

Sheep Research Demonstration Farm, Athenry

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Lambing is due to commence on February 28th. Ewes are still being offered grass silage (72 DMD) with concentrates stepped up to 0.5kg, 0.7kg and 0.9kg/hd/day at the point of lambing for ewes carrying singles, twins and triplets respectively. All ewes received their clostridia and pasteurella booster vaccine 4 weeks pre lambing. Weather conditions, as is the case on most farms have impacted on management. A total of 293mm (11.5 inches) of rain has fallen during January and early February. As a result no nitrogen has been spread as of yet. Due to the water logged conditions soil temperatures were also ~0.5 degrees behind normal averaging 4.7, although this has increased to 6.5-7.0 in recent days (Feb 20th). Grass growth rates have been impacted with minimal growth during February. The first paddocks closed have a cover of 800-900 Kg/DM/ha (~6cm). Nitrogen in the form of urea will be blanket spread on all farmlets at a rate of 35 units/ac (³/₄ bag) as soon as ground conditions allow to help boost grass covers. A response rate of 15-25kg grass DM per kg of N applied can be expected in early March.