

BETTER Farm Update March 2018

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Hill Flocks

Scanning for three of the hill flocks in the programme was completed during February, the results are summarised in Table 1. Post scanning the flocks split their ewes on the basis of litter size with twin bearing ewes drafted onto the lowland areas for most of the flocks. Ewe BCS appears to be very variable within the flocks with farmers reporting more thin ewes than normal. These ewes will need to be carefully monitored and managed in the run up to lambing time.

Table 1. Ewe scanning results from Hill BETTER farms

Farm	McLaughlin	Gonley	Dunne
Location	Donegal	Sligo	Wicklow
Scanned litter size	1.33	1.35	1.29
Scanned Pregnancy rate	88.9	95.0	89.5
Scanning rate	1.18	1.28	1.16

Mid-Season Flocks

At the time of writing all of the mid-season flocks have completed their clostridia vaccinations and are stepping up the level of concentrates being offered to ewes as lambing approaches. The three flocks mating ewe lambs completed scanning these ewes during February with results in line with last year and are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2. Yearling ewe scanning results on lowland BETTER farms

Farm	O'Leary	O'Connell	Doyle
Location	Kerry	Leitrim	Wexford
Scanned litter size	1.60	1.66	1.53
Scanned pregnancy rate (%)	91.9	91.4	98.8
Scanning rate	1.47	1.5	1.51

Wet weather conditions in January and February has made it difficult for these flocks to get fertilizer out early as planned with most flocks still waiting to get fertilizer out in some areas of the farm. This has meant some of the farmers have had to spread small, drier areas of the farm when ground conditions allowed in order to start getting fertilizer out.