

Sheep Research Demonstration Farm, Athenry

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Drafting of lambs continues. On a stocking rate basis, 47% of lambs have been drafted from low stocking rate (10 ewes/ha) groups with 33% from the medium (12 ewes/ha) and 24% from high stocking rate (14 ewes/ha) groups. Prolificacy levels are not having a big effect with even numbers of lambs drafted from each group so far. Average liveweight for lambs drafted to date (August 25th) was 43.5 kg with average carcass weight 19.1 kg. This represents an average kill out percentage of 44%. Lamb growth rates since weaning are in the region of 130-145 g/day. Current average lamb live weights range from 38.2kg (low stocking rate) to 37.0kg (high stocking rate). Attention has turned to preparing the flocks for mating. Ewe BCS is satisfactory at 2.9 to 3.4. Flushing will begin in late August for ram turnout in early October. Rams and ewes are being footbathed at regular intervals and any problem cases being dealt with. Grass growth rates are averaging 50-60 kg DM/ha/day. This is allowing covers to begin to build as we go into the autumn. All paddocks will receive their final nitrogen applications at the rate of 17 to 25 kg N/ha (depending on stocking rate) in late August to continue building covers for the autumn. Maintenance dressings of K are also being applied.