

Sheep Research Demonstration Farm, Athenry

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Lambing is due to commence on March 4th. Ewes are still being offered grass silage (73 DMD) with concentrates stepped up to 0.6kg, 0.8kg and 1.0kg/hd/day at the point of lambing for ewes carrying singles, twins and triplets respectively. All ewes received their clostridia and pasteurilla booster vaccine 4 weeks pre lambing. Grass growth rates have averaged 5 kg DM/ha/day since mid-December. The first paddocks closed now have covers of 900-1100 Kg/DM/ha (~7-8cm). Table 1 shows an example of grass supplies from one of the 10 ewe/ha groups. Due to weather conditions we have not yet (Feb 16th) spread any nitrogen. As soon as conditions allow we will apply 23 units/ac ($\frac{1}{2}$ bag) of urea to all farmlets. The paddocks with the heavier covers will also receive N as they have become tired looking as a result of the continued wet conditions. A response rate of 15-25kg grass DM per kg of N applied can be expected in early March. Soil samples were taken over winter and we will base fertiliser applications for the year around the results.

Table 1. Closing and opening grass covers for 10 ewe/ha farmlet

Paddock	Closing date	Closing height (cm)	Height (cm) 16/02/16	Kg/dm/ha 16/02/16
1	19/10/15	4.0	8.2	1100
2	02/11/15	3.8	7.2	900
3	12/11/15	3.9	5.6	550
4	22/11/15	3.8	5.3	400
5	21/12/15	3.9	4.5	250