

## **BETTER Farm update October 2016**

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As the end of one production season draws near plans and preparations are in full swing for the next one. The mid-season lowland flocks have begun joining rams to the flocks with joining dates varying depending on desired lambing date with most flocks will join the mature ewes between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> of October. Rams will be raddled and the colour changed frequently so as to identify rams that are not performing and identify the predicted week of lambing which will inform the feeding regime for late pregnancy. All ewes and replacements will be weighed and condition scored prior to joining and thin ewes who failed to improve in condition over the past two months will be culled. Both the lowland and hill flocks are reporting that ewe condition is generally good this year. The hill flocks are currently checking breeding ewes for health problems and drafting off thin ewes for extra feeding prior to joining.

Immature fluke have been observed in the livers of some lambs from one of the mid-season flocks in the last fortnight. As a result lambs less than 45 kg on this farm have been treated with a short withdrawal flukicide aimed to target immature fluke. The withdrawal period and the life cycle stage of the fluke that the flukicide targets are very important considerations when treating for fluke. All flocks are checking with their slaughter plants continually as to the health status of the livers from slaughtered lambs. Where fluke is a problem in lambs this will generally indicate a problem in ewes as well but some flocks are also taking faecal samples from their ewes to test for fluke eggs prior to mating.