

BETTER Farm update August 2020

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The lowland flocks in the program weaned in June/early July with the performance presented in Table 1. Performance was mixed between the flocks with drought conditions hampering some flocks; however, most of the flocks have a draft of lambs ready for sale just before or at weaning time. A flush of grass growth after the end of the dry period of weather has allowed the flocks to start cutting silage again and winter feed supplies on the farms are on target. The flocks have begun to look to next year also with cull ewes pulled out from the flock, thin ewes marked and rams being examined to assess what ram purchases might be needed as ram sales commence.

Table 1. Lamb performance from 8 of the Teagasc BETTER lowland sheep flocks from birth to 14 weeks (weaning).

Birth Type	Growth Rate (g/day)		14 Week Weight (kg)	
	Mean	Range	Mean	Range
1	302	(254-386)	36	(31.3-43.5)
2	253	(224-282)	30	(27.1-32.8)
3+	250	(229-278)	29	(27.0-32.2)

On the hill flocks late July/August will mean weaning lambs and making a decision as to what to do with the lamb crop. This will differ between farms depending on what grass is available at weaning, what grass will be needed for the ewe flock later in the year, store lamb markets and also the breakdown of the lamb weaning weights. The breakdown of lamb weights will be crucial for flocks hoping to finish lambs as lambs >30kg will be easier to finish whereas lighter lambs will require a different plan depending on the facilities and grass supply on the farm.