Solution

Body Condition Scoring Toolkit

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UK SOLUTIONS

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TOPIC:

X Reproduction

Gestation

Lamb mortality “management

Lamb mortality “ewe-lamb

ISSUE: Body Condition Scoring

Solution name: Body Condition Scoring Toolkit

Country: UK

Dairy or/and meat sheep: Meat

Source of information: Industry and research

Level of solution:

X Knowledge

X Practical

Just Being Tested

Aim: Achieve target body condition score (BCS) for mating for improved scanning percentage

Description:

- Body condition score (BCS) ewes at weaning to enable targeted feeding for ewe groups below and above target. This will increase the proportion on target BCS (3-3.5).
- BCS pads (ewe vertebrae and ribs with varying levels of padding to represent the five BCS scores) help farmers validate their BCS assessment; this is accompanied with a poster to provide guidance for what BCS targets should be according to reproductive phase.

Expected benefits: 10-20% higher fertility rates and prolificacy

Prerequisites and/or limits (knowledge, training, capabilities, cost, management, facilities, equipment, etc.)

- Training on how to BCS
- Regular practice of BCS on own flock, ideally by a designated stock person to remove potential for handler variation
- Handling system designed for quick movement through the system and ease of assessment
- Feed options on farm to allow for targeted feeding between weaning and mating; for example high quality pastures for those below target