

BETTER Farm update

Ciaran Lynch, Animal and Grassland Research and Innovation Centre, Teagasc Athenry, Co. Galway

The 2 flocks with early lamb systems John Doyle's and Tomas O'Leary's are preparing for lambing in Early January. The scan results for these flocks are summarised in Table 1. The Ewes in these flocks will be housed in early December, 4 weeks pre lambing. Once housed these ewes will be divided on the basis of their scan result and fed accordingly.

Table 1. Early lamb flocks scan results for the

	O'Leary's	Doyle's
Scanned Litter size	1.90	1.79
Scanned Pregnancy rate	97.5	90.0
Scanning rate	1.85	1.62

The hill flocks will finish up mating in mid-December, following a period of single sire mating them all grouped up the ewes to allow for mob mating to cover any repeats. A summary of the weight of the older ewes in the flocks gathered at joining is presented in table 2. Weight at joining will have a big impact on ewe output. There was more variability in ewe weight in the newer flocks this season. This is one area we will be focusing on in the 2 newer flocks is to reduce the cohort of these thin ewes that are limiting flock performance over the coming seasons.

Table 2. Mature ewe weight (kg) in hill flocks

	Mc Laughlin's S. Blackface	O'Riordan's S.Blackface	Dunne's Cheviot
Mature ewe weight	56.3	53.1	62.1

Improving pregnancy nutrition is an area we have focused on over the past number of years, the farms involved in the programme will collect silage samples for analysis in mid to late November to determine feed quality to plan a winter feed regime for their ewe flock.