

BETTER Farm update July 2021

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As presented in Table 1. the lowland flocks weaned in late June/early July and with any group performance varied but was with performance generally good across the flocks. A number of the flocks had a small draft of lambs ready for sale just before or at weaning time. A key performance metric the flocks are looking at apart from average performance is the proportion of lambs that are either less than 25kg, 25-30kg, 30-35kg and 35kg+. While all flocks will have lambs that are less than 25kg or 25-30kg it's the proportion of these that's important and will have influence management decisions for finishing lambs with the higher performing flocks have >50% of lambs over 30kg at weaning. All the flocks are also monitoring faecal egg counts to assess when it is necessary to dose. Samples are being taken fortnightly and once egg counts exceed 500 eggs per gram then lambs are being dosed with the appropriate anthelmintic.

While most of the attention at this time of year is focused on maximising lamb performance attention also needs to turn to next year with cull ewes being pulled out from the flocks and thin ewes being marked and once dried off given preferential grazing. It will be important for the flocks to monitor these thin ewes for the next couple of months in the lead up to mating as ewes failing to recover condition will need to be culled with target to have no ewes less than BCS 3.0 at mating time.

Table 1. Lamb performance from the Teagasc BETTER lowland sheep flocks from birth to 14 weeks (weaning).

Birth Type	Growth Rate (g/day)		14 Week Weight (kg)	
	Mean	Range	Mean	Range
1	35.9	(33.2-39.8)	304	(281-338)
2	31.6	(28.4-32.7)	268	(241-278)
3+	30.4	(28.4-32.2)	264	(247-278)