

## **To Tease or Not To Tease!**

If your lockdown experience was like mine, having extra hands at home and not at school during lambing was very advantageous. But hopefully this won't be the case for lambing 2021! Ensuring the majority of the ewes lamb during this two week Easter holiday window is possible by the use of teaser tups. The use of teasers are an excellent flock management tool, but if they are not used correctly, you reduce their effectiveness.

Key steps that should be taken when using teasers:

- The ewes must be clear of any tups within sight, sound or smell for 6 weeks prior to the teaser being introduced.
- The teaser should only be with the ewes for 14-17 days for maximum effect.
- When he is removed the stock tups should be introduced.
- Additional tup power will be required with an influx of ewes cycling at the same time (1:25-35).

There are many benefits in using a teaser. Probably the biggest is that you achieve a tight lambing period, allowing for savings in labour and feeding of the flock. This then results in more early born lambs, aiding in selection for replacement breeding stock. The flock can be managed as one batch in terms of vaccinations, feeding and weaning and not split between early and late lambs, reducing the fields required as well as allowing for earlier marking and weaning. Given the number of earlier born lambs, should result in an increased amount of lambs sold at weaning when there is often a premium on their value.

If lambing hoggs, a teaser aids stimulating oestrous, which should achieve an early average weaning weight. This allows for the lambs to be weaned earlier giving their mothers more time to recover and grow before returning to the tup for a second year.

As with all good things, there are disadvantages, including, the cost to purchase and keep the teaser on the holding, along with the additional tup power and the impacts of having a tight lambing period. This means there needs to be ample lambing pens available and that staff need to be skilled and understand the routine from day one of lambing.

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