Sheep Research Demonstration Farm, Athenry

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Ewes were scanned in early January. Preliminary analysis shows a scan rate of 1.78 in the medium prolific flocks with the high prolific groups averaging 2.10. Stocking rate has had little effect on scanned litter size which is an improvement on last year when the 14 ewe/ha stocking rate groups had a lower litter size compared to the 10 and 12 ewe/ha stocking rates . Ewes are in good body condition averaging 3.3 BCS. The 10 ewe/ha stocking rate groups were housed in mid-January. Ewes are now being offered grass silage (73 DMD) and have been grouped according to scanned litter size and lambing date as predicted by raddle colour which was changed weekly during mating and will be offered concentrates as shown in Table 1. Over winter grass growth rates have been in the region of 3-5kg DM/ha/day and so grass covers on the first paddocks closed are now in the region of ~700-900kg DM/ha (6-7cm). Nitrogen in the form of urea will be blanket spread on all farmlets at a rate of 23 units/ac (half bag) once soil temperatures are above 6-7 degrees in early to mid February to help boost grass covers prior to turnout in March. The pre lambing clostridia booster will be administered in mid-February ahead of lambing start date of March 6st.

Table 1.

	Weeks pre lambing				
	7	6-5	4-3	2-1	Total
	Concentrates (kg/ewe/day)				
Singles	-	-	0.3	0.6	13
Twins	-	0.35	0.55	0.75	23
Triplets	0.2	0.35	0.65	0.95	29