

Sheep Research Demonstration Farm, Athenry

Philip Creighton, Animal and Grassland Research and Innovation Centre, Teagasc
Athenry, Co Galway.

Drafting of lambs continues. On a stocking rate basis, 34% of lambs have been drafted from low stocking rate (10 ewes/ha) groups with 27% from the medium (12 ewes/ha) and 20% from high stocking rate (14 ewes/ha) groups up to mid August. Prolificacy levels are not having a big effect with even numbers of lambs drafted from each group so far. Average liveweight for lambs drafted to date (August 14th) was 44.5 kg with average carcass weight 19.7 kg. This represents an average kill out percentage of 44%. Lamb growth rates for the past month have been in the region of 180 to 145g/day. Attention is starting to turn to preparing the flocks for mating. A final check of ewes will be completed in mid August and replacements added to the groups once any remaining culls are removed. Rams and ewes are being footbathed at regular intervals and any problem cases being dealt with. Grass growth rates are averaging 40-60 kg DM/ha/day. This is allowing covers to begin to build as we go into the autumn. Nitrogen application rates are currently between 11, 17 and 25kg/ha (1/3, 1/2, 3/4, bag CAN/ac) for the low, medium and high stocking rates respectively. A final application of between 17 to 25 kg N/ha (depending on stocking rate) will be applied in mid September to continue building covers for the autumn. Maintenance dressings of K are also being applied.