

Sheep Research Demonstration Farm, Athenry

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Rams were removed from flocks on 15th of November after a 6 week mating period. Repeat numbers appear to be low but we will have to wait until scanning to get a more accurate picture of performance. At this point lamb drafting percentages stand at 93% for low stocking rate groups, 91% for the medium and 84% for the high stocking rate groups. The remaining lambs in the high stocking rate groups were housed on the 8th of November based on a grass budget showing inadequate grass reserves to support both ewes and lambs. Priority was given to the ewes to ensure no sudden change in diet following breeding. The lambs are being fed grass silage (70DMD) and 0.6 kg of a high energy lamb finisher nut. The small numbers of lambs remaining in the other groups are still at grass but are now also being supplemented with up to 0.5kg of concentrate/hd/day as performance had dropped back to less than 100g/day on grass only. It is worth noting that the numbers of lamb involved are small with the majority having been finished without concentrate supplementation. Closing of paddocks commenced on October 25th. Ewes in the high stocking rate groups will be housed in early December. There are sufficient grass reserves to carry the medium stocking rate groups until mid to late December with reserves in the low stocking rate group's sufficient to remain grazing until mid to late January although this will depend greatly on weather conditions and utilisation levels. All ewes received a fluke dose in mid November and will receive a second treatment in late December/early January.