



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Sheep Improvement Scheme

Feb 9th 2023

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Sheep Improvement Scheme



- 5 year scheme with an annual roll over for participants
- Builds on progress of the Sheep Welfare Scheme which has been in place for the last 6 years and closed Jan 31st, 2023.
- Required to have a flock number, hold breeding ewes, submit annual Sheep Census return and annual BISS application for each year of participation

Sheep Improvement Scheme



- Year 1 runs from 1st February to 31st December 2023
- From 2024 the scheme year will coincide with the calendar year, 1st January to 31st December.
- This will make administration of the scheme more straightforward for farmers, advisors and the Department.

Sheep Improvement Scheme



- Payment rate of €12 per ewe on completion of selected actions
- Reference number for payment based on historical census data
- The most beneficial three-year average within the historical reference years (2016-2021)
- Participant selects 1 Cat A and 1 Cat B action similar to the Sheep Welfare Scheme
- Changes to actions from Sheep Welfare Scheme – Faecal Egg Count upgraded to Cat A and new Genotyped Ram action.

Menu of Actions



Lowland Flock	Hill Flock
<u>Category A</u>	<u>Category A</u>
Lameness Control	Mineral Supplementation Ewes Post Mating
Mineral Supplementation Ewes Post Mating	Meal Feeding Lambs Post Weaning*
Parasite Control (Faecal Egg Count)	Parasite Control (Faecal Egg Count)
<u>Category B</u>	<u>Category B</u>
Genotyped Ram**	Genotyped Ram**
Scanning and recording of results.	Scanning and recording of results.
Flystrike Control	Mineral Supplementation Lambs Pre Weaning*

*Hill flocks may not choose both Mineral supplementation of lambs Pre Weaning and Meal feeding of lambs Post Weaning.

**All participants must select Genotype Ram at least once

Actions



Lameness Control (lowland flocks)

- Under this action scheme participants must carry out a minimum of 5 lameness examinations per scheme year and complete the relevant section for Lameness Control in the Scheme Action Record Book.
- Scheme participants must then treat all identified incidences having firstly identified the cause(s) of lameness to prevent animals becoming sick/injured as a result of lameness.

Mineral Supplementation Ewes post Mating

- Under this action scheme participants must supplement all ewes (including hoggets out to the ram) with mineral feeding stuffs post mating. Mineral Supplementation is required to be administered to ewes to ensure the duration of cover provided by the minerals includes **at least** the first 60 days from the date of ram turnout.

Actions



Meal Feeding Lambs Post Weaning (hill flocks)

- Lambs must be supplemented with compound feeding stuffs containing appropriate mineral and vitamins for 4 weeks post weaning.

Parasite Control (Faecal Egg Count)

- Under this action scheme participants with lowland flocks must take and submit to the laboratory for testing a minimum of 2 Faecal Egg Counts per annum between 1st of June and 30th September on lambs.
- Scheme participants with hill flocks must carry out 1 Faecal Egg Count on lambs for the presence of worms within 4 weeks post weaning.
- This task is for Lambs only, not ewes.

Actions



Flystrike Control

- Under this action participants must incorporate a flystrike programme for the prevention of flies during the months of flystrike risk.
- They must incorporate mechanical means for the prevention of flies in addition to any chemical control used.
- They must record the times of intervention and the number of sheep with dags removed.

Mineral Supplementation Lambs Pre Weaning(hill flocks)

- Under this action participants must supplement lambs at least once with a mineral feeding stuff during the grazing season pre weaning which will assist in addressing mineral deficiencies in lambs on hill flocks.

Scanning and Recording of results

- Ewes must be scanned approximately between 70 and 100 days post ram turnout.

Genotyped Ram Action



- Not completed for each year of the scheme.
- At application, all farmers will choose another Category B action, and indicate the year in which they will replace this with the genotype ram action
- Participants with flock size 150 ewes or less only required to complete this action once.
- Participants with flock size >150 ewes required to complete this action twice.

Genotyped Ram Action



Lowland flocks - ram must be four or five star on the Replacement or Terminal Index and have a genomic evaluation with Sheep Ireland **at the time of purchase**, and be a type one, two or three for Scrapie.

No type 4 or 5 scrapie genotyped rams will qualify.

Genotyped Ram Action



Hill Flocks – if the ram is a hill flock breed, the ram only needs to be DNA Sire verified by Sheep Ireland and be a type one, two or three for Scrapie **at the time of purchase.**

- Or purchase four or five star ram as per lowland flocks.

Sheep Improvement Scheme



- Application closed on Monday 9th January with over 19,000 applicants
- Annual rollover for current participants
 - Right to withdraw from the scheme available
- New entrants are still eligible to apply for the scheme over the coming 5 years.
- Payment Dates
 - Advanced Payments 85% November 2023
 - Balancing Payment expected Q 2 2024

Next Steps



- Applicants will receive Welcome Letter in early February as well as a copy of the Scheme Action Record Book
- Scheme Action Record Book Guidance document will be available for applicant's to review on the DAFM website in February
- Applicant's who normally scan in January will be given the opportunity to change this action up to Feb 28th 2023 for the 1st year of the scheme to allow flexibility in light of the initial shortened scheme year.
- SIS Terms and Conditions and FAQ's are available on the DAFM Website: [gov.ie - Sheep Improvement Scheme \(www.gov.ie\)](http://www.gov.ie)

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Thank You