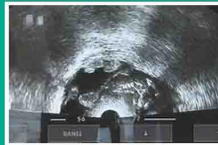


Sheep Scanning



Sheep Scanning

By now most of the pre tupping management will have been taken care of and the rams will be doing their job (or have finished and put their feet up for another year), but scanning the ewes mid pregnancy can give us an early indicator of what is to come.



Ideally ewes should be scanned around 70 days, with an average spread of 2-3 cycles with the ram this is between 40 and 90 days after the rams were put in. Scanning results can then be used to manage the flock in the later stages of pregnancy and further flock management. Firstly scanning will identify barren (geld) ewes. If a ewe is barren she can be removed from the lambing flock which reduces further risk of spreading disease and means she is not being fed unnecessarily. The barren rate should be <5% for ewes, if it is higher than this further investigation into potential causes should be carried out, this may avoid a similar situation in subsequent years.

Blood sampling for diseases such as Enzootic Abortion (EAE) and Toxoplasmosis may be carried out on barren ewes before the ewes are culled. Scanning ewes at the correct time also gives us information on the number of lambs that a



ewe is expected to give birth to. During pregnancy this means ewes can be split into groups according to number of fetus and fed accordingly. At lambing knowing how many lambs a ewe is expecting also allows management of spare

lambs and wet mothering. After lambing it is important to compare scanning percentage and number of births. Lamb losses between scanning and birth should be less than 6% in lowland flocks and 5% and 4% in upland and hill flocks respectively. Large differences in these numbers may be due to nutrition, infectious disease and handling and should be investigated. While handling ewes mid pregnancy it is a good time to assess body condition score (BCS). Managing fat and thin ewes to ensure BCS targets are met will help maintaining optimal BCS at lambing. Avoid ewes losing 5% bodyweight (0.5 of a BCS) quickly during early and late pregnancy as this can affect the foetuses.

Winter Ewe Lambs

Liveweight determines onset of puberty, ewe lambs should be 70% of their mature bodyweight at mating. For example 70% of 70kg is 49kg, with a birthweight of 4kg a lamb needs to gain 45kg in 7 months, this is a daily liveweight gain of 215g/day! Lightweight lambs that have not reached the correct weight are unlikely to become pregnant and may be a reason for poor scanning rates. Running a vasectomised ram with ewe lambs that are not being bred from will help bring them into season at this time, this will help tighten the lambing period next year.

Sheep Scanning Service

Martin has been scanning for a number of years, he is very competitively priced and can accommodate flocks big and small. For more information call Martin directly on 07939928763.