

Sheep Research Demonstration Farm, Athenry

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Lambing commenced on March 4th. At time of writing (March 21st), Progress has been good with 80% of the ewes lambing within the first 17 days. Lamb mortality is running at approximately 8% on average. We have had some ewe fatalities in the run up to lambing (~3%) due to a combination of factors including meningitis, Prolapse, E-coli mastitis and the clostridial strain *sordellii*, which was picked up following post mortems in the regional vet lab. This particular strain is not covered by the 8 in 1 vaccine and following veterinary advice, ewes will be changed to the 10 in 1 vaccine with lambs vaccinated at 6 weeks of age. More detailed results will follow in future updates once all ewes have lambed. Freshly lambed ewes are spending one night indoors in individual penning and are then turned out to grass which has been aided by ideal weather conditions. Ewes and lambs are being assigned to one of the six farmlet groups based on stocking rate and prolificacy. Grass growth has been strong with growth rates of 25-35 kg DM/ha/day being recorded. As a result pre grazing covers are high at approximately 1300 - 1400kg DM/ ha (8-10cm). The plan is to graze these swards down to 3.5cm to ensure leafy re-growths for the next rotation.