

BETTER Farm update November 2020

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Initial analysis of mating live weights and BCS for the mature ewes from eight of the lowland BETTER sheep flocks is presented in Table 1. Overall ewe BCS is generally very good which is a reflection of the attention the flocks have given to assessing and managing ewes for the previous two months. Where ewe lambs are being mated the ram will be joined with these 2-3 weeks after the rams are joined with the mature ewes. All of the lowland flocks are closely following their autumn closing plan which is a vital to ensuring that there is sufficient grass available at lambing time next year. Grass growth rates and utilisation were good for the most part in October. As winter nears planning for winter feeding is also under way and silage analysis will be carried out in the next few weeks.

Table 1. Initial analysis of mature ewe live weight and BCS on eight of the lowland sheep flocks.

Flock	Carey	Gonley	Kearney	Moore	O'Connell	O'Leary	O'Toole	Powell
County	Mayo	Sligo	Louth	Roscommon	Leitrim	Kerry	Galway	Tipperary
Mean live weight (kg)	64.0	69.0	74.1	73.9	76.7	72.8	65.9	65.2
Mean BCS	3.4	3.1	3.1	3.3	3.3	3.6	3.4	3.5

All of the hill flocks will have their ewes weighed and condition scored in the coming weeks prior to the ram being joined with the ewes. Gathering of these ewes has not begun at the time of writing but it is hoped that after the comparatively good weather conditions over the past few week's ewes will be in good BCS coming in off the hills.