

BETTER Farm Update March 2017

Frank Campion, AGRIC, Athenry, Co. Galway.

Lowland Flocks

Lambing is almost complete on most of the lowland flocks at this stage with only the yearling ewes left to lamb on most of the farms. Overall lambing has gone well for all the flocks with the biggest issue being getting ewes and lambs out to grass at times during March due to the weather. Grass growth was very good during the closed period which coupled together with winter closing plans and early nitrogen application has meant that grass supplies are good across all farms. Average farm cover at the start of March across the flocks starting lambing during the first week of March was over 600kg DM/ha. The big focus for April for all the lowland flocks will be to establish grazing groups and get the grazing rotation in full swing as well as applying a further round of fertilizer.

Hill Flocks

Lambing will commence across the hill flocks from late March early April. All the flocks are reporting that ewe condition is reasonable with ewes in good healthy state after the relatively good weather over the winter period. All these flocks will be recording tagging and performance recording at lambing time. Three of the flocks also carried out single sire mating meaning data will be generated on the performance of progeny from individual rams on these farms.

New Flock

We are pleased to announce that a new flock has joined the BETTER farm sheep program this year; Francis Gonley who runs both a hill and lowland flock near Sligo town in Co. Sligo. Francis has begun recording flock performance during lambing and over the coming months a detailed farm plan will be drawn for his sheep enterprise.