

## **BETTER Farm Update**

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### **Early lamb flocks**

The early lamb flocks got ewes and lambs out to pasture in early February. This ground had been rested since late September/early October and had good grass covers. Lamb weights at 7 weeks (see in Table 1) are ahead of their counterparts last season by approx. 1 to 1.5kg despite the difficult grazing conditions in February. These lambs are currently consuming in excess of 300 g/day of concentrate. They will be weaned in early March to prioritise grazing for the mid-season flocks on these farms.

Table 1. Lamb weight (kg) at 7 weeks on the Early Lambing flocks

	Farm's		
	P. Kearney	T O'Leary	J. Doyle*
Birth type	Louth	Kerry	Wexford
Singles	24.8	26.7	23.9
Twins	23.5	22	21.7
Triplets	20.9	21.8	18.5

\* 1<sup>st</sup> group only

### **Mid-season flocks**

The mid-season flocks focused on getting the remaining flock health treatments done before lambing. All the mid-season flocks administered clostridial /pasteurella booster vaccine to ewes during February. The start of lambing will vary for the flocks from the 26<sup>th</sup> Feb to March 17<sup>th</sup>. This season we will be examining lambing difficulty in more detail on each farm.

### **Grassland**

The farmers have been measuring their opening grass covers in Late February. The average farm cover on the lowland farms was 331 kg/DM/Ha (approx. 5 cm). There is some variation between farms and with some not due to start lambing for 2 to 3 weeks will allow covers to increase prior to turnout.

To date (late February) only 3 of the farms have applied spring applications of fertilizer. Due to a combination of low soil temperatures and waterlogged conditions

in late February most of the more northerly farms delayed applications until early March when hopefully conditions improve.

A combination of N or compound based fertilizer will be applied on the first round of grazing depending on recommendations outlined in the nutrient plan for each farm.