
Ultrasound scanning

Introduction

Many breeders take ultrasound measurements in the autumn of loin muscle and of fat depth to get information about carcass meat traits.

Ultrasonic scanning

To get the most value from ultrasound scanning it is best to:

- Scan enough progeny per sire to get reliable estimates of genetic merit – a minimum of 10 per sire is recommended. You don't have to measure every lamb – larger flocks may measure ram lambs only but smaller flocks will need to measure ewe lambs as well to get sufficient scanning information for accurate genetic evaluations.
- It is important that the animals that make it to scanning are spread across a reasonable proportion of sire lines.
- Ultrasound measurements can be affected by the stance of the sheep. Stressed sheep may not stand in a consistent way and cause the results to be biased. Discuss with your scan operator how to minimise such effects and so maximise the quality of the data collected.
- You should supply to Sheep Ireland eye muscle depth, eye muscle width and fat depth together with the live weight and date at scanning.

When to collect data

It is recommended that ultrasound scanning for fat and muscle depth be carried out at 140 days-of-age. Weight should be collected at this time also. Scanning at this time will increase the accuracy of evaluations, providing better information by which to make selection decisions on.

You or the technician

This service will be provided by a technician, and a cost in addition to the LambPlus base-fee.