

Minerals under the Sheep Welfare Scheme

There are three categories of tasks concerning mineral supplementation under the new Sheep Welfare Scheme - which most sheep farmers are partaking in. The scheme commenced in February and it might not be any harm to refresh ourselves on the requirements with regards to the mineral supplementation options. The three possible mineral options are listed below -

(1) Mineral Feedingstuff Supplementation for Ewes - Scheme participants who selected this option must supplement all ewes (including hoggets put out to the ram) with mineral feedingstuffs post mating. Supplementation may take the form of bagged mineral feedingstuffs (dry minerals), mineral blocks, drenches and liquid minerals, injectables or boluses. Where compound feedingstuffs are being fed at this time, a mineral feedingstuff may be included in the ration by the feed mill at the time of manufacture. Otherwise, dry mineral feedingstuffs (bagged minerals) may be dusted on the silage or fed with feed materials ('straights'). Where boluses are used these can be administered 7-10 days pre mating to allow for rumen breakdown of the bolus. Receipts and invoices of all mineral feedingstuffs and/or compound rations containing the mineral feedingstuffs purchased must be retained should there be a DAFM check. It is important to note that mineral feedingstuffs must be sourced from DAFM licenced feed business operators – check this with your supplier. Mineral feedingstuffs must be administered in accordance with the appropriate instructions. Ewes must be supplemented with suitable minerals feedingstuffs for 60 days post mating. The label of the mineral should indicate that it is suitable for ewes and also state the duration of its action. A drench may have to be given in more than one application to cover the required 60 days depending on its stated duration of action.

(2) Mineral Feedingstuff Supplementation (Concentrate feeding to lambs post weaning). Where a farmer has selected this option he/she must supplement all lambs with compound feedingstuffs containing appropriate mineral and vitamins for 4 weeks post weaning. Purchased compound feed containing minerals or feed materials ('straights') with a suitable mineral supplement can be used. Again receipts and invoices of all compound feedingstuffs and/or mineral feedingstuffs purchased must be retained in order to be available for inspection. Farmers that have selected this option must retain all lambs for 4 weeks after weaning and are required to retain dispatch documents for any lambs sold to verify lambs they were fed for 4 weeks post weaning and they must also record date of weaning in the Scheme Actions record book. Where groups of lambs are weaned on different dates these dates must be recorded for each group. In addition the level of supplementation must be at an adequate rate to provide the required level of nutrition. Participants should supplement in accordance with manufacturers label recommendations.

(3) Mineral Feedingstuff Supplementation (Lambs pre weaning) - Hill sheep farmers that selected this action must supplement lambs with minerals during the grazing season pre weaning. Supplementation may take the form of injectables, boluses, drenches or liquid minerals. Any minerals used, including cobalt, must be labelled as suitable for lambs. Again, records of all mineral feedingstuffs purchased must be retained for inspection. Care should be taken that the mineral feedingstuffs is be sourced from DAFM licenced feed business operator and must be administered in accordance with the appropriate instructions.

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