

BETTER Farm update September 2022

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Late July and early August brought very dry conditions for most of the country but the weather prior to this varied widely between regions which had a knock on effect on grass growth rates in August. The data recorded for the farms in South East showed grass growth rates averaged 32kg DM/Ha for July compared to 76kg DM/Ha for the same time period for the flocks in Leitrim and Sligo. As a result the flocks in the south east had to supplement some stock on the farm in late July and August to try and address deficits in grass supplies. Nearly all the lowland flocks have established 'finishing groups' on the farms which is comprised of lambs that are ~38kg and above. These lambs are getting ~500g/head/day of concentrates at grass. The remainder of the lambs are on grass only and will be drafted into the finishing group once they hit 38kg. The aim of this is to speed up the drafting of lambs while controlling the levels of concentrates being fed to lambs.

The hill flocks are weaning their lambs at the time of writing the flocks are assessing their options for selling these lambs based on local store lamb prices and grass supplies and facilities available for finishing lambs on farm. Available grass supplies on enclosed/green ground as these farms as we move into the autumn and early winter will be prioritised for the ewe flock for mating with only additional grass potentially available to lambs.