

## Sheep Research Demonstration Farm, Athenry

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Grass growth has improved since our last update averaging ~55kg DM/ha/day for the month of May and while very welcome it is still below normal. We removed supplementation from the ewes in the third week of April following close to a months feeding. Total supplementation level per ewe post lambing is approximately 20kg. This was necessary with grass growth rates 70% and 50% below normal for March and April respectively. While this supplementation comes at a cost it allowed us stretch out what available grass we did have and helped reduce a drop in milk yield and lamb performance. Table 1 shows lamb performance figures for the year to date. Lamb performance improved during the 6-9 week period most likely as a result of the quality leafy swards available which were built up while supplementing the ewes. Currently just over 30% of each of the farmlets is closed for silage which should be cut by mid June. We will also try and take out as much surpluses as possible to complete our silage requirements. To date 90 kg N/ha has been applied

**Table 1. Lamb performance (growth rate g/day)**

Age	10 ewes/ha	12 ewes/ha	14 ewes/ha	Medium Prolificacy	High Prolificacy
0-6 weeks	272	272	265	276	262
6-9 weeks	326	302	270	302	296