

## **Sheep Research Demonstration Farm, Athenry**

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The first of the ewes have been housed with both high stocking rate (14 ewes/ha) groups housed on Dec 9<sup>th</sup>. Body condition score at housing was good averaging 3.5 so ewes are being fed a maintenance diet of 67 DMD baled silage to prevent excess gain in mid pregnancy. The medium (12 ewes/ha) and low (10 ewes/ha) stocking rate groups remain at grass. Weather permitting the medium stocking rate groups will graze until late December while the low stocking rate groups have sufficient reserves to support extended grazing until mid January. Groups are being strip grazed using temporary electric fencing. Grass growth on the paddocks closed since late October/early November has been good but this grass will be of more benefit next March than grazed now. Total grass grown for the year has ranged between 10.5 tons DM/ha (low stocking rate) to 12.5 tons DM/ha (high stocking rate). Ewes will be scanned in early January. Lamb drafting is almost complete with 99%, 98% and 95% of lambs in the low, medium, and high SR groups drafted up to mid December. Lamb performance improved to average 200g/day following the introduction of meal to remaining lambs in mid November.