

Sheep Research Demonstration Farm, Athenry

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Lambs were weaned on June 19th at approximately 14 weeks of age. Preliminary analysis suggests an average weaning rate of 1.52 lambs/ewe for the medium prolific groups and 1.75 lambs/ewe for the high prolific groups. Lamb performance from birth to weaning and weaning weights is presented in Table 1. To date (22 July), a total of 56 lambs have been drafted from the farm. Approximately 52% of these lambs were from the two low stocking rate groups with 29% and 19% coming from the medium and high stocking rate groups respectively. Lambs from medium prolificacy groups represented 77% of lambs drafted with the balance from high prolificacy groups. Average liveweight at drafting was 42.9kg with an average carcass weight of 19.95kg. This represents an average kill out percentage of ~47%. The main silage harvest took place on June 19th. This combined with further surplus paddocks has now brought our silage reserves to the required levels or above in the low and medium stocking rate groups and just below target for the high stocking rate groups. Grass growth rates have fluctuated a little over the last month from a high of ~70 kg DM/ha/day in late June to a low of ~30 kg DM/ha/day at the end of the current dry spell. No nitrogen was spread during the dry weather but we will go with 17kg N/ha in the form of sulphur CAN when rain is forecast to try and build covers and maintain grass quality.

Table 1. Lamb performance (birth to weaning @14 weeks)

Age	10 ewes/ha	12 ewes/ha	14 ewes/ha	Medium Prolificacy	High Prolificacy
0-14 weeks (g/day)	273	258	240	264	250
Wt (kg) @ 14 weeks	32.2	30.7	29.1	31.7	29.6