Effect of birth and rearing type on lamb performance

Need/issue: Nutrition

Aim: To present the effect of birth and rearing type on lamb performance

How to implement:

- Ewes carrying triplets or quadruplets receive an extra 7 kg of concentrate compared to twin-bearing ewes during late pregnancy.
  - Ewes that rear either one or two lambs receive no concentrate post lambing.
  - Ewes that rear 3 lambs are supplemented with 0.5 kg concentrate daily for 5 weeks post lambing.

Description:

- Birth type (single, twin, triplet or quadruplet) and rearing type (i.e., how many lambs are reared by a ewe) effect individual lamb performance
- As mean flock litter size increases, the incidence of triplets increase.
- Lambs born and reared as singles are approximately 7 kg heavier at weaning than lambs born and reared as twins.
- The difference in weaning weight between singles and twins is due to differences in birth weight and the milk supply from the dam.

Expected benefits:

Target growth rates from birth to weaning for lambs born and reared as singles, twins and triplets in a grass-based production system are 330, 270 and 280 g/d, respectively.

Relative to those born and reared as twins, lambs born and reared as triplets were lighter at birth but had a higher daily gain to weaning, thus having a similar weight at weaning.

Prerequisites and/or limits:

- Creep feeders are required to feed concentrates to lambs reared as triplets.

Country: Ireland

Dairy or/and meat sheep: Meat sheep

Category of Animal (ewe, replacement, lamb):
Ewe, Lamb

Topic:

	Health
X	Nutrition
	Management

Level of solution:

X	Knowledge
X	Practical

Source of information:

BSAS 2018, (Page 57)

Journal of the Irish Grassland Association 2010, (page 81 – 92)

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