP PERFORMING CHAROLAIS BULLS AT TULLY

Curragrange Onedin and Curragrange Oisin (sons of Moyglare Inspecteur(the property of Mr. J. J. McGrath Curragh Grange, Curragh, Co. Kildare. Seen here with the bulls are Mr. Paddy O'Brien and Mr. Jim Mulligan.

Name of Breeder	Name of Bull	Age at start (Days)	Av. Daily Gain Pre-Test (kg)	Traits expressed relative to the Breed Average (100)				Price Paid
				Av. Daily Gain on Test	Adjusted Final Weight	Adjusted Feed Efficiency	Withers Height	
Mr. H. Reg Armstrong	Inchanappa Newton	258	1.23	94	98	112	101	1000 gns
Earl of Iveagh	Farmleigh Noel	226	1.21	95	96	105	97	900 gns.
Mr. B.J. Monaghan	Meath Oisin	226	1.34	97	100	96	102	Not Sold
Dr. F. Austin	Drumnagoon Ole	185	1.41	81	92	85	99	1100 gns.
Mr. J.J. McGrath	Curragrange Oscar	226	1.38	101	103	101	101	1080 gns.
Dr. R.A.P. Crinion	Beauparc Orson	219	1.28	95	92	96	101	1180 gns.
Mr. B.J. Monaghan	Meath Onedin	212	1.06	105	89	108	97	1050 gns.
Mr. S. Mohan	Glenview Oran	209	1.36	101	97	102	102	960 gns.
Mrs. Anthony	Stonebrook Oscar	206	1.45	96	104	103	101	1000 gns.
Mr. M. Flanagan	Lowertown Officer	206	1.28	86	91	90	98	880 gns.
Dr. F. Austin	Drumnagoon Oodles	204	1.61	100	99	97	103	Not Sold
Mrs. E. Gardner	Ministown Omega	198	1.33	95	98	107	103	1550 gns.
Mrs. J.J. McGrath	Curragrange Onedin	198	1.49	119	111	110	104	1600 gns.
Mr. P. Matson	Loughgur Osprey	196	1.19	84	88	93	99	800 gns.
Mr. B.J. Monaghan	Meath Oncle	187	1.33	94	102	98	101	1140 gns.
Mr. J.J. McGrath	Curragrange Oisin	183	1.59	98	106	105	101	1600 gns.
Mr. J.J. Shields	Redmount Oscar	176	1.20	101	98	107	97	780 gns.

Special prizes were presented by the Agricultural Credit Corporation. Our thanks to the A.C.C. for their generous sponsorship.

The winners in the Charolais section were:

1st Prize of £150	CURRAGRANGE ONEDIN (Mr. J.J. McGrath)	
2nd Prize of £150	CURRAGRANGE OSSIN (Mr. J.J. McGrath)	
3rd Prize of £75	INCHANAPPA NEWTON (Mr. H. Reg. Armstrong)	Joint Third.
	STONEBROOK OSCAR (Mrs. M.E. Anthony)	

EDITORIAL

Be Selective

The immense potential of the Charolais breed can partly be attributed to the wide selection of animals available in France from which to select breeding stock. For over a century the Charolais Herd Book in France geared the direction and control of selection of breeding stock.

The breed possesses exceptionally divergent gene types which vary from fertile breeding animals for reproduction, to beef cattle with a high muscular development rate for beef production and for crossing.

The Charolais Standard

The Charolais Herd Book Code defines the standard as follows:

1. Coat uniformly white, occasionally cream, without markings.
2. Mucosae uniformly light, without markings.
3. Head relatively small and short with a wide, flat or slightly concave brow, short and straight forehead; long white round horns; medium sized ears, thin and very little hair, large protruding eyes, heavy cheeks, wide muzzle.
4. Short neck
5. Deep chest, rounded flanks blending into shoulders.
6. Very muscular horizontal back; very wide and thick haunch; hindquarters and croup slightly set back but very wide.
7. Plump and very pendulous buttocks.
8. Short legs, well-set, not very shapely.
9. Average skin thickness not too great but very supple.
10. Considerable general development, good compactness.

Why, you may well ask, such an introduction to an Editorial in your Charolais Breeders, Newsletter! The answer is simple, this is the type of animal that is selected in France for entry into the Herd Book, this is the type of animal the original Importers brought into this country, this is the type of animal subsequent Importers selected in France and this is the type of animal that I see a future for here in Ireland.

After recent sales shrewd cattle men were critical of the type of Charolais now being produced by some Irish Breeders. The main criticism being the lack in size of animals generally. Are our present day Breeders inclined to produce a smaller more compact type of Charolais? If this be so then I think it is time to call a halt to such folly before we find ourselves producing a "type" no-body wants. It has happened to other breeds, it can happen to ours.

The time has come for each Breeder and for all of us within the Society to have a careful look at the stock bulls available both on the farm and through the A.I. stations. The amount of damage that even one bad bull can create within a national developing herd the size of ours is incalculable. It is not just good enough to produce a calf each year, you must produce the calf best suited to to-days requirements and conform to the 'Charolais Standard'.

We are the envy of other Continental Breeders at the moment by the seemingly never ending market that now exists for Charolais and in particular for females. However, there is no room for complacency and certain animals recently turned out for sales would be better off sent to the meat factory rather than sold at a give away price. These animals will not help to promote the herd of their producer and certainly will not help the Charolais breed.

I am not being pessimistic, in fact I was never so optimistic. The future for Charolais in this country never looked so good. The Charolais bull as a terminal sire has no equal. Practically every Show in the country has been dominated by Charolais x cattle. The commercial classes at Spring Show 1978 were completely dominated by Charolais. Some Show Societies have gone so far as to eliminate the Charolais from certain classes so as to encourage exhibitors of other breeds to participate.

The buoyancy in the market at the moment for pedigree Charolais will continue provided we all become selective in our breeding programme. If we continue breeding just 'any type' of Charolais this buoyancy may come to an end very quickly. I say slaughter that poor performing cow, slaughter that poor performing heifer, slaughter that poor to average bull. If this advice is heeded then the demand for Charolais will far outstrip the supply.

What happened in the North Western Cattle Breeding Station in 1978, whereby the Charolais became the number 1 beef breed in usage, did not happen by accident. Carefully selected Charolais bulls were made available to farmers in the area and the farmers responded. Good cattlemen know and appreciate good bulls. The Charolais now commands 22% of all insmeinations at Sligo and this percentage is growing. A similar situation applies to Clarecastle A.I. station. Two years ago there were no Charolais bulls at this station, to-day there are four and recent reports suggest that these four need to be in full full production – such is the demand. This is the way it should be, this is the way it must be, this is the way it will be provided we are all practical when planning our breeding programme.

The rewards for pre-selection look enormous, do your selecting now. Let us face the 1980's knowing that we have selected animals that will be known not only nationally but internationally as a truly Irish Charolais.

This very fine cow 'Moyglare Louise' (daughter of Shamrock Ambassadeur) with her bull calf (by Dovea Heritier) realised a price of 5150 gns. at the April sale in Goffs. Seen here is Mr. Chris Clarke and Mr. James Geoghegan – the owner.

REPORT ON OFFICIAL SHOWS AND SALES

R.D.S. — Tuesday, 13th March, 1979.

Show Judge — Mr. S. Johnston, Ballyworkan House, Portadown, Co. Armagh.

The competition was judged on two levels, 60% of the marks went for visual assessment and 40% for on-farm weight records.

Overall Charolais Champion — PELLETSTOWN OISIN — bred and exhibited by Dr. R. McCarrick — sold for 1350 gns. to Mr. S. Johnston.

Reserve Charolais Champion — CURRAGRANGE OMAR — bred and exhibited by Mr. J.J. Mcgrath — sold for 1900 gns. to Mr. & Mrs. P. Lett.

3rd Placed Charolais — FARMLEIGH OLIVER — bred and exhibited by the Earl of Iveagh — sold for 1450 gns. to Mr. S. Johnston.

Average price for the sale was 1440 gns.

Presentation of bulls was excellent and the general standard was very satisfactory.

GOFFS — Wednesday, 4th April, 1979.

With a turnover of over 90,000 gns. for 51 animals (pedigree and grade register) this sale can only be described as very successful. Once again the Scottish buyers were very much in evidence and eight pedigree bulls found new homes in Scotland. Quite a number of our newer Members (i.e. those who purchased Charolais for the first time in 1978) were back at this sale, ready to invest again in Charolais.

SALE PRICES

Top price female 5500 gns. — went to the Earl of Iveagh Farmleigh, Castleknock, Co. Dublin, for his 1975 in-calf female 'Farmleigh Lavinia'. Lavinia is in calf to a son of the famous ECHO. She was pruchased by Mr. Tony O'Reilly, Castlemartin Farm, Kilcullen, Co. Kildare.

Top price male — 2000 gns. — went to Mr. John Fahy, Rathbane, Ardrahan, Co. Galway for his yearling bull 'Rathbane Oscar'. Oscar was purchased by Mr. S. Johnston, Udston Head Farm, Strathaven, Lanarkshire, Scotland. No doubt we will be hearing about this fine bull in the Autumn sales in Scotland.

WE LIST HEREUNDER A RANDOM SELECTION OF PRICES REALISED

FEMALES

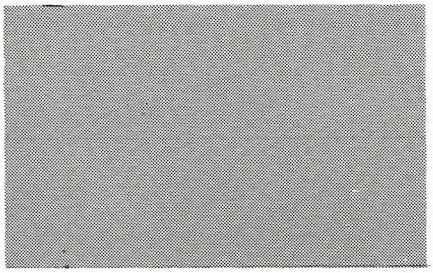
Name of animal	Vendor	Purchaser	Price Paid
Farmleigh Jacqueline	Earl of Iveagh Dublin	Mr. J. Ryall Co. Cork	5,200 gns.
Glenview Orla	Mr. S. Mohan Co. Offaly	North Western Cattle Breeding Soc. Sligo	4,100 gns.
Glenview Ornathis	Mr. S. Mohan	Mr. C. & Miss L. Carrigan, Clonmel	3,000 gns.
Mellifont Olive	Mellifont Abbey Co. Lough	Mr. C. & Miss L. Carrigan	3,000 gns.
Carn Juliette	P.E. McCullough & Son.	Mr. P. Stephens Co. Wicklow	2,800 gns.
Moyglare Louise	M.J. & A.G. Geoghegan Co. Wicklow	Mr. & Mrs. P. Lett Co. Wexford	4,500 gns.
Killadreenan Nanette	M.J. & A.G. Geoghegan	Mr. W. Austin Co. Wexford	4,000 gns.
Scarriff Maria	Dr. F. Austin Dublin	Mr. F. Twomey, Co. Cork	3,750 gns.
Killuragh Oyster	Mr. J. Dillon Co. Limerick	Mr. C. & Miss L. Carrigan	3,000 gns.
Ministown Olympia	Mrs. E. Gardner Ministown Laytown	Mr. P. Whiriskey Ardrahan	1,850 gns.

Averages: Cows — 2970 gns.: In-calf heifers — 4625 gns.: Maiden Heifers — 3170 gns.

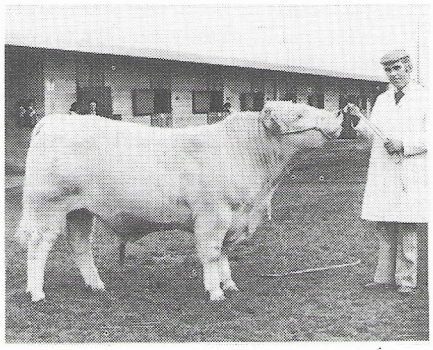
Average bulls 1092 gns.

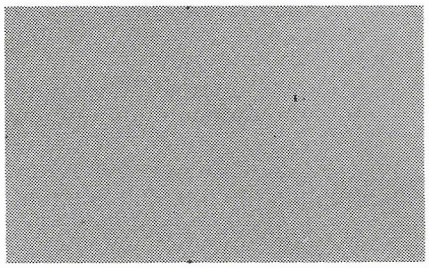
ALL BUYERS AT GOFFS

Mr. & Mrs. Pierce Lett Tomsallagh Ferns Co. Wexford, Mr. Ivan Ryall and his father Jim from Castlemartyr, Co. Cork.

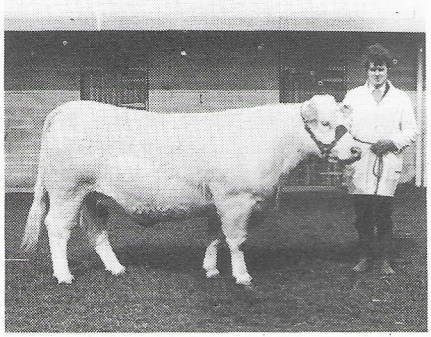


Mr. John Fahy Rathbane Ardrahan, Co. Galway with his top price bull 'Rathbane Oscar' (son of Dovea Heritier) at the April sale in Goffs.





Mr. Louis Rafferty with the Earl of Iveagh's top price female 'Farmleigh Lavinia' (daughter of Farmleigh Edouard) at the April sale in Goffs.



Effects of Production Disease on Returns from Breeding Charolais Cattle

by MICHAEL MONAGHAN, Department of Veterinary Preventive Medicine & Food Hygiene, U.C.D.

The term "production disease" has been coined as an umbrella term to cover all the diseases which rarely cause an animal's death, but can nonetheless cause quite severe economic losses to their owners. In fact, animals suffering from these diseases rarely show any of the usual signs of sickness, but simply deliver less of the intended end-product. Mastitis in dairy herds is a suitable and well-worn example to cite: cows rarely die as a result of mastitis, yet the disease can result in severe losses to the farmer because of reduced milk production, discarded milk and drug costs.

To apply this concept to the breeding of Charolais cattle, we can most usefully look at reproductive performance, the losses that result from inefficiency, some of their possible causes, and, hopefully, some ways in which these losses might be reduced. The only saleable product in breeding pedigree beef cattle is the calf crop, and if cows are not producing calves at the optimal rate, then they are not being as profitable as they might be. The high prices which have been paid for pedigree cattle over the past few years make the losses resulting from inefficiency quite apalling.

If, for illustrative purposes, we take a hypothetical Charolais cow, and examine her life-style from purchase as a two-year old in-calf heifer to her eventual demise at ten years of age, then the following economic facts emerge. She performs like clockwork, and has a calf every year, which is the optimal performance. This is referred to as a 12-month calving interval. In her life-time she produces eight calves (four bulls and four heifers). If bulls are sold for £1,500 apiece and heifers for £2,500 apiece, then her life-time gross is £16,000, or £2,000 a year. If we allow £700 per year for depreciation, interest, feed and other variable costs, then her annual profit is £1,300 per year.

If her calving interval is 14 months however, this means that in her eight-year productive life she produces only 6.85 calves. Her life-time gross return reduces to £13,700, her annual profit reduces to £1,012, as variable costs will be the same whether she is producing calves or not. This means that the cow's two-month annual holiday costs her owner approximately £300, or £5.20 per day.

If we have a ten cow herd with an average calving interval of 14 months, then, on the figures quoted above, this herd is losing £3,000 per year on calves not produced. While I would be the first to admit that these figures are crude and arbitrary, I think they are close enough to reality to give an idea of the possible costs of production disease in Charolais breeding in Ireland.

The cause of prolonged calving interval are numerous, but can be considered in two broad categories:

(1) The interval from calving to first heat;
(2) The number of services per conception.

I propose to say very little about the second cateogry, as it is very much a matter for the individual cow and her gynaecologist.

The interval from calving to first heat is governed by many factors including —

(i) accuracy of heat detection
(ii) nutrition
(iii) pathological conditions of the reproductive tract
(iv) suckling effect

(i) The accuracy of heat detection is of critical importance in management of cows whether they be beef or dairy. There is no doubt that a bull is the best equipped detector of heat in cows, but regrettably he is not as available as he might be. Given the small size of most Charolais herds, it is not feasible to keep a bull, and even if it were, it might not be desirable to have all the cows in the herd served by him. We are then left with a situation where all the cows must be spotted in heat by the owner or stockman. Many cows come in heat for short periods, and/or at very unsociable hours. It has been shown many times that the number of cows spotted in heat increases directly in proportion to the number of times they are inspected daily. A minimum of three daily checks should be made, and these should last for 10-15 minutes each. A quick look over the gate is not adequate. Picking out the right cow is also important, as up to 12% of cows presented for A.I. are not in heat. Other aids to management may include the use of vasectomised bulls, or hormone-treated cows or bullocks.

(ii) Nutrition both before and after calving is reflected in the general performance of all cows. While it is widely accepted among Charolais breeders that overfeeding before calving can lead to calving difficulties, it is not as widely realised that over-enthusiastic application of this approach can lead to other problems. A cow which is in poor condition at calving will not milk well, so her calf suffers, and she will also be more susceptible to other illnesses at and after calving. Reproduction can be regarded as a luxury function of the body, and can therefore be switched off if conditions are inappropriate. If a cow is in poor condition, and she is also trying to rear a calf, then the last thing she needs is another calf draining her from the inside, so she goes into anoestrus. This means that the ovaries close down and refuse to do any further business until conditions are more suitable. The same logic applies to nutrition after calving. Cows must be fed for maintenance, lactation and to regain lost condition, and the aim should be to have them gaining from 0.5 to 0.7 kg. per day at the time when breeding should be taking place. It has been shown consistently with beef cattle that those gaining weight at this time are much more likely to have the optimum reproductive performance than their less fortunate colleagues. It seems pointless to set a target like this unless there is some means of knowing whether or not it is being achieved. The weighing scales should be by now a sine qua non on beef farms, and this is a further use to which they can be put. The scales never tell lies, and their view-point is always objective, which is more than can be said for the alternative of visual inspection. If the weight gains are unsatisfactory then this ought to be investigated and the reason discovered. It could vary from inadequate nutrient intake to fluke infestation.

(iii) There are various pathological conditions of the genital tract which will delay the onset of normal cycling including uterine infections and cysts. These need veterinary attention and obviously the sooner they are treated, the sooner the cow's cycle begins.

(iv) It has been shown that the more frequently a cow is milked the longer is the interval between calving and first oestrus. Obviously a beef cow rearing a calf will be milked many times per day, and this does have a definite effect on the length of the interval. There is very little can be done practically about this. In attempting to improve reproductive performance all the above factors must be considered, and a definite effort must be made both by farmer and veterinarian to combine their resources and achieve the desired effect. A cow has got 80 days after calving in which to conceive to attain a 12-month calving interval, so everything possible must be done to get her to come in season well before this deadline. Any treatments which she may need must be carried out early so that no time is wasted. An obvious pre-requisite for any herd health programme is an adequate record-keeping system; otherwise, nobody knows whether things are improving or getting worse. Preventing losses occurring ought to be the aim, and to achieve this we must be aware of where the problem is and how to make a cost-effective approach to solving it.

	12-month calving interval	14-month calving interval
Life-time gross	£16,000	£13,700
Annual gross	£2,000	£1,712
Variable costs	£700	£700
Profit	£1,300 p.a.	£1,012 p.a.

Official Charolais Shows and Sales 1979

Tuesday 2nd October, Goffs, Kill, Co. Kildare

Fully Brucellosis Certified Pedigree Animals

Tuesday 4th December, Goffs, Kill, Co. Kildare

Mixed, Pedigree and Grade Register Animals

Full Particulars from the Secretary,

Irish Charolais Cattle Society
Irish Farm Centre,
Bluebell,
Dublin 12. Tel. (01) 501166.

ADVERTISING

In future editons of the Charolais Newsletter, full or half page advertisements can be reserved on behalf of breeders, firms etc.
Advertising rates and latest dates for receipt of advertisements from the Secretary.

WHAT OIL CRISIS?

This picture was adjudged to be the best Photograph submitted for the 1978 Photo Competition. Seen here is the five Fahy children from Ardrahan Co. Galway.

COUNTY SHOWS

Not alone are county shows a social occasion for the people of the area which they serve but they are also a platform for pedigree breeders to exhibit their stock. The Irish Charolais Cattle Society in an on-going campaign to promote the breed have decided to exhibit pedigree stock at the following Shows in 1979. Your support at these Shows would be appreciated.

Cork Summer Show (information from Jim Ryall, tel. (021) 28421)
Limerick Show (information from John Dillon, tel. (061) 84150)
Longford Show (information from Fr. Seamus Casey, tel. Kilmore 20)
Trim Show (information from Louis McLoughlin, Moneymore, Trim)
Enniscorthy Show (information from William Austin, tel. (053) 38134)
Bailieboro Show (information from the office, tel. (01) 501166)

We would encourage Breeders to exhibit x bred cattle at as many Shows as possible. Please note, at the time of going to press the 30 day pre-movement test is in force. If you intend supporting more than one Show with a particular animal please be very careful with test dates as once an animal is tested he can be moved for 30 days but cannot be re-tested for 60 days.

Charolais Newsletter — Directory of Breeders

Tell future buyers where you and your herd can be found. Advertise in our new Directory of Breeders. One year's subscription only £5.

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Please place the following entry in the Charolais Newsletter Directory of Breeders

Name .....

Address .....

.....

Telephone .....

Herd Title .....

Signature .....

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13th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Society's 13th Annual General Meeting was held on the 23rd Feb. '79 in Portlaoise Co. Laois. The Council took the decision to hold the A.G.M. outside Dublin in an effort to get as wide a representation as possible of our Members to attend the meeting. We are pleased to report that the Members responded and turned up in very satisfactory numbers. The meeting was addressed by the President, Mr. Sean Fitzgerald, (text of address is given hereunder). A very lively question and answer session was held and the views and suggestions put forward were carefully noted by Council.

Address by the President Sean Fitzgerald.

"Ladies and Gentlemen,

Farmers who had committed themselves to breeding and feeding pedigree or commercial Charolais stock were earning at least 50% more from their lifestock enterprises than those involved in other breeds.

Any farmer with good management could receive returns from drystock farming which were considerably better than those shown in the Farm Management Surveys of the Agricultural Institute. The finding of the Agricultural Institute in relation to the earning power of different farm enterprises have institutionalised the idea that if you wish to earn a reasonable income from farming you must be in milk or tillage. This thinking is not being foisted on farmers by the Agricultural Institute which merely reports a factual average situation in its Annual Management Survey. But it is nevertheless regarded as the gospel of farm earnings and as such has a very big influence on farmers decision making.

I would like to urge farmers to look beyond the Farm Management Survey to work being done by the Institute which showed that in a properly managed suckler operation returns of over £150 per acre are possible. The economic future for farmers in drystock farming could be at least as good as for those engaged in other farm enterprises. It requires farmers to maintain a high level of management and a policy which concentrated on producing top earning animals — this means Charolais. Any farmer who concentrates on producing high quality Charolais cross cattle will find that his earning power is not too far short of his grain and milk producing colleagues.

I would like to stress that the operation of a pedigree Charolais herd is not and should not be the preserve of the bigger farmer. Despite the fact that pedigree Charolais achieved new price levels in 1978, they are nevertheless better value to buyers than heretofore when judged against the price which commercial Charolais crosses are making.

There are many small farmers with small pedigree herds and they are a very sound economic project for them. This will be the pattern of the future when farmers come to realise that it costs as much to keep a commercial animal as it does a pedigree, whereas the returns from sales from pedigree are considerably higher.

Pedigree Charolais breeding is an ideal small farm project and the Charolais Society will be making a major effort to get this across in the future.

The presentation of any product is a vital factor at the point of sale. I would like to emphasise in this respect the definite need and advantage for breeders to turn animals out better.

The market for pedigree Chrolais has not developed by chance. The work of the Irish Charolais Cattle Society in encouraging the importation and breeding of the best Charolais cattle is now bearing fruit. The Charolais are undoubtedly the best pedigree animals in Ireland and this is recognised by foreign buyers who are always keen buyers at official Charolais sales.

As the Society has given leadership in encouraging quality stock production, disease control and marketing, each individual breeder should regard himself as an Ambassador for the breed and should reflect this in herd management and marketing practice.

Each breeder should also be fully aware of their membership of the Chrolais Society and the need to lead by example in promoting the breed and encourage other farmers to get into Charolais.

The holding in 1978 of the first ever sale of pedigree animals which were fully attested was a major milestone in lifestock marketing, it is the aim of the Society to progress as soon as possible to the stage where only fully attested animals would be sold at official Charolais sales. This step is necessary as a fundamental step in good marketing and to support the Government's campaign to achieve a fully disease free status for the Irish National Herd as quickly as possible.

The marketing efforts of the Charolais Society were very successful in 1978 and apart from the intrinsic superiority of the breed this effort has ensured a total clearance of all animals offered at every sale held under the auspices of the Society. This was a unique situation and one which is vastly encouraging for the future. The ability of your Society to continue this good work hinges on the active co-operation and participation by you the Members and the solid support you provide will be your best guarantee of continuously improved services and prices for stock in the future.

In order to provide a mechanism for better involvement by members the Society plans to establish regional Charolais Clubs and to devise and centre activities around them. In this way an active two way channel of communication with the Society would be created and a much improved information flow to farmers in general would be maintained."

The Secretary, Council Members & part of the large attendance at the 13th Annual General Meeting.

NEWS ITEMS

CHAROLAIS CLUBS

STROKESTOWN

Our first Charolais Club held their first Annual General Meeting in Strokestown on 12th February. The meeting which was very well attended was addressed by the President of the Society, Mr. Sean Fitzgerald.

Officers elected for 1979 were:

President
Mr. Joe Gilfillan, Kilmore House, Carrick-on-Shannon. Joe who had been President for the previous year was returned unopposed.

Secretary
Fr. Seamus Casey, Begnagh, Killashee, Co. Longford. Fr. Seamus had been acting Secretary for most of the previous year and was elected unopposed.

Treasurer
Mr. Bunny Jones, Rathcroghan, Tulsk, Co. Roscommon. Bunny who served as Treasurer for the Club's first year was also returned unopposed.

The Club, fresh with enthusiasm after the success of the Charolais representation at last year's Strokestown Show, have big plans for the Show this year. They also plan to have pedigree Charolais classes at Longford Show. These enthusiastic Charolais Breeders from the West look to You for support — we hope you will not let them down.

MID-WEST CHAROLAIS BREEDERS ASSOCIATION

We are glad to report that Charolais Club No. 2 has been established. The inaugural meeting of the Mid-West Charolais Breeders Association was held in Limerick on 2nd March with an attendance of over 60 people. The meeting was addressed by the President, Mr. Sean Fitzgerald. Other speakers included Mr. Maurice O'Brien, Clarecastle A.I. Station and Mr. Frank Robinson of I.M.P.
The following committee were elected:

Chairman: Mr. John Dillon, Killuragh, Pallasgreen, Co. Limerick.
Secretary: Mrs. Mary Raleigh, Mitchelstowndown, Knocklong, Co. Limerick.
Treasurer: Mr. Pat Raleigh, Mitchelstowndown, Knocklong, Co. Limerick.

Committee Members

Mr. Dan Melody, Bunratty,
Mr. Maurice O'Brien, Clarecastle A.I. Station
Mr. Peter Matson, Lough Gur, Grange
Mr. William Stanton, Galbally
Mr. Tony Power, Kilmallock
Mr. William Gubbins, Kilfinane
Mr. Michael Dillon, Crusheen
Mr. Harry Bugler, Castletroy
Mr. Tony Quish, Emily
Mr. B. Donovan, Emily.

SUPPLEMENTARY REGISTER

The decision to discontinue the registering of $^3/_4$ bred bulls as and from the 31st December, 1978 is final. Therefore after this date only bulls of $\frac{7}{8}$ bred and higher will be accepted by the Society.

As you already know we have not been accepting Grade A ($\frac{1}{2}$ bred) females since the 31st December 1977. But, the female progeny of Grade A females will be accepted for registration (subject of course to inspection) for the entire lifetime of those Grade A cows. Similarly Grade C females will be accepted (subject to inspection) for the entire lifetime of accepted Grade B cows. This process will continue right up to the point where all animals will have reached the purebred stage.

THE 16th WORLD CHAROLAIS CONVENTION

New Zealand . .. . . March 17th to 23rd, 1980.

The New Zealand Charolais Cattle Society have extended a warm and sincere invitation to all Charolais breeders to attend the XVI International Charolais Convention in Christchurch in 1980. A exciting convention programme has been prepared and participation in this'convention of a lifetime' will mean not only the experience of fellowship within the Charolais organisation but the opportunity to holiday in the 'gem of the South Pacific'.

An organised trip can be arranged provided there is enough interest. Information from the office.

MEMBERSHIP FEES 1979

Membership fees fall due on the 1st January each year. The 1979 fee is £10. If we have not already received yours perhaps you would let us have it at your earliest convenience. Life membership is available at £100.

CARRICK-ON-SHANNON BULL SALE
17th April, 1979

A ready market was available for the ten $^3/_4$ bred Charolais bulls on offer at this sale. Prices ranged from 650 gns. to 1100 gns. with an average selling price of 820 gns. The Champion Charolais was exhibited by Mr. Tom Gilfillan, Kilmore House, Carrick-on-Shannon, and sold for 1100 gns. The Champion was a son of Shamrock Commodore. The Reserve Champion was exhibited by Arthur Golden, Skreen, Co. Sligo and sold for 900 gns. The Reserve Champion was a son of Tattenhall Hublot. Third prize winner was exhibited by Mr. John Barry, Finlough, Strokestown. This bull was withdrawn at 900 gns. in the ring but was sold subsequently for a much higher price. This bull was a son of Meath Major. The presentation and standard of these bulls was excellent and will do a lot to promote Charolais in the West of Ireland.

BIRTH NOTIFICATIONS AND A.I. DOCKETS

Please ensure that all birth notifications (pedigree and Grade Register) reach the office within 14 days of the birth of the calf. *The registration fee and A.I. docket should accompany the birth notification form.* In all cases 90 days will be allowed to withdraw the animal with the full registration fee refunded.

Unfortunately, we are still receiving A.I. dockets which do not contain the necessary details. We cannot accept A.I. dockets unless the following details are filled in:

(1) Date of insemination.
(2) Name of owner of cow.
(3) Name and tattoo number of cow (tag number will *not* suffice).
(4) Name and code letters of bull.

CHAROLAIS CALVING SURVEY 1978

(Carried out by Irish A.I. Centres)

A.I. Station	Name of Bull	A.I. Code Letters	% Serious Difficulty
SLIGO	Curragrange Imp	IC 17	3.0
	Doonally (Imp. '74F) Intermede	CF 21	5.5
	Meath Major	MMR	2.3
	Shamrock Commodore	IC 9	3.8
CLONDALKIN	Enfield(Imp. '73F)Helas	CF 15	3.9
	Enfield(Imp. '73F)Illico	CF 18	3.1
DOVEA	Dovea(Imp. '73F)Heritier	CF 14	6.3
	Dovea(Imp. '74F)Ingenieux	CF 16	5.7
	Dovea(Imp. '74F)Istambul	CF 17	3.4
	Shamrock Violon	CF 7	6.6
GALTEE	Galtee(Imp. '74F)Ike	CF 20	9.9
BANDON	Banndan(Imp. '74F)Indolent	CF 19	15.6
	Shamrock Brigand	IC 2	4.8
CLARECASTLE	Shamrock Deliverer	IC 14	1.6
DUBLIN	Shamrock Hamlet	IC 16	4.7

PRESENT DAY MARKET REQUIREMENTS

by JOHN CORR, General Manager of C.B.F.

The nature of the Belgian market for Irish beef is the best indicator we have had so far of the importance of precise quality factors. It is a small market so far but it is one where importers are ready to step right in with a premium and apply it particularly to our Continental-type cross-breeds.

That market is clear evidence of the fact that we can increase the price to producers by better selection and, without any doubt, by including a bigger selection of Continental bulls in our breeding programme.

At present our reference price for beef exports is 75 per cent of the Guide Price (the EEC Guarantee). We can, within our own resources move up to 90 per cent and, again, quality has to be taken into account with every step we take.

The Continental market wants a supply of heavy, lean carcases – from cattle in excess of 12 cwt. that kill out over 700 lb. deadweight. It will pay the price.

That doesn't mean that we should even consider a huge switch-over to new breeds. For the foreseeable future up to three quarters of our beef cattle will come from the dairy herd and it is unlikely that dairy farmers will move from the present pattern while they have need of replacement heifers. Could anyone blame them?

Still there is wide scope for the use of continental beef breeds, among which the Charolais ranks very prominently.

HIGHEST WEIGHT GAINS

Because the Charolais has only been in this country for such a relatively short time it has not been possible to carry out extensive research work on it. However, from the experiments that have been carried out both by the Agricultural Institute here and by the Meat and Livestock Commission in Britain some very interesting facts emerge.

It has been established for instance, that the Charolais and its crosses have the highest daily liveweight gain of any competing breed – the advantage in growth rate is estimated to be in the order of 7 per cent. Naturally, then the animal has a higher slaughter weight than any other breed of a similar age. It has also been established that the Charolais has a low percentage of fat, a high percentage of lean and therefore a high yield of saleable meat.

These are a lot of very valuable qualities and, as such, place the Charolais very high in the list of breeds suitable for commercial beef production in this country.

HIGH YIELD OF LEAN MEAT

One of the important qualities of the Charolais is, of course, its very high yield of lean meat and its low production of fat. Every farmer knows the economics of producing lean meat as compared with fat. If he doesn't then perhaps it may interest him to learn that it takes 6-7 times as much food to produce one pound of fat as to produce one pound of lean. Production of fat is therefore expensive and grossly uneconomical. It may have been acceptable in the past to produce animals with excessive amounts of fat when farmers were being paid on a live weight basis with little or no emphasis on quality. However, the farmer will soon be faced with a situation where the price he receives for his animals will be closely related to the yield of lean meat and there will be severe penalties for over fatness. Indeed, some meat plants are currently penalising for overfatness and others have established a very definite premium for the type of animal that should accrue from good use of the Charolais bulls now available to Irish breeders.

FUTURE TRENDS

It is likely that the future trend in this country will be towards killing cattle at heavier weight, as they currently do on the continent, in order to spread high calf prices over bigger carcases. Also, because of high killing and processing costs we can expect greater emphasis on the use of heavier animals.

The meat industry and we in C.B.F. will certainly be emphasising the advantages of breeds like the Charolais with their high lean content, less trimming and no wasteful production of fat. Beef from animals like the Charolais with its massively developed hind-quarters is more adaptable to continental cutting standards and is more suitable to continental tastes. It is therefore easier to sell to our customers in Europe. From the farmers point of view one major advantage of the Charolais compared with some other continental breeds is that it colour marks its calves. (In this context, it should be remembered that animals which look like Charolais may sometimes be third or fourth crosses or more and therefore may not exhibit the finer qualities of the true Charolais).

CHOOSE AN EASY CALVING CHAROLAIS BULL

Finally, the publicity concerning calving difficulties must be mentioned. I know that this is a big obstacle standing in the way of greater use of the Charolais. The whole subject of calving difficulties must be kept in perspective.

Naturally, if you change to a heavier breed like the Charolais you automatically increase calf birth weights and this can lead to some difficulty in calving. However, it should always be remembered that the higher growth performance of the calf can often more than offset this inconvenience. It should also be understood that calving difficulties are associated only with some bulls and it is now possible to monitor individual bulls for ease of calving. It is essential that there be greater study in this area so that a complete list of bulls showing low calving difficulties can be drawn up. This would encourage wider use of the breed and this must be good for the long-term development of the industry.

It is important that we increase livestock numbers, particularly over the next few years and, for the beef producer, cross breeding, improved disease control and improved grassland management are all important factors in producting the requirements for the market. The choice of breeds for crossing is very important and there is certainly scope for improvements in the beef bulls we are using on a percentage of our cows.

It is hoped that we will increase the use of A.I. and also that discriminating farmers will respond to any advice and encouragement made available to them to use Charolais bulls that give minimum problems and maximum yield of high quality, early maturing beef.

NOTICE

The Council of the Irish Charolais Cattle Society wish to inform all prospective purchasers of pedigree Charolais animals which are not registered in the Irish Charolais Cattle Society Herd Book that such animals will have to be inspected and approved as being eligible for inclusion in the Irish Charolais Cattle Society Herd Book within 14 days from date of importation and an inspection fee and registration fee will be payable to the Irish Charolais Cattle Society in respect of such animals.

For further details and information please contact the Secretary, Irish Charolais Cattle Society Ltd., Irish Farm Centre, Bluebell, Dublin 12, Tel (01) 501166.

IRISH BEEF IN FRANCE – HOW GOOD IS IT?

SUMMARY BY DR. JOHN O'CONNELL

This is a brief summary of a report entitled "The Marketing of Irish Beef in France with special reference to price/-quality relationships" by Dr. John O'-Connell, U.C.D., Matthew Dempsey and Catherine Meenan. The report was published by the Agricultural Trust in February 1979.

Since 1974 France has steadily become more important as a market for Irish beef. It was the second largest market for Irish beef in 1978 taking 22% of Irish beef exports. These exports comprised 3% of total French beef consumption in that year. Irish beef prices at producer level are substantially lower than those received by French farmers, the difference amounting to 11p/1b carcase weight in 1978.

The above study set out to explain the price difference which exists between French and Irish beef. It was hypothesised at the outset that the difference should be explained by two factors: (i) Physical characteristics of the beef, and (ii) Marketing methods. The physical characteristics refers mainly to weight, conformation and fatness. It would be expected that the differences in these characteristics would explain at least some of the difference between French and Irish beef prices. Marketing methods refer to channels of distribution used for Irish beef exports to France and the prices and margins obtaining in these channels. Evidence of bias against Irish beef was sought by considering whether the same price is paid for Irish and French beef of equivalent quality.

To determine the part played by physical characteristics a pricing and classification exercise was undertaken in Rungis wholesale market which serves Paris with meat, dairy products, fish, flowers, etc. The exercise enabled prices to be related to measures of physical characteristics of beef. Beef from France, Ireland, U.K. and other countries was examined to see if any special factors operated for different countries. The exercise was done for pistola beef. This was because pistola beef is much more prevalent in Rungis market than is carcase beef.The pistola consists of the hind quarter plus an eight ribbed loin but excluding the flank. In terms of weight a pistola is just about half the side but in terms of value it would comprise 70 to 75 percent of the value of the side. Since it is such an important part of the side the results derived for pistolas in this study would be attributable directly to side or carcase beef as well. To examine the effects of marketing methods, the channels through which Irish beef is imported into France were described and quality levels, quality variation, prices and margins were measured for the different channels.

Price — Quality Relationships

In the Rungis pricing and classification exercise, beef prices were related to the physical characteristics of the beef and the country of origin. Conformation and fatness were each measured on a seven point scale, the higher the reading the better the conformation, the lower the reading the less the fat. The average levels of the main physical characteristics are given below by country of origin (Table 1).

In this sample French beef is superior, on average, to beef from Ireland or from other countries in terms of weight, conformation and fat. While it was not possible to identify the breeds simply by looking at the beef on sale in Rungis, there is no doubt that a large range of beef breeds was covered in this exercise, ranging from poorish beef from dairy breeds up to the very best of the continental type breeds. The difference in average price between the Irish and French beef examined in this sample was over 20p per lb. This difference of course related to pistola beef and it would be less, probably in the region of 12p to 14p per lb if one were talking about side or carcase beef. The country of origin of beef selling in Rungis was found not to have a consistent effect on the price. The price difference between French and Irish beef found therefore is explained totally in terms of the physical characteristics of beef, and this sample of Irish beef, though selling at a much lower price than French beef was neither under-priced or over-priced relative to its quality level. Analysis of the data produced results which are summarised below.

Relative importance of physical characteristics in explaining price difference between French and Irish beef sold in Rungis.

	Steer Beef %	Cow Beef %
Attributable to:		
Weight	23	62
Conformation	71	19
Fat	6	19
	100	100

As can be seen the poorer conformation of Irish beef accounts for 71 per cent of the price difference that exists between French and Irish beef, the poor weight of Irish steer beef accounts for 23 per cent and the greater fat of Irish beef accounts for 6 per cent. This does not mean that Irish beef is very well suited to the French market as far as fat levels are concerned. Most Irish beef going to France is preselected in the factories in relation to fat and in many cases also severe triming of fat is done before the beef is sent to France. In the case of cow beef the most important factor in explaining the price difference between Irish and French beef is the poor weight of Irish cows which accounted for 62 per cent of the price difference with conformation and fat each accounting for 19 per cent. Therefore in the case of both steer beef and cow beef the difference in price between Irish and French beef was accounted for totally by quality characteristics but the importance of these varied as between steer beef and cow beef with conformation by far the most important factor for steer beef and weight the most important factor in the case of cows. These differences do get reflected back to farm level as can be seen by examining the figures given in Table 2.

MARKETING CHANNELS

There are five main channels through which Irish beef is imported into France. Channel 1 is made up of wholesalers who handle and display the beef on their stands. The two main operators within this channel are Rungis wholesalers and provincial wholesalers. About 25 per cent of Irish beef imports into France go through Rungis and 15 per cent through provincial wholesalers. Channel 2 is made up of wholesalers whose only costs are administrative costs and who arrange over the telephone or telex for Irish beef to be dropped at the various destinations in France. This channel accounts for about 25 per cent of Irish beef imports into France. Channel 3 is made up of wholesalers who bone out the meat and they would take about 10 per cent of Irish beef imports into France. Channel 4 contains no intermediaries and sales to this channel are made directly from the factory to the retail outlet. The commodity dealt with in this chanel is bone-in beef and about 10 per cent of Irish beef will go through this channel. Channel 5 is similar to Channel 4, the only difference being that the commodity involved in Channel 5 is bone-out beef. Irish trade through this channel occurs mainly during the holiday season. It takes about 5 per cent of Irish beef imports into France. From the point of view of generating employment in Ireland sales through Channel 5 should be the ultimate target. About 23 per cent of beef is sold in consumer packs at retail level in France. However, only 5 per cent of this is pre-packed by the suppliers of the retail outlets. This figures is about half of what it was in 1971. This trend does not offer much encouragement to exporters who might hope to pack beef in consumer pre-packs in Ireland for direct sale to retail outlets in France. The quality of Irish beef going to France is higher and is better standardised than the national output of Irish beef. Within France Irish beef going to the Rungis market is lower in terms of quality level and standardization than Irish beef going to the other channels in France. Accordingly, the Irish beef going to the other channels makes a higher price than Irish beef selling in Rungis. There was some evidence that this price in some cases should have been higher again. It would

seem that the difference between what we reckoned the Irish beef should be making in these cases compared with what it was making was being used by the wholesalers concerned to build up a high volume of trade with their retail customers. Efforts by Irish exporters to gain higher prices in this situation resulted in the wholesaler switching to other Irish exporters who supplied equivalent beef at a lower price thus maintaining the advantage for the wholesaler, vis a vis his retailer customers. It should be stressed, however, that in Rungis, which is the largest channel for the importation of Irish beef, no evidence was found that Irish beef gets a lower price than its quality deserves.

Margins were also measured in this study. They were measured at the difference between what the French importers and wholesalers pay for beef and what they get for that beef delivered into a retail outlet in France. The margins of the Rungis and provincial wholesalers as measured by us vary between 5p and 7p/lb in stable trading conditions. These margins, of course, vary with variations in trading conditions and they can be lower or higher than those quoted above. Margins earned by channel 2 wholesalers, i.e. wholesalers who simply arrange over the telephone or telex for the beef to be dropped at various places, varied from less than 1p/1b to over 2p/lb in stable trading conditions. Again these would vary with different trading conditions. These margins cover all the operating and fixed costs of the wholesalers' importers and provide for their profit. No evidence was found of substantially different margins being earned on Irish compared with French beef.

IMPLICATIONS

Breeding

One of the most obvious improvements in returns from the French market is to be obtained from breeding. Of the price gap of over 20p/lb between French and Irish steer beef it was found in this study that conformation accounted for over 70 per cent. In this exercise, Irish steer beef rated 1.2 units lower on the conformation scale than French beef. Improved conformation through more intensive use of continental type beef bulls could eliminate the conformation difference between French and Irish steer beef. There would also be associated gains in weight and fat levels. For steer beef, therefore, improved breeding, if accompanied by improved husbandry as discussed below could go a long way towards eliminating the gap which currently exists between French and Irish prices. In addition to gains in the market price in terms of revenue, there are also gains to be had in cost terms at farm level. Cross-bred animals from continental beef bulls exhibit higher daily gains than the other main breeds and crosses found in the country; at the same time, their food conversion efficiency is about the same as for other breeds. Also, at heavy weights, their efficiency of conversion of concentrates into lean meat is better than that of most other breeds.

At a national level, inseminations of continental beef bulls currently account for about 11 per cent of all artificial inseminations. This varies from almost nil in some southern counties to 35 per cent in some areas in the Sligo region. It is thought that fear of calving difficulties is the main reason for this low level of use of continental beef bulls. However, some continental beef breeds do not cause undue calving difficulties. In addition, bulls have been isolated in the last few years which have very low rates of calving difficulties. Greater use could be made of these.

Husbandry/Nutrition

As far as husbandry/nutrition are concerned, it can be said that excess fatness occurs when an animal is fed to a weight and age too advanced for that particular breed. The amount of fat, excluding cod fat, trimmed off carcases which are sold to provincial wholesalers in France is generally in the range of 5lb to 12lb, but in some cases it amounts to over 20lb and even then, these latter carcases would still be considered as over-fat for the market. In addition to the loss in price which over-fat carcases incur on the market, costs at farm level are also increased because the energy requirements for the deposition of fat are far greater than those required for a similar weightof lean meat. The adoption of beef systems involving earlier finishing could contribute to a reduction in the average slaughter age, less fat and better conformation. In other words, costs incurred at farm level would be less and the finished products would be far better quality.

Husbandry/nutrition is probably of even greater importance in the case of cows than in the case of steers. As was seen, differences in weight and fat levels account for almost 80 per cent of the price difference between French and Irish cow beef with weight by far the most important factor. The poor body weight of Irish cows could be counteracted by improved feeding of replacement heifers and, in particular, by improved feeding of culled cows. Too often cows are culled at the end of the lactation period when they are in poor condition and they are sent for slaughter in an unfinished condition.

Marketing

Developments in the marketing sector are linked closely to developments regarding beef quality improvement at producer level. Unless the marketing sector, in its pricing structure reflects back to producer level the premia and penalties which operate in the market, the necessary changes in breeding and husbandry practices will not take place. It is therefore imperative that payment to farmers be related to class and quality of the beef when the beef classification scheme becomes operative later this year. Another matter relating to marketing is that price competition between Irish factories leads to some loss in the price of Irish beef selling in some areas of France. The only way that this can be remedied is by some form of group action by the Irish factories in relation to price. On an overall basis though by far the major reason for the price gap which exists in the market place between French and Irish beef is the poorer quality of Irish beef.

TABLE 1

	Average Characteristics					
	Steer Beef			Cow Beef		
	France	Ireland	U.K.	France	Ireland	U.K.
Equivalent live (cwt)	14.1	11.3	12.0	12.0	9.3	10.6
Conformation	5.9	4.7	5.0	4.4	3.7	3.8
Fat	2.2	3.5	4.2	2.7	3.5	3.6

TABLE 2

Prices, Costs and Margins from Rungis to Farm Level		
	French	Irish
Ex-Rungis price of steer carcase on 18/9/78	76.85 p/lb	67.80 p/lb
Less customs charges	–	0.54
Plus French MCA	–	5.06
Importers/Wholesalers revenue	76.85	72.32
Importers/Wholesalers margin	3.70	4.82
Factory c.i.f. price	73.15	67.50
Insurance and transport	1.00	3.44
Net price received by factory	72.15	64.06
Gross value of offals	7.00	6.75
Factory revenue	79.15	70.81
Farm level carcase price of equivalent live animals on 11/9/78	77.11	68.19
Factory margin calculated as residual	2.04	2.62

Note: Difference at Rungis (in this case) was 9.05 p/lb.
Difference at Farm level was 8.92 p/lb.

I being a member of the I.C.C.S. would like a copy of the Irish Charolais Newsletter sent to:

Name_____

Occupation_____

Address _____

Please detatch this slip & return to the I.C.C.S. Signed_____

EDITOR: WALTER FEELY.

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