

## BETTER Farm update November 2022

Frank Campion, Animal & Grassland Research & Innovation Centre

Analysis of mating live weights and BCS for the mature ewes from five of the lowland BETTER sheep flocks is presented in Table 1. with mature ewe BCS generally looking good across the flocks but there is large degree of variation in scores within some of these flocks. All the lowland flocks are now well and truly into the mating season at this point and reports are things have went well. Flocks breeding ewe lambs joined the ewe lambs near the end of October, a couple of weeks after introducing rams to the main flock. Most of the flocks are reporting that grass supplies for ewes are good but there is some variation within this with flocks effected by low rainfall levels in July and August having lower than desired pre-grazing covers for this time of year. All of the flocks are following an autumn closing plan and will aim to have 20% of the farm closed by the end of October with a further 20% (40% in total) closed by mid-November.

**Table 1.** Initial analysis of mature ewe live weight and BCS on five of the lowland sheep flocks.

<b>Flock</b>	<b>Gavin</b>	<b>Keane</b>	<b>Moore</b>	<b>O'Leary</b>	<b>O'Toole</b>
<b>County</b>	<b>Carlow</b>	<b>Wexford</b>	<b>Roscommon</b>	<b>Kerry</b>	<b>Galway</b>
<b>Mean live weight (kg)</b>	77.6	71.8	72.6	73.8	58.4
<b>Mean BCS</b>	3.4	3.2	3.4	3.4	3.1

The hill flocks are starting to gather ewes for mating and will be introducing rams from the 4<sup>th</sup> of November up to around the 20<sup>th</sup>. As with the lowland flocks ewes will be weighed and condition scored prior to mating with any additional ewes that are in poor condition or have other issues will be culled before mating.