

BETTER Farm Update March 2017

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Hill Flocks

Scanning for the four hill flocks in the programme was completed during February, the results are summarised in Table 1. Overall results varied across the four flocks with an increase in the number of empty ewes compared to last year in three of the flocks. Post scanning the flocks split their ewes on the basis of litter size with twin bearing ewes drafted onto the lowland areas for most of the flocks. All the flocks bar the Cork flock returned single bearing ewes to the hill until closer to lambing time.

Table 1. Ewe scanning results from Hill BETTER farms

Farm	McLaughlin	Lally	O'Riordan	Dunne*
Location	Donegal	Mayo	Cork	Wicklow
Scanned litter size	1.40	1.20	1.34	1.34
Scanned Pregnancy rate	91.7	94.6	94.5	86.8
Scanning rate	1.28	1.13	1.27	1.17

*Cheviots

Mid-Season Flocks

The first mid-season flocks began lambing during the last week of February and with the remaining flocks due to begin lambing during the first two weeks of March. This year a big emphasis will be placed on recording lamb mortality at lambing time and the reasons behind it. All the flocks have completed their clostridia vaccinations and are monitoring ewe protein intake to ensure ewes are lambing down with enough colostrum. The four flocks mating ewe lambs completed scanning these ewes during February and the results are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2. Yearling ewe scanning results on lowland BETTER farms

Farm	O'Leary	O'Connell	Doyle	Nicholson
Location	Kerry	Leitrim	Wexford	Kilkenny
Scanned litter size	1.60	1.37	1.47	1.55
Scanned pregnancy rate (%)	92.4	77.4	84.3	78.3
Scanning rate	1.48	1.06	1.24	1.22