

## BETTER Farm Update February 2021

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

As presented in Table 1. the lowland flocks pregnancy scanned their ewes in late December/January. Overall the scanned litter size was very similar to last year with a small increase 0.04 on the average scanned litter size for the group as a whole. While one flock recorded an increase of 0.24 in scanned litter size, litter sizes are on target for most of the flocks and with lower scanning flocks showing an upward trend. Pregnancy rates were very similar to last for the group as a whole and while somewhat variable they are still broadly in line with target for most of the flocks. Some of the flocks have scanned yearling ewes with some still scan them in the coming days. The flocks have also re-assessed what fodder supplies remaining on farms to ensure fodder budgets are on target or take remedial action if necessary to deal with any potential short falls.

Likewise, the hill flocks will be pregnancy scanning this month. This time will also provide a good opportunity to assess how these ewes are doing on the hill over the winter and assess ewe BCS in case any very thin ewes need preferential treatment after scanning.

Table 1. Mature ewe scanning results from lowland BETTER farms 2020/21

Farm	Boyle	Carey	Dunne	Gonley	Kearney	Moore	O'Connell	O'Leary	O'Toole	Powell
Location	Donegal	Mayo	Wicklow	Sligo	Louth	Roscommon	Leitrim	Kerry	Galway	Tipperary
<b>Scanned litter size</b>	1.73	1.88	1.98	2.03	1.96	2.03	2.07	2.15	2.05	1.74
<b>Scanned pregnancy rate (%)</b>	98.5	93.0	95.8	96.0	94.6	93.2	95.8	98.1	94.0	93.9
<b>Scanning rate</b>	1.71	1.75	1.90	1.95	1.85	1.89	1.98	2.11	1.93	1.63