

Sheep Research Demonstration Farm, Athenry

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Lambing finished on April 4th. Mean lambing date for 2014 was March 9th. Lamb performance has been good with 5 week weights presented in Table 1. Performance has been good and is up about 25g/day for the same period last year. As mentioned in last month's update we did have to introduce concentrates to ewes for a short period (2.5 weeks) to slow the rotation as grass growth was below demand. A total of 14kg of meal was fed per ewe. 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. Ewe body condition score is averaging 3.2.

A further 25 units (30 kg N/ha) was applied in April to boost grass growth rates which responded well combined with the improving soil temperatures increasing to 40-50 kg DM/ha/day. We should be in a position to close silage ground in late April.

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

Age	10 ewes/ha	12 ewes/ha	14 ewes/ha	Medium Prolificacy*	High Prolificacy*
0-5 weeks	306	306	280	300	294

* Medium prolificacy groups averaging 1.55 lambs/ewe

High prolificacy groups averaging 1.78 lambs/ewe