

## BETTER Farm update January 2022

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A vital part of a winter feeding plan is to know the quality of what you're feeding and the BETTER farmers are currently getting the analysis of their silage samples back. The results received to date are summarised in Table 1. with DMD largely in line with last year for the flocks. The best quality silage will be used closest to lambing when it will have the biggest benefit as higher quality silage allows for lower levels of concentrates to be offered to ewes in the lead up lambing.

**Table 1.** Results to date from silage quality tests on baled silage on the BETTER sheep farms

	Mean	Min	Max
DM (%)	38.0	19.3	46.6
PH	4.6	4.1	5
NH3	4.7	2.7	21.6
Protein (% DM)	12.8	10.7	15.3
ME (Mj/kg DM)	9.9	8.9	10.7
DMD (% DM)	69.2	62.5	74.2

Pregnancy scanning will take place on the lowland flocks during late December/January and following scanning ewes will be divided by litter size and raddle colours (lambing date). As concentrate prices have increased significantly on last year this year more than ever attention will be paid to delaying the onset of meal feeding to later lambing ewes. Empty ewes in the flocks will also be sold after scanning.

With the start of a new year it is very important to reflect on last year from both the physical and financial performance perspective of the farm. All the BETTER sheep farmers will be completing an E-profit monitor in January which will be used to review the performance of their farms for 2021 and also to inform decisions for 2022. The farmers will also be completing a budget to see what they can afford to spend on inputs and how best to allocate this money in order to get the maximum benefit. This year more than ever this will be vital as the cost of some inputs have increased significantly and costs will need to be carefully managed.