

## BETTER Farm Update June 2023

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The comparatively good weather during May meant most of the flocks made some silage. This was important for the flocks as most of this was high quality silage that will be marked for ewes pre-lambing next winter but also because grass supplies were getting ahead of flocks. The flocks will be targeting 10 grazing days ahead from early June and days ahead had been climbing rapidly for a time in May. For the most part this has been brought back under control by dropping out paddocks and sub-dividing paddocks as necessary. This is vital as if grass quality is allowed to decline between now and weaning lamb performance will be reduced. Second rounds of fertiliser have been applied across the farms with rates varying depending on stocking rate and grass supply but even where grass supplies were good at least 25 units/ha was applied (10units/ac) to help maintain grass quality high.

All of the lowland flocks weighed their lambs in May when the lambs were at approximately 7 weeks of age. Lamb growth rates for five of the lowland flocks from birth to seven weeks post-partum are presented in Table 1. Growth rates are back on previous years, weather conditions in March particularly for the early March lambing flocks is one reason being sighted by the farmers as a reason for this.

Table 1. Mean lamb performance from the lowland flocks from birth to 7 weeks of age with range in brackets for five of the lowland flocks

<b>Birth Type</b>	<b>Birth Weight (kg)</b>	<b>Growth Rate (g/day)</b>	<b>7 Week Weight (kg)</b>
<b>1</b>	6.0 (5.2-6.7)	309 (265-353)	21.5 (19.7-23.3)
<b>2</b>	5.2 (4.6-5.5)	270 (240-286)	18.2 (15.5-19.0)
<b>3+*</b>	4.4 (3.7-4.8)	272 (249-288)	17.5 (15.0-18.4)

\*Born as triplets and reared as twins

The hill flocks have begun letting their single rearing ewes, lambs back to the hill during May. These lambs will be weighed at 7 weeks of age to assess performance to date. Twin rearing ewes and their lambs are being held on the green ground or improved areas of the hill.