

Sheep Research Demonstration Farm, Athenry

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Lambing finished on April 12^h. Mean lambing date was March 09^h with 98% of ewes lambed by the end of March. Lamb mortality is running at 9% on average. Six week weights will be taken this week (April 22nd) and will be reported next month. Lambs will also receive their first worm dose for Nematodirus infection. Grass growth for March and the first two weeks of April averaged 10.6 kg DM/ha well below demand. At turnout in early March we estimated that we had ~20 days grazing ahead. As a result of the poor grass growth we began supplementing all groups with 0.8kg concentrates/ewe/day on March 27th. This has continued for the past three and a half weeks to reduce grass demand and satisfy ewe requirements. Ewes lambed down at an average BCS of 3.1 and so we have allowed for some mobilisation of body reserves to meet nutritional demands when setting our supplementation level. The two high stocking rate groups also had access to the last of the high quality silage. If we were to pick out a positive from the current situation it is that utilisation levels have been excellent with post grazing heights of 3.0-3.5cm. This will set the farm up for quality grazing when grass does come. Grass growth increased to 32 Kg DM/ha in mid April so we would hope to remove concentrates this week. To date we have spread ~60 kg N/ha. No silage ground has been closed as of yet.