

BETTER Farm Update March 2019

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Hill Flocks

Scanning for most of the hill flocks in the programme was completed at the time of writing with the results summarised in Table 1. Scan results are variable for the flocks with scanned high litter sizes but some lower than desired pregnancy rates in the flocks. For the Donegal flock this issue has been traced back to an infertile ram, in the Kerry flock low BCS at mating is most likely the primary reason behind this while for the Wicklow flock it is still being investigated. The relatively mild winter has left ewes in good BCS with the hope being this can be maintained in the run up to lambing.

Table 1. Ewe scanning results from Hill BETTER farms

Farm	Dunne	Fitzgerald	Gonley	McLaughlin
Location	Wicklow	Kerry	Sligo	Donegal
Scanned litter size	1.20	1.53	1.39	1.32
Scanned Pregnancy rate	88.4	88.1	94.8	85.9
Scanning rate	1.06	1.34	1.32	1.13

Lowland Flocks

Fertilizer, mainly in the form of Urea, was spread by nearly all the farms in February and grass covers are good throughout the flocks as lambing commences. Clostridia booster vaccines were given in the last couple of weeks while the opportunity of having ewes in a race was also used to separate out thinner ewes for preferential treatment where necessary. For the Roscommon flock where a small number of the ewes were lambed in early January the last few weeks have been very kind to lambs outdoors, however, an outbreak of coccidiosis has meant a slight check on growth.