

BETTER Farm Update

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Early lamb flocks

The early lamb flocks got ewes and lambs out to pasture in early February. This ground had been rested since late September/early October and had good grass covers. Lamb weights at 7 weeks (see in Table 1) are ahead of their counterparts last season by approx. 1 to 1.5kg despite the difficult grazing conditions in February. These lambs are currently consuming in excess of 300 g/day of concentrate. They will be weaned in early March to prioritise grazing for the mid-season flocks on these farms.

Table 1. Lamb weight (kg) at 7 weeks on the Early Lambing flocks

	Farm's		
	P. Kearney	T O'Leary	J. Doyle*
Birth type	Louth	Kerry	Wexford
Singles	24.8	26.7	23.9
Twins	23.5	22	21.7
Triplets	20.9	21.8	18.5

* 1st group only

Mid-season flocks

The mid-season flocks focused on getting the remaining flock health treatments done before lambing. All the mid-season flocks administered clostridial /pasteurella booster vaccine to ewes during February. The start of lambing will vary for the flocks from the 26th Feb to March 17th. This season we will be examining lambing difficulty in more detail on each farm.

Grassland

The farmers have been measuring their opening grass covers in Late February. The average farm cover on the lowland farms was 331 kg/DM/Ha (approx. 5 cm). There is some variation between farms and with some not due to start lambing for 2 to 3 weeks will allow covers to increase prior to turnout.

To date (late February) only 3 of the farms have applied spring applications of fertilizer. Due to a combination of low soil temperatures and waterlogged conditions

in late February most of the more northerly farms delayed applications until early March when hopefully conditions improve.

A combination of N or compound based fertilizer will be applied on the first round of grazing depending on recommendations outlined in the nutrient plan for each farm.