

## **Sheep Research Demonstration Farm, Athenry**

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

Lambing finished on April 11th. Mean lambing date for 2016 was March 12<sup>th</sup>. The past month has been challenging. Due to the persistent wet and cold weather in the first half of April we introduced concentrate feed at a rate of 0.5kg/ewe/day for a ten day period. This was mainly introduced as an aid to maintain ewe intakes on very low DM grass and to supply adequate calmag after we lost a number of ewes with grass tetany. It obviously also helped lengthen the first round of grazing, with groups commencing the second grazing rotation in the third week of April. Grass growth rates have been averaging 25kg DM/ha/day but with demand rising daily we are tight for grass. Between 57 and 75kg N/ha (46-60units N/ac) has been applied to date so hopefully as weather improves growth will increase rapidly. From weights completed at 5 weeks, lamb performance is averaging in the region of 280 to 290g/day. Ewe BCS is in the region of 3.0. More detailed results for ewe and lamb performance will be included in next month's update.