

BETTER Farm update December 2019

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Ewe BCS on the BETTER hill sheep farms was for the most part good, with a very brief initial analysis showing ewes being close to target (3.0) BCS at mating. Rams were introduced between the 1st and 14th of November depending on the flock. All the hill flocks doing some level of cross breeding. Lambs on these farms are now either sold or being finished indoors.

Mating is nearly complete for the lowland flocks rams will be taken away 6-7 weeks after being introduced. All the farms have upwards of 60% of their grazing ground closed off for next March; some of the higher stocked farms will have 100% of the grazing block closed off by early December. The wet autumn has made grazing conditions difficult on some of the farms and will lead to some ewes being housed earlier than scheduled. Average grass grown per hectare to mid-November on the farms is averaging 10.5 t/Ha and ranging for flocks who took over 20 measurements since January 2019. This figure will be an important figure for the farms when planning for the next grazing season. An important part in managing grass supplies during the year has been the removal of surplus grass for silage during the grazing season. Currently samples are being taken from these silages for analysis which will be used to inform the feeding programme for late pregnancy.