

Sheep Research Demonstration Farm, Athenry

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

The first draft of lambs left the flocks on July 10th. Average live weight for the 31 lambs was 42.8 kg. Average Carcass weight was 20.5kg giving a kill out percentage of ~48%. There were approximately equal numbers of lambs drafted across the stocking rates and different prolificacy's. At time of writing (July 23rd) a further 32 lambs averaging 43.3kg live weight have been identified for drafting. Current lamb growth rates are in the region of 170-190 g/day. Faecal egg counts showed a rise in worm challenge and so all lambs were dosed in Mid July. Egg counts will be conducted on a regular basis to monitor effectiveness and requirement for the next dose. Grass growth rates are still in the region of 40kg DM/ha/day sufficient to meet flock demands but a little below average for time of year. Nitrogen (half bag CAN/ac) is being spread after grazing to stimulate growth and maintain quality.

Topping of paddocks is coming to an end with just a small number of paddocks that had not been cut for bales or topped already being tidied up this week. Lambs are grazing the best available swards with pre grazing covers of ~800-1000kg DM/ha or ~7cm. The ewes are being used to clean out paddocks after the lambs.