

BETTER Farm update October 2019

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All of the mid-season flocks are now in full preparation for the breeding season. Ewes were checked in August with remaining cull ewes removed. Thin ewes were also separated for preferential feeding in order to try and re-build body condition; ewes that fail to re-gain condition prior to mating will be culled. Rams were also given a full NCT in August, checked again in September and are on good grass prior to being joined with the ewes. The mid-season lowland flocks will begin joining rams to the flocks between the 1st and 20th of October depending on desired lambing date. Rams will be raddled and the colour changed frequently so as to identify rams that are not performing but also to allow later lambing ewes and repeats to be fed separately where possible during late pregnancy. Being able to separate repeats and later lambing ewes at housing time will reduce the risk of ewes being overfed in the run up to lambing potentially reducing lambing problems and also feeding costs.

For the hill flocks replacement ewe lambs have been selected and for the most parts gone back to the hill. The remaining lambs have been weighed with the amount of grass and facilities for finishing lambs available on the farm dictating the plan for selling male lambs. By this stage all of the flocks have begun implementing plans to sell male lambs. For the most part this has meant selling lighter lambs (<35kg) as stores and trying to finish the heavier lambs on farm. At this time of year grass will be prioritised towards the ewes, particularly thin ewes, and towards building grass covers for mating.