

BETTER Farm Update February 2020

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The mid-season flocks scanned their ewes in late December/January and a summary of the results are presented in Table 1. Scanned litter size this year is on average similar to last year as are pregnancy rates. Ewes have now been penned by litter size and where possible divided by raddle marks within litter size to better manage ewe nutrition in the run up to lambing.

Yearling ewes and the hill flocks will scan over the coming weeks with flocks reporting that hill ewes appear to be in good condition, however, scanning time will provide a good opportunity to properly assess how these ewes are doing on the hill over the winter.

Table 1. Mature ewe scanning results from lowland BETTER farms 2019/20

Farm	Doyle	Dunne	Gonley	Kearney	McLaughlin	Moore	O'Connell	O'Leary	O'Toole	Powell
Location	Wexford	Wicklow	Sligo	Louth	Donegal	Roscommon	Leitrim	Kerry	Galway	Tipperary
Scanned Litter size	1.89	2.11	1.88	2.03	2.00	2.07	2.14	2.04	1.81	1.65
Scanned Pregnancy rate	98.1	96.6	92.9	96.8	95.5	91.1	96.8	95.7	97.2	97.3
Scanning rate	1.85	2.04	1.74	1.96	1.91	1.88	2.07	1.95	1.76	1.60

With nearly all the silage analysis results for silage made in 2019 compiled the results are summarised in Table 2. Silage dry matter, DMD and protein rates are between 1-2% lower than last year on average.

Table 2. Results to date from silage quality tests on baled silage on the BETTER sheep farms

	2019 Mean	Min	Max
DM (%)	35.8	20.4	63.7
PH	4.5	4.1	4.9
NH3	5.1	1.4	8.9
Protein (% DM)	12.4	6.6	15.4

ME (Mj/kg DM)	10.0	8.1	11.1
DMD (% DM)	70.1	65	76.5
