

BETTER Farm update

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The lowland flocks are mating is well under way on most of the flocks. Target lambing dates range from the 1st of March to the 1st of April on the farms to suit spring grass growth in the different regions. In All cases where replacements were being produced within the flock ewes were divided prior to joining into different breeding groups to allow the farms to operate a reciprocal crossing system to produce their replacements. For the last 2 to 3 weeks of the joining period ewes were grouped into larger batches and only terminal sires were used. The early lamb flocks will be scanning these ewes towards the end of October; a clean-up ram was run with these since the start of the mid-season breeding season.

For both the Lowland and Hill flocks nearly all the flocks have treated the breeding flock for Fluke prior to Joining with wither a Triclabendazole, Closantel or Rafoxanide based product. We are still receiving samples from the farms checking for worm burden. From these we are getting back high results for individual groups. A number of the farms have opted to use a dual active wormer from Group 5 (SI) as a break dose to treat their lambs.

Grass growth has been good on the farms during late September into October averaging between 30 to 40 kg/DM/ha with good grazing conditions during the early part of the month. Planning for spring grass has begun on the farms with the two farms with early lambing ewes began closing up a proportion of the ground in late September, with the mid-season flocks starting this process in mid to late October. To avoid leaving ewes on low covers for prolonged periods during mating many of the farms have opted to split the larger paddocks with temporary fencing. This results in increased grazing pressure for a shorter time period. As most of the flocks are lambing in early March the target is to have 30 to 40 % of the paddocks closed by the beginning of November to allow sufficient rest period over the winter months.