

BETTER Farm Update May 2019

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Grass

The second rotation is now under way for the lowland flocks with nearly all grazing groups established. Group sizes across the farms depending on the size of the flock but vary from 50 to 200 ewes and there lambs per group. Despite grass supplies being good all the flocks have continued to apply fertilizer even if at reduced rates in order to maintain grass quality and for addressing soil fertility issues where necessary. The flocks have also begun closing off paddocks for silage with the focus on paddocks gone too strong for grazing.

Time to start weighing lambs again

During the first two to three weeks of May all of the lowland lambs will be weighed for their 7 week weight which will provide the first proper indication of how lambs are performing this year. For the Co. Tipperary flock which began lambing at the end of January some of the lambs have already had their 7 week weight with growth rates averaging 265 g/day since birth. The early lambing flock on the Co. Roscommon BETTER farm began drafting lambs in April with approximately 26% of lambs drafted as the second week of April.

Dosing

Lambs were treated for nematodirus in April in line with the DAFM warning using a white drench (Benzimidazole; 1-BZ) and some flocks may need to go in dose a second time for nematodirus where some of the lambs are still quite young and the first dose may have been too early. Faecal sampling of lambs will begin this month (May) to allow for FECPAK analysis to establish when further worm dosing is required.



Picture: Recently lambed ewes and lamb on John Joe Fitzgerald's hill farm near Dingle Co. Kerry on the 9th of April. John Joe is using temporary fencing to control grass on his green ground as he builds ewe and lamb groups post-lambing.