

BETTER Farm Update February 2019

Frank Campion, Animal & Grassland Research & Innovation Centre, Athenry, Co. Galway.

The mid-season flocks scanned their ewes in late December/January and a summary of the results are presented in Table 1. Scanned litter size this year is similar to last year on average compared to last years scan average across the lowland flocks. Ewes have now been penned by litter size and where possible divided by raddle marks within litter size as per normal. Yearling ewes and the hill flocks will scan over the coming weeks and there will be an update in the next newsletter

Table 1. Mature ewe scanning results from lowland BETTER farms 2018/19

Farm	Doyle	Dunne	Gonley	Kearney	McLaughlin	O'Connell	O'Leary	Powell	Prendergast's
Location	Wexford	Wicklow	Sligo	Louth	Donegal	Leitrim	Kerry	Tipperary	Mayo
Scanned litter size	1.95	1.94	1.79	2.05	1.96	2.11	2.21	1.57	1.94
Scanned pregnancy rate (%)	97.4	96.4	89.5	97.9	97.3	98.3	98.3	97.1	98.0
Scanning rate	1.90	1.87	1.61	2.00	1.91	2.07	2.17	1.53	1.90

The relatively good grass growth during December and early January has created a temptation for some of the farmers to keep some ewes out longer, however, this would be a false economy for most as this grass is will be more valuable after lambing. All the farms have taken an opening grass cover during January and average farm covers are on target for this time of the year. Opening rounds of fertilizer will also be applied as soon as soil and weather conditions allow with some of the farms in the south of the country getting some areas spread in mid-January.