

BETTER Farm Update June 2018

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May brought some welcome heat and a surge in grass growth on the BETTER sheep farms. At the time of writing collection the 7 week weights on the flocks are ongoing with early an indication that despite the difficult spring conditions lamb performance is reasonably good but there is a lot of variation in lamb weights within some flocks. This performance came at a cost with most of the farmers being forced to feed meal for parts of the spring due to very poor grass growth and grazing conditions. As presented in Figure 1. grass growth rates were very low up until mid-April. However, since then growth rates have increased significantly and major challenge at the moment on the farms is managing grass growth and planning to ensure silage stocks get replenished. All the farms have now closed some paddocks for silage and in some cases cut paddocks that went too strong for grazing.

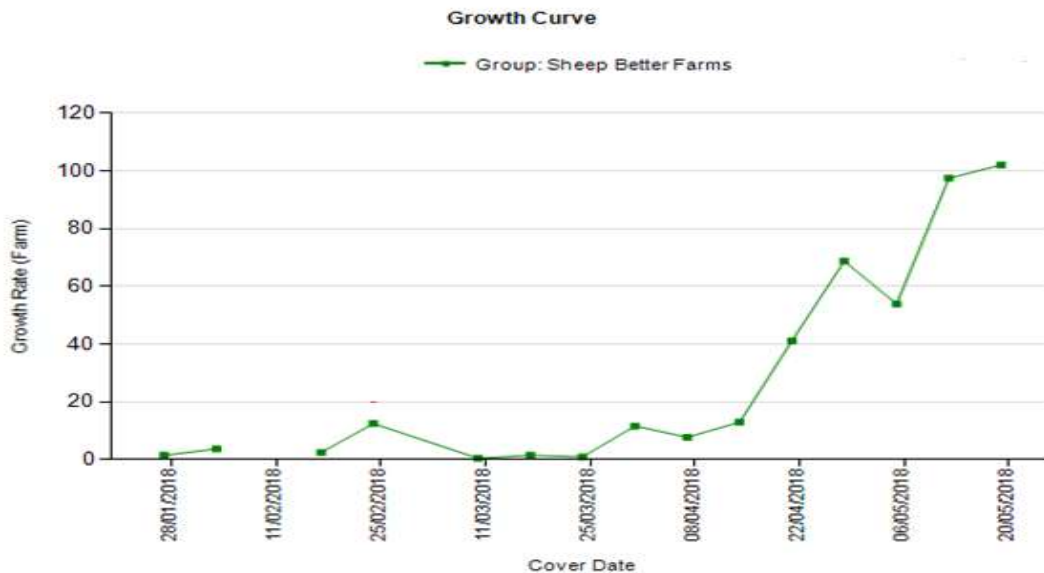


Figure 1. Grass growth curve for the sheep BETTER farms from January to May 2018.

Lowland flocks began collecting lamb faecal samples for FECPAK analysis in mid-May and will continue to do so throughout the year. Some of the flocks have had to give lambs a second dose for *Nematodirus* and the early flock has also dosed for *Trichostrongylus*. Drafting of lambs in the early flock has gone well with 60% of the lambs drafted by mid-May.

Work on collecting the 7 week weights from the hill flocks will commence in the coming weeks. Lambing has finished on these flocks now with strong ewes and lambs gone back to the hill where possible.