

Sheep Research Demonstration Farm, Athenry

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The housing of ewes has commenced with both high stocking rate (14 ewes/ha) groups housed in early December and both medium stocking rate groups housed in mid-December. The recent difficult weather conditions (140mm rain in first two weeks of December) has meant that grass utilisation has dropped significantly in the low stocking rate groups grazing heavy covers built up earlier in the autumn. As a result these groups will now also be housed over the Christmas/New year period and not mid to late January as expected. Grass growth on the paddocks closed since late October/early November has been good but this grass will be of more benefit next March than grazed now. Total grass grown for the year has ranged between 11.3 tons DM/ha (low stocking rate) to 14.2 tons DM/ha (high stocking rate). Ewes will be scanned in early January. Lamb drafting is almost complete with 98.5%, 97.5% and 91.5% of lambs in the low, medium, and high SR groups drafted up to mid December.