

Sheep Research Demonstration Farm, Athenry

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

Ewes were scanned in early January. The medium prolific flocks had an average litter size of 1.81 with the high prolific groups averaging 2.1. Ewes are now being offered grass silage (74 DMD) and have been grouped according to scanned litter size and will be offered concentrates as shown in Table 1. The ewes in the low stocking rate groups were housed in early January. Persistent wet weather had reduced the utilisation of grass reserves. Grass covers are building with the first paddocks due for grazing in early March having a cover of ~650-700kg DM/ha (5-6cm). Nitrogen in the form of urea will be blanket spread on all farmlets at a rate of 23 units/ac (half bag) in early to mid February to help boost grass covers prior to turnout in March. Once soil temperatures are above 6-7 degrees, grass growth will occur and a response will be obtained. The pre lambing clostridia booster will be administered in mid February ahead of lambing start date of March 1st.

Table 1.

	Weeks pre lambing				Total
	7	6-5	4-3	2-1	
	Concentrates (kg/ewe/day)				
Singles	-	-	0.3	0.6	13
Twins	-	0.3	0.45	0.7	20
Triplets	0.2	0.3	0.6	0.9	27