

BETTER Farm Update May 2022

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During early April the flocks grouped up ewes and lambs into larger grazing groups and were using temporary divisions where necessary to improve grass utilisation, reduce residency times in paddocks. This is more important than ever this year as the flocks are reducing their fertiliser levels in order to manage input costs so maximising grass growth through good grazing management is more essential than ever. All of the flocks went with 15-20 units of N in early March and a second application will be spread in late April.

Where available flocks are targeting slurry at silage ground to reduce the need for chemical fertiliser, however, where no slurry is available silage ground is still receiving sufficient fertiliser to ensure there are sufficient silage supplies for next winter. Of particular importance with this is cutting enough good quality silage so concentrate levels can be kept to a minimum next winter. All the flocks have carried out a winter fodder budget for next winter in order to ensure they make enough silage this summer but also ensure they are not spreading excess fertiliser to make silage that may not be needed.

With lambing just ending the flock will be reviewing lambing performance and looking at areas to improve or change for next year. Two areas of particular interest will be looking at the lambing spread and could this be reduced to improve labour efficiency and also identifying poor performing ewes either at lambing or that bring in poor lambs at the 7 week weights for potential culling.

Lambs were treated for Nematodirus in April in line with the DAFM forecast using a white drench (Benzimidazole; 1-BZ). Some of the flocks may need to go in and dose a second time for Nematodirus where some of the lambs are still quite young at the time of the first dose. Faecal sampling of lambs will begin this month (May) to allow for FECPAK analysis to establish when further anthelmintic treatments are required.