



Lowland Sheep Farm Walk

September 7th 2023

Farm of Eddie Gavin

Fenniscourt, Co. Carlow



Farm Details

- Mid-season lambing flock run alongside beef and tillage enterprises
 - 44 Ha of grazing ground
 - 34 Ha of tillage ground
 - 11 Ha winter Barley, 23 Ha Spring
 - Somewhat fragmented farm
- Mixed beef and sheep farm
 - 250 breeding ewes lambing from March 1st
 - 70 replacement ewes
 - 30 spring born dairy calves purchased yearly and sold at 18-24 month

Farm Plan

Focused on:

1. Grassland management

Improve grass utilisation

Grass measuring and budgeting

Clover incorporation

2. Flock management –Adjust system to suit farm

Better integration of tillage and grazing system

Move all lambing to mid-season

Lamb finishing strategies

Introduce store lambs finishing system

3. Flock Health

Anthelmintic challenges

Lameness

Mineral nutrition

4. Stabilising breeding policy

Identify best breeds for system

Close flock – breed own replacement females

Flock Performance

Table 1. Performance of the mature ewes in the mid-season flock for 2022 & 2023

	2022	2023
Ewes joined	250	269
Litter size	1.9	1.8
Ewes lambled (%)	92	91
Lambs reared per ewe joined	1.6	1.4

- Focused on improving output and stabilising breed profile
- Target litter size of 2.0 lambs per ewe
- Flock health issues hampered performance this year
- Housing restrictions mean ewe numbers will most likely stay around current number

Table 2. Lamb performance to date for lambs reared by mature ewes.

Litter Size	Birth Wt. (kg)	7 Week Weight (kg)	14 Week Weight (kg)	ADG 0-14 weeks (g/day)
Singles	5.4	19.1	30.8	260
Twins	4.7	17.5	29.7	254
Triplets*	4.3	17.2	29.3	255

- Heavier lambs have been separated and are being offered concentrates at grass
- Remaining lambs on grass will be drafted into 'finishing group as they get heavier
- Forage crops sown currently are also option for some of own lambs + store lambs later in the autumn/winter



Drench Test

Calculate % reduction in Strongyle egg count:

$$\frac{\text{Egg count Test1} - \text{egg count Test2} \times 100}{\text{Egg count Test1}}$$

< 95%

Treatment did not work



Possible resistance problems

> 95%

Treatment worked



Faecal Egg Reduction Test Carried out on this farm in July 2022

- 15 lambs had individual faecal samples collected and were dosed on Day 0 with a clear 3-ML: Macrocytic Lactone (Clear Group)
- On Day 14 lambs the same 15 lambs were re-sampled
- A reduction of 49% was recorded in worm counts - resistance



Lameness Survey

A National Survey on Lameness within Irish Sheep Flocks

- An outbreak of Infectious lameness within a sheep flock can have a range of negative impacts on flock productivity
- Lack of information on infectious lameness i.e. Scald, Footrot and Contagious Ovine Digital Dermatitis (CODD) in Irish sheep flocks
- By completing the survey we can identify the factors that effect the on farm lameness prevalence

Survey seeks to establish information on:

- On-farm presence of Scald, Footrot and CODD
- How farmers treat cases of lameness in their sheep
- Steps farmers take to control lameness in their flocks
- Farmers bio-security protocols for newly purchased sheep
- Where farmers source their information on lameness

Scan me!



Flock Lameness Levels

- As part of joint project with UCD all sheep on a number of the Teagasc BETTER flocks are being assessed for lameness
- This flock is part of this and ewes and lambs were assessed at 7 and 14 weeks post-lambing

Condition	7 Weeks Post-Partum		14 Weeks Post-Partum	
	Ewes	Lambs	Ewes	Lambs
Scald	66	56	59	40
Footrot	13	26	6	32
CODD	21	18	35	29





Grazing Guidelines

Key points when feeding sheep on forage crops:

- Introduce sheep to crops gradually
- Allow run back to grass
- Monitor animals for signs of ill health and remove animals from crop if necessary
- Provide long fibre source (hay / silage)
- Mineral supplementation required

Gavin's Store Lamb Performance 2022

Lambs purchased early October

Put through biosecurity protocol

Introduced to forage crops gradually

<u>Lamb Performance</u>	
Starting Weight (kg)	30.4
ADG (g/day)	148
Finishing Weight (kg)	47.1
DTS	115

Forage crops

How much crop do we actually have?

This is going to determine 2 things:

How long can we graze for?

What animal performance we can achieve from the crop?

How do we measure the yield?

1. Get a 1m x 1m quadrat and cut all material in square
2. Place the material in a bag and weight the bag
3. Assume a DM% is ~12 – 13%

Example calculation:

sample weight (kg) x DM x 10,000 = kg DM/ha

3.5 kg x 0.13 x 10,000 = 4,550 kg DM/ha

