

Teagasc Notes for week ended Friday September 27th 2019

Weight recording in BEEP

With the way things have been going in the beef industry over the last few months any opportunity to avail of additional funding in the sector has to be welcomed but more importantly claimed. Approximately 18,000 farms have signed up to the Beef Environmental Efficiency Programme (BEEP) and indications are that we are falling behind with getting our weights into the Irish Cattle Breeding Federation (ICBF).

Animals eligible for payment under the BEEP are suckler calves (beef sire x beef dam) born from July 1st 2018 to June 30th 2019, payment will be no more than €40 per eligible calf. The suckler cow and her calf must be weighed on the same day and must be weighed individually. The optimum time to weigh the cow and calf unit is when the calf is between 150 and 250 days (five to eight months) and while the calf is still on the cow.

Table 1 shows the optimum dates to weigh calves based on their dates of birth. Remember the final date for weighing will be **November 1st 2019**.



Table 1: The ideal times to weigh calves.

Calves born between	Optimum weighing period
July 1, 2018 – Sept. 30, 2018	March 8, 2019 – April 30, 2019
Oct. 1, 2018 – Dec. 31, 2018	May 1, 2019 – July 31, 2019
Jan. 1, 2019 – March 31, 2019	July 1, 2019 – Sept. 30, 2019
April 1, 2019 – June 30, 2019	Sept. 1, 2019 – Oct. 31, 2019

Make sure if you are using your own scales that they are registered with the ICBF. You can use rented scales, which are available through www.mybeep.ie. If you are using/borrowing third-party scales then you will need the registration number of the scales when submitting the weights. Weights that are submitted without a valid scales registration number will not qualify for payment. Weight recording forms are available through www.icbf.com or contact your local advisor for assistance. At this stage, make sure you have everything in order and don't leave things to the last minute.

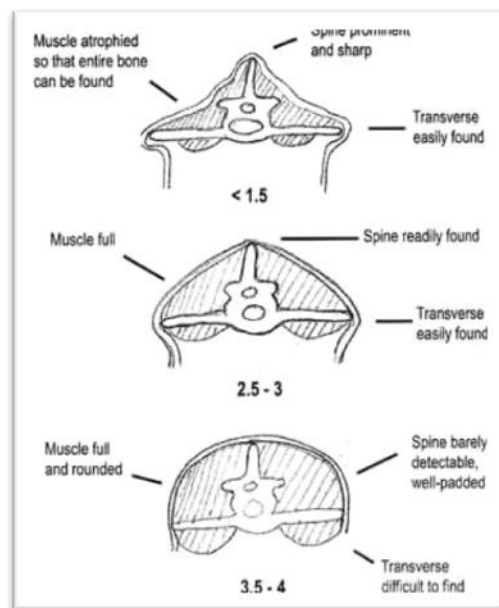
Management pre-breeding is vital on sheep farms

The target body score at the point of tupping for lowland ewes is 3.0-3.5. Body condition scoring does not require any equipment and is easy to learn as illustrated in fig. 1. Mating ewes at condition score of less than 2.5 increases the risk of barrenness, consequently, thin ewes also ovulate fewer eggs

and are likely to have less lambs leading to a reduction in weaning rate. Now is the time to assess your ewe's body score as it takes a ewe 5 to 6 weeks of good grazing pasture to gain 0.5 units of body condition.

Ewe lambs should be at least 75 per cent of mature body weight at mating. This means that for a lowland crossbred flock with an average mature weight of 70-80 kg, ewe lambs need to be 60+ kg at mating.

Figure 1: Accessing body condition score



Thinking of buying in replacements?

It is worth remembering purchased sheep can often carry new and unwanted disease onto the farm. If purchasing replacement females or rams try to purchase them from known credited sources. Find out as much as possible about the history of veterinary treatments for purchased stock and it is important to quarantine purchased stock for three to four weeks. It is also worth consulting with your local vet regarding a flock health plan in such areas as:

- Abortions: Vaccines such as those for toxoplasma and enzootic abortion should be administered 4-6 weeks pre-tupping.
- Pasteurella and Clostridial Diseases: Replacement or retained ewes will require two vaccine doses, four to six weeks apart and a booster pre-lambing.
- Parasites: Fit mature ewes should not require worming before tupping. Young or thin ewes may require a wormer. If ewes are in, or from a known fluke area, discuss fluke control with the vet.

