



The effect of litter size on lamb mortality

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TOPIC:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Reproduction	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lamb mortality “management”
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gestation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Lamb mortality “ewe-lamb”

ISSUE: Litter size

Solution name: The effect of litter size on lamb mortality

Country: Ireland

Dairy or/and meat sheep: Meat

Source of information: Teagasc (https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/98C75330ACA155E42FF4637C83994EB5/S2040470013000046a.pdf/submitted_summaries.pdf , Page 7)

Level of solution:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Knowledge
<input type="checkbox"/>	Practical
<input type="checkbox"/>	Just Being Tested

Aim: To present the effect of litter size on lamb mortality

Description:

- Litter size has a significant effect on lamb mortality.
- Approximately 6%, 7%, 21% and 28% of lambs born as singles, twins, triplets and quadruplets die.
- Regardless of litter size, low and high birth weights are linked with increased mortality.
- The mortality of lambs born as singles relative is primarily due to larger lambs (>7kg) and thus greater lambing difficulty.
- The higher mortality in larger litters (triplets & quadruplets) is associated with lambs of lower birth weight especially lambs weighing less than 3.5kg at birth.
- The optimum birth weight of lambs born as twins and triplets are approximately 93% and 78% that of single lambs.

Expected benefits:

- Awareness of the effect of litter size on lamb mortality enables producers implement appropriate nutrition and management protocols to minimise lamb mortality.

Effect of litter size on lamb mortality

- Litter size has a significant effect on lamb mortality.



6% mortality



7% mortality



21% mortality



28% mortality

- Increased lambing difficulty, labour requirement and lamb mortality are associated with lambs born :

- less than 3.5 kg**



- greater than 7kg**



Expected benefits

- Farmer awareness of the effect litter size on lamb mortality enables the farmer to prepare and implement appropriate nutritional and management protocols to minimise lamb mortality.