

Sheep Research Demonstration Farm, Athenry

Philip Creighton, Animal and Grassland Research and Innovation Centre, Teagasc Athenry, Co Galway.

Lambing finished on April 9th. Mean lambing date for 2014 was March 15th. Provisional analysis shows lamb birth weights averaging 6.0kg for singles, 4.95kg for twins and 4.15kg for triplets. The breakdown of the proportion of singles twins and triplets in the medium and high prolificacy groups is shown in Table 1. Birth weights in the MP groups were +0.5kg as a result of greater numbers of single born lambs and fewer triplets. Lambing assistance levels were also recorded with 19% of MP ewes and 29% of HP ewes requiring some level of assistance at lambing. Six week weights will be presented in the next update but limited weighings show lamb performance averaging 340g/day from birth to 4 weeks. Ewe BCS is in the region of 2.9, down 0.3 BCS units since lambing which averaged 3.2. Grass growth has been strong in recent weeks with highs of 60kg DM/ha/day recorded. A total of 57kg of N/ha (46units/ac) has been spread so far. All paddocks are now being split when grazing to control grazing, aiming to maximise regrowth and quality. We started skipping ground for silage in mid-April.

Table 1. Percentage singles, twins and triplets by prolificacy group

Age	Singles	Twins	Triplets
Medium Prolificacy groups	20	66	14
High Prolificacy groups	15	61	24