

## **Abstract by George Ramsbottom - Using extension to progress genetic improvement on Irish dairy farms**

The Economic Breeding Index (EBI), developed by the Irish Cattle Breeding Federation (ICBF), is now widely used in selecting sires on Irish dairy farms. The index was initially developed in 1998 and has undergone continual modification since. At that time AI use was in decline. Among the reasons for this decline was the widespread perception that AI bred cows were less fertile than the daughters of stock bulls. The former Irish dairy cattle breeding index focused on milk production alone and placed particular emphasis on protein production. Genetics for fertility and other traits were not included and the fertility performance of the national dairy herd was in decline. Research personnel in Teagasc have been instrumental in the development of the Index from the start. Advisory personnel in Teagasc have promoted the Index since its initial development in 2000. Extension methods used since then include: