

## **BETTER Farm Update**

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### **Scanning**

The first scan results from the mid-season flocks look promising, the rest of the flocks in the programme will complete this task in late December in to early January depending on ram turnout date. In most of the cases where ewe lambs were mated these will be scanned later on.

### **Winter feeding**

In all of the cases grass silage forms the bases of the diet during the housing period on these farms. Through their local advisors each of the farmers has completed their respective forage analysis this month. On average the silage quality improved slightly – see Table 1. However, this was a reflection fewer farmers producing poor quality silage produced as opposed to making producing top quality silage. This is still an area that needs be addressed on a number of farms as it has a large bearing on the amount of concentrate supplementation needed during late pregnancy. These results along will determine how much supplementation is needed for each farm. Following scanning a feeding regime will be drawn up for each flock to meet the ewes demands of late pregnancy.

**Table 1. Silage quality for the 2014 season**

	Mean	Range
DM (%)	33.3	(16.6 to 64.6)
PH	4.8	(4.5 to 5.0)
NH3 (% total N)	12.0	(5 to 20)
Protein (% DM)	12.8	(9.3 to 16.2)
ME (Mj/kg DM)	10.9	(9.9 to 11.4)
DMD (% DM)	71.2	(68 to 74)

### **E-Profit monitor**

One of the first tasks for the New Year is to reflect on the farms performance during the previous 12 months. The farmers in the programme with their advisors will complete their E-profit monitor for 2013. For each farm the strengths and weaknesses

of the systems will be examined and this helps identify areas where improvement is needed.

### **New Flocks**

We are pleased to announce a further expansion of the programme that 3 new flocks have been recruited into the BETTER Farm Sheep Programme in early December. Details of these farms are summarised in Table 2.

<b>Farmer</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>System</b>	<b>Advisor</b>
Patrick Dunne	Glenmalure, co Wicklow	Hill flock	Declan Byrne
Dennis O’Riordan	Bantry, Co.Cork	Hill Flock	Michael Connolly
Michael & John Prendergast	Hollymount Co. Mayo	Lowland Flock	Eamonn Patten