

BETTER Farm update December 2022

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Rams were introduced on the hill flocks between the 1st and 20th of November depending on the flock with hill bred rams being joined with the majority of ewes to ensure there are sufficient ewe lambs next year to either maintain or increase ewe numbers depending on the individual farm plan. The remainder of the ewes are being crossbred to lowland terminal sires. Once mating is finished ewes will go back to the hill until scanning time in February. Initial analysis of the body condition scores of ewes on the hill shows variable results in the flocks. Condition will need to be monitored, particularly at scanning with any particularly thin ewes possibly needing to be held back from the hill.

The lowland flocks are removing rams at this stage with the target of having rams out after 5-6 weeks. This will ensure lambing is compact next spring and make the spring workload easier to manage. In 2022 the average time from the first to the last ewe lambing across the lowland flocks was 37 days with a range of 32-51. It is important to keep this in mind that this can only be achieved by removing the ram on time.

As the year draws to a close it is an important time to have a look back on what has happened during the year from both a physical and financial performance perspective on farm. With that in mind all the BETTER sheep farmers will complete an E-profit monitor in January which will be used to review their individual farm plans and to inform decisions for 2023.