

BETTER Farm update

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Early lamb flocks

The farm's with early lamb flocks weaned the ewes in late February/early March. The ewes were dried off to reduce grass demand and the lambs are being given access to better pasture. These flocks are began to draft lambs in late March. The target drafting weight for the flocks is 40 kg.

Mid-season flocks

Lambing is complete for the adult ewes in most of the Mid-season flock with only the yearlings remaining. With the bulk of the flock at grass for 2 to 3 weeks or more the farmers will begin grouping up ewes into larger batches and begin to establish grazing groups by early April. This will facilitate better management as the season progresses

The yearling flocks are managed as a separate grazing group. On occasion this may include adult ewes rearing triplets that are also being supplemented. These yearling ewes will receive an anthelmintic treatment at turnout. These yearling ewes are susceptible to a GI challenge, they will need to be considered the same as naïve lambs until weaning when they finish lactating at which point they behave like adult ewes once more. In most cases the farmers opted used a moxidectin based product with residual activity.

Grass supplies

Grass supplies are variable on the farms, largely a reflection of the situation in early March. Growth rates of 5 to 15 kg/Dm/ha being recorded on individual farms during March with the best performance being achieved on more sheltered fields with higher covers. Many of the farms have began the second fertilizer application to increase grass supplies.

Hill flocks

Lambing is underway on 2 of the hill flocks in late March with older ewes carrying crossbred lambs starting first. The other hill flocks will start in early April. Grass supplies on the closed ground are limited in a number of these farms which will make management post lambing difficult. Ewes in particular those rearing twins may be supplemented for a period until supplies improve.