

## **Sheep Research Demonstration Farm, Athenry**

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Rams were turned out to ewes on October 9<sup>th</sup>. Progress has been good with 40-50% of ewes served in each group by the end of the first week. Rams are being rotated around the groups every 3-4 days to minimise fertility issues and to remove the effect of ram on any individual group. Raddle colour is being changed weekly to aid management. Ewe body condition going to the ram ranged from 3.1 (high Stocking rate) to 3.4 (low stocking rate). Up to October 21<sup>st</sup> approximately 84% of the lambs in the low stocking rate groups, 73% of lambs in the medium stocking rate groups and 65% of lambs in the high stocking rate groups had been drafted. Lambs are currently being drafted at 46kg liveweight and are achieving a 43% kill-out. Average carcass weight for lambs drafted to date was 19.7kg. Lamb growth rates for October were in the region of 120-160g/day on a grass only diet. Between 15 and 20% of the lightest lambs (<40kg) were removed from the two high stocking rate groups in mid-October and are being fed concentrates and silage indoors to reduce grass demand. Grass growth rates were between 40-50kg DM/ha/day during October, good for the time of year. Currently we have 30-50 days grass ahead of groups. Closing of paddocks commenced in mid-October to build grass for next spring. The plan is to have approximately 30% of the medium stocking rate farmlets closed by early November, 60% by late November, 80% by mid-December with the remainder by late December/Early January.