

## **BETTER Farm update October 2018**

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The last month has seen a rapid rise in faecal egg counts from remaining lambs in nearly all the flocks. Despite rain fall rising in some parts in August the worm counts were slow to rise at first but jumped rapidly from the start of September with nearly all flocks dosing lambs in September. Despite the difficult conditions across the spring and summer both the lowland and hill flocks are reporting that ewes appear to be in good BCS but are still being monitoring ewes closely to ensure any thin or problem ewes are dealt with early. Fluke dosing, particularly for the hill flocks, has been taking place in the last couple of weeks in order to ensure ewes don't lose BCS between now and mating time.

The mid-season lowland flocks will be joining rams to the flock from early this month to target the start lambing during the first week in March to match grass growth on the farm. Once again a number of the flocks will be using rams from the INZAC (Ireland New Zealand Animal Comparison) project this year in order to evaluate the performance of the progeny off these rams. Another new breeding project called 'Ovidata' which is being carried out in collaboration with Sheep Ireland will also begin this year on a number of the lowland flocks.

Autumn time brings about the beginning of planning for next year's grazing with the farms starting to plan what order they intend to close up paddocks for next spring. The target will be to start closing paddocks in rotation 120 days prior to target turn out date.