

Mid-Season Flock

Grassland Management and Performance

- Starts closing ground late October
- Mid-winter – ewes on rape and swedes
- Fertiliser – 29 kg N/ha (23 units/ac) mid-Feb (urea)
- Meal – 1-month before lambing
- Ewes housed for lambing (1 March)
- To grass after lambing
- Creep feeding – from 8 weeks old (total 20 kg/lamb)
- Forward creep graze lambs

	Singles (5)	Twins (20)
DOB	8/3	8/3
Birth wt(Est)	5.0	4.5
Wt 28th Apr.	23.5	23.3
ADG (51 days)	363g/d	369g/d
Wt ____ May	_____	_____
ADG (past 4 weeks)	_____	_____
ADG from birth	_____	_____

Prime lamb from grazed grass

- ◆ Grass - the cheapest feed
- ◆ Target weaning weight - 34 kg
- ◆ To obtain optimum lamb performance, sward quality must be maintained by
 - tight grazing in early part of season
 - controlling sward height
 - removing paddocks from rotation as grass growth increases

Sward height (cm) to obtain optimum lamb performance

Month	System	
	Rotational (Post grazing)	Set stocked
April	4	5-6
May	5	6
June	6	6-8
Post weaning	6	7-9

Drafting Pattern 08 and 07

Month	2008 No (Tot %)	2007 No (Tot %)
May	4 (1)	18 (6)
June	64 (22)	61 (28)
July	96 (54)	26 (37)
Aug	66 (76)	130 (82)
Sept	46 (91)	0 (82)
Oct	27 (100)	52 (100)
Total	303	287



Forage Crops

Stubble Turnips & Forage Rape

- Sow before mid August
- Broadcast into standing crop or post harvest
- Fertiliser allowance (under nitrates / REPS) may be increased for additional crop
- Graze 100 days post sowing finish early March
- 1 acre – 25 ewes for 1 month
- Use high Iodine mineral in late pregnancy

Clover swards for sheep

- ◆ **Reduces fertiliser costs as clover can fix up to 120 kg /ha N annually**
- ◆ **Lamb growth rate is improved**
 - especially post weaning
- ◆ **Appropriate grazing management essential to maintain clover content**
 - Graze paddocks out in Nov/Dec
 - Keep swards short in spring
 - Rotational grazing
 - Use N for early grazing only
- ◆ **How to establish clover**
 - full reseedling (expensive)
 - surface seeding (after silage harvest in June)

How to get clover swards

- ◆ **Full reseeding – expensive**
- ◆ **Surface seeding – less expensive**
- ◆ **June after silage cut is best time for surface seeding sheep pastures**
- ◆ **Ensure that pH is right – lime**

Replacements

- $\frac{1}{2}$ Belclare x $\frac{1}{2}$ Suffolk & $\frac{1}{4}$ Belclare x $\frac{3}{4}$ Suffolk.
- Replacements identified at birth – notched.
- Selected from Mid Season Flock.
- 2008 – 58 ewe lambs mated to Charolais rams.
- 52 lambed – 76 lambs.
- 1.34 lambs per ewe lamb mated.
- Managed as a separate flock. .



Ewe Productivity

- ◆ Increased lamb output per ewe
 - key driver of higher profit
- ◆ Annual feed cost per 1 kg of lamb weaned is 40% greater for a **single** than a **twin**
- ◆ Genetic resources are available that will significantly increase ewe productivity
- ◆ Target output - 1.7 lambs per ewe put to ram
- ◆ Feeding/management aims
 - good lamb birth weight
 - minimum mortality
 - minimum barren ewes
- ◆ Avoid unnecessary culling

Early Lamb 2009

- 120 ewes (45 cast ewes) sponged 15/07/08
- 92 (77%) lambing to sponge + 1 repeat.
- Ewes fed meals 4 weeks pre lambing
- Silage + 1kg meals 40days post lambing.
- Lambs weaned at 8 weeks – finished indoors.
- Cull ewes finished on meals + silage.
- Lambs consume 60 kg meals – home mix.
- **142 lambs sold – 1.54 per ewe lambed.**

Lamb Sales 6th March – 27th April 2009

Lambs	Number	Av. Weight (kg)	Av. Price €
Light	12	12.4	80.51
French	130	19.1	107.60
Total	142		105.30

Early Lamb Gross Margin/Ewe

Gross Output/Ewe

Lamb Sales €162.5

Less replac. Cost 9.5

Gross Output **€153.0**

Variable Costs; €

Concentrates

Ewes 14.0

Lambs 25.0

Silage & Grazing 21.5

Veterinary & Sponges 12.4

Straw 6.0

Miscellaneous 3.0

Total Variable Costs **81.9**



Gross Margin per Ewe €71.10

Lamb Weights and Grades 2008

Weight Bands 08 (all lambs > 16kg)

16 – 18 kg	3%
18 – 20 kg	45%
20 – 22 kg	43%
22 -24 kg	8%
> 24 kg	1%

Grades 08

Grades	(%)
2008	419
Total lambs	
E	2
U	56
R	38
Fat (U4/R4)	4

Labour

- Handling facility and fencing.
- Tags used for management identification.
- Problem ewes identified.
- Replacement ewe lambs notched at birth.
- Compact Lambing.
- Ewes and lambs numbered.
- Triplets fostered.
- Student help at lambing.

