



FARMER LED, FARMER DRIVEN

Dumfriesshire

Growing for optimum output
30th July 2024



Farm Fact Sheet



Farm Size: 500 acres (main block, of which around 60 acres is rougher ground) + 16 acres rented from a neighbouring farm (April-October).

Forage Crop: 35 acres (Kale/Hybrid)

Arable Silage: 20 acres, under sown with perennial ryegrass, white clover and red clover long term mix.

Currently Shut Off for Silage: 60 acres. Has made around 240 bales so far and has almost filled one pit and has half a pit carried over from last year. Whole crop arable silage and grass silage combined in the clamp. First cut bales on June 1st and pit silage on June 10th.

Cattle

Simmental and Luing crossed to Aberdeen Angus, Saler and Pedigree Charolais.

Spring Calving

<i>2024 calving season – Key stats</i>	
Calving start: March 1st	102% scanning, 0% barren
100 cows	Approx. 20% calved in first two weeks
Wintering: Kale then housed	9 C-sections, big calves due to nutrition
Calf sales: October (7-8 months old), creep fed from mid-July	90 calves on the ground now
	Bulling period: 9 weeks

Summer Calving

<i>2024 calving season – Key stats</i>	
Calving start: June 20th	82% in calf, 20% barren (high barren as bringing bulling forward to align with Spring calvers)
35 cows.	Approx. 40% calved in two weeks
Wintering: Indoors November- End April	2 calvings assisted
Calf sales: mid-April (8-9 months old)	Bulling period: 6 weeks

Sheep

Texel, Lleyn, Mules, Aberfield SR

Aiming to get to a 1000-ewe closed flock.

2024 lambing season – Key stats	
Lambing start: March 8th, in shed and polytunnels.	Scanning: Ewes and gimmers: 194%, Hoggs: 126% Lamb loss: 26% between scanning and May.
700 ewes and 200 hoggs/gimmers tupped	550 lambed in two weeks (teaser effect)
Wintering: Rotational grazing and Kale.	434 lambs sold fat so far
Lamb Sales: June- September	200 replacements bought in as trying to build numbers.

2024 success stories	2024 challenges
Sheep nutrition – high quality silage based Total Mixed Ration	Spring calving – big calves
Lambing staff and improved communication	Ewe condition loss during pregnancy
Lamb sales ahead of last year	Spring weather and slow grass growth
Summer calving going well	Sheep Mastitis

Considerations for the future

- Is it worth tupping hoggs? High culling possibly due to too much strain on ewe lambs. Worth focusing on lamb survival rather than having more females in lamb? Or better to tup them but creep feed the lambs?
- Winter the Spring calving herd indoors and turn out for calving? Outside calving would need to be late March/April?
- Bale the high-quality sheep silage and put the rest in the clamp which will be designated cow silage.
- Increase feed access in the lambing sheds to reduce stress and improve natural ewe-lamb bonding.
- Lamb later and outdoors?
- Swedes for sheep wintering rather than Kale?

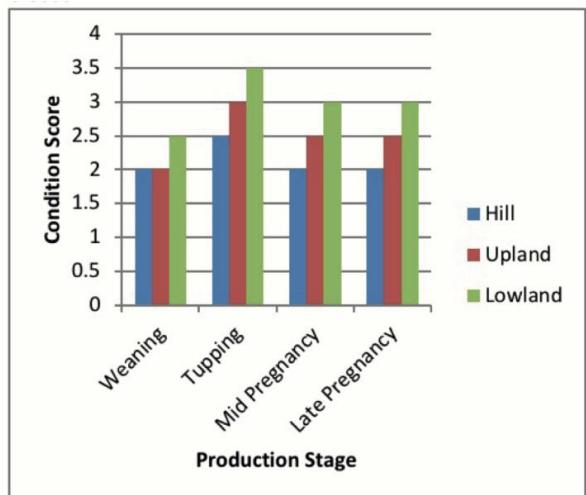
Body Condition Scoring



Ali Haggerty, Stewartry Vets

Check your ewes' Body Condition Score (BCS) now and take action to ensure they are at BCS 3-3.5 before tupping, or 2.5 in a hill flock.

Increasing BCS by one score – so, say, from BCS 2 to 3 – is equivalent to about 10-12% of the ewe's mature bodyweight. So, for a 70kg ewe, that's 7-8.4kg. How many days do you have before tupping to achieve that BCS?



Ewes can gain 0.5 BCS in around four weeks with good quality grazing.

At Barnbackle, lambs have been weaned in early July, but there is a focus now on increasing ewe BCS before lambing.

We're looking to achieve greater than 80% of the flock to be at the desired BCS at tupping

EWE NUTRITION AND BODY CONDITION SCORING TIMELINE

QMS

Weaning to tupping

Get ewes fit for production. Aim to get all ewes to target BCS 3 – 3.5. Offer lean ewes the best grass.

1st 50 Days

Take care of the eggs & developing embryo. Look to maintain BCS for embryo survival. Minimise stress on the ewe with no sudden changes in diet.

2nd 50 Days

Let the placenta grow and develop. A well grown placenta = good lamb development and birthweight. Ewes that were above target BCS at tupping can lose half a BCS.

3rd 50 Days

Ensure ewes are fit for lambing. Growing foetus and udder increases nutritional demands. Maintaining BCS will minimise ewe metabolic problems, maximise colostrum production, lamb vigour and survival.

Early Lactation

Maximise milk production. Total milk production is driven by high quality pasture and body condition.

Late Lactation

Maximise lamb growth. Lamb growth driven by pasture quality as ewe milk production declines. Wean at 90-110 days and offer lambs the best grass.

Golden 20 days
Move ewes to fresh pasture regularly, ideally daily, for 10 days before and after tupps go out to raise scanning %

Use opportunity to condition score and pull out ewes below target BCS 3 for preferential feeding.

Golden 35 days
Essential to feed to maintain BCS. Under feeding in last 35 days will cap lactation and reduce lamb vigour



PASTURE ALLOCATION
FOR ROTATIONAL GRAZING
(for 75kg ewe)

	x Maintenance	MJME/day required	kgDM/day assuming 10 MJME grass*
Early pregnancy	1.0	11.5	1.5
Mid pregnancy	1.0	11.5	1.5

*These figures assume 20% grass wastage

	x Maintenance	MJME/day required	kgDM/day assuming 11 MJME grass*
Early pregnancy	1.1	12.0	1.5
Mid pregnancy	1.5	16.5	1.8

*These figures assume 20% grass wastage

QMS would like to acknowledge Trevor Cook for his input to this publication, and John Vipond for his assistance.

For further information, visit www.qmscotland.co.uk

DUMFRIESSHIRE

Tups, lambs and sprayers



Stuart Graham, Innovis



Innovis provide performance recorded tups selected for genetic traits and all raised on a grass-based system.

Barnbackle have been using Innovis for a few years now with the aim to reduce ewe weight and produce a more efficient ewe for the system at Barnbackle.

[Click here](#) to find out more about Innovis and to use the handy Innovis mating cost calculator to find out your cost of mating per ewe.

John Smith, Auctioneer at Wallets Marts

After the prime lamb sale in Castle Douglas that morning, John covered the current market and what is required. Lambs are in demand at the moment, whether they are 32kg or 52kg they are wanted.

Attendees had a hands on feel at some of the lambs at Barnbackle to determine what you should be looking for when selecting lambs out for market.



SKAI spot sprayer, Tarff Valley

The SKAI spot spraying system detects and sprays only where needed.

- Reduce chemical use by up to 95%
- Reduce crop damage
- Reduce environmental impact





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To find out more or to sign up, please contact:

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