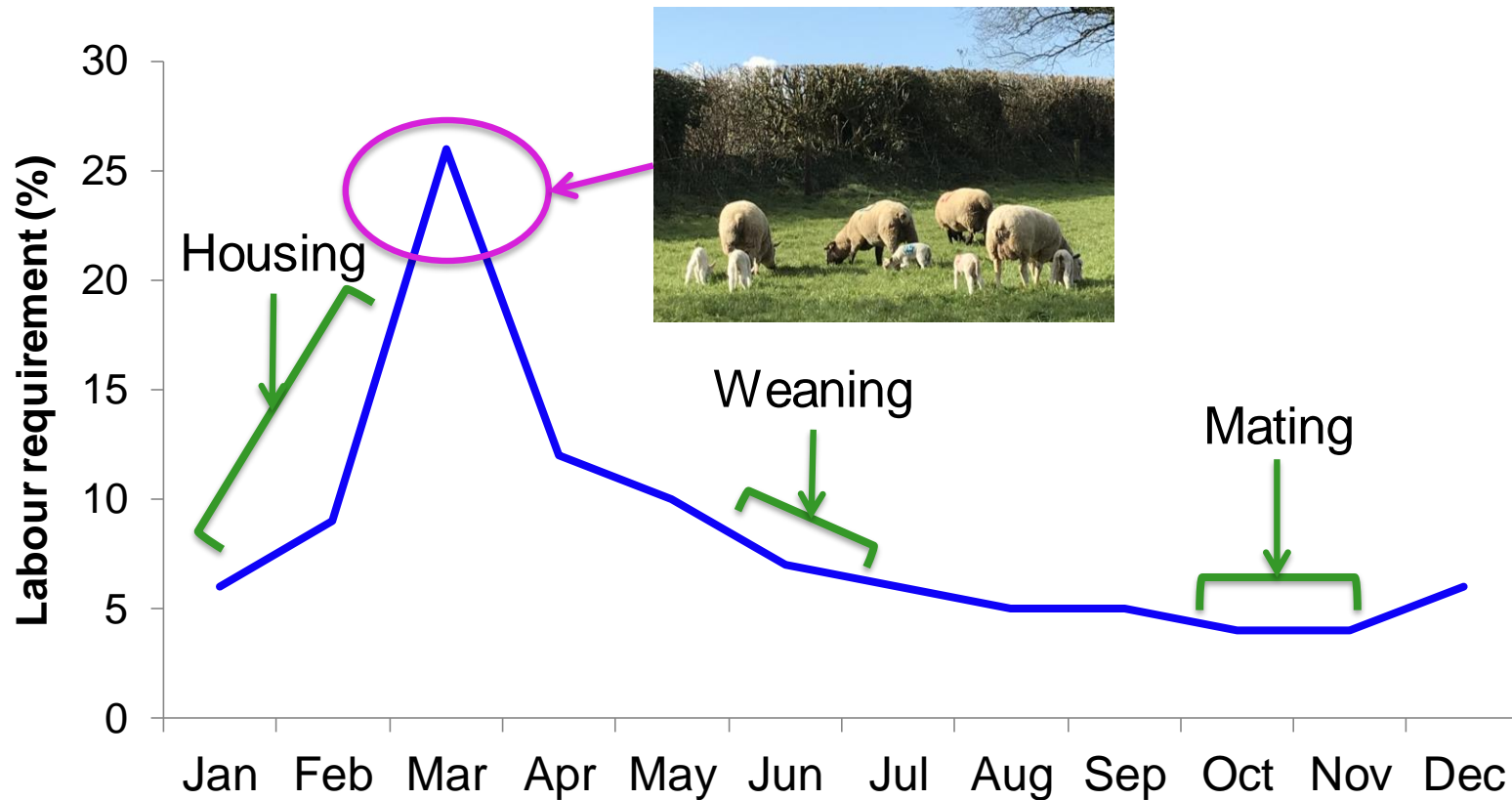


Making life easier at the busiest time: The potential to breed for greater lamb vigour and better mothering ability



Áine O'Brien
Sheep Ireland Conference
17th January 2020

Labour at lambing



Lamb vigour - Trait description



Very poor

Poor

Average

Good

Very good



Standing
within 60
minutes

Standing
within 30
minutes

Standing
within 10
minutes



Ewe mothering ability



1
Very poor

2
Poor

3
Average

4
Good

5
Very good

No interest
in lamb



Keeps
well away
from
lamb(s)
Does
not
know
how
to
lick
lamb(s)

Licks the
lamb(s) &
follows the
lamb(s)

Licks the
lamb(s), is
protective &
follows closely



Very
active, licks
lamb(s)
immediately,
protects
the lamb(s)
closely & bleats
for
lamb(s)

Score prevalence (%)

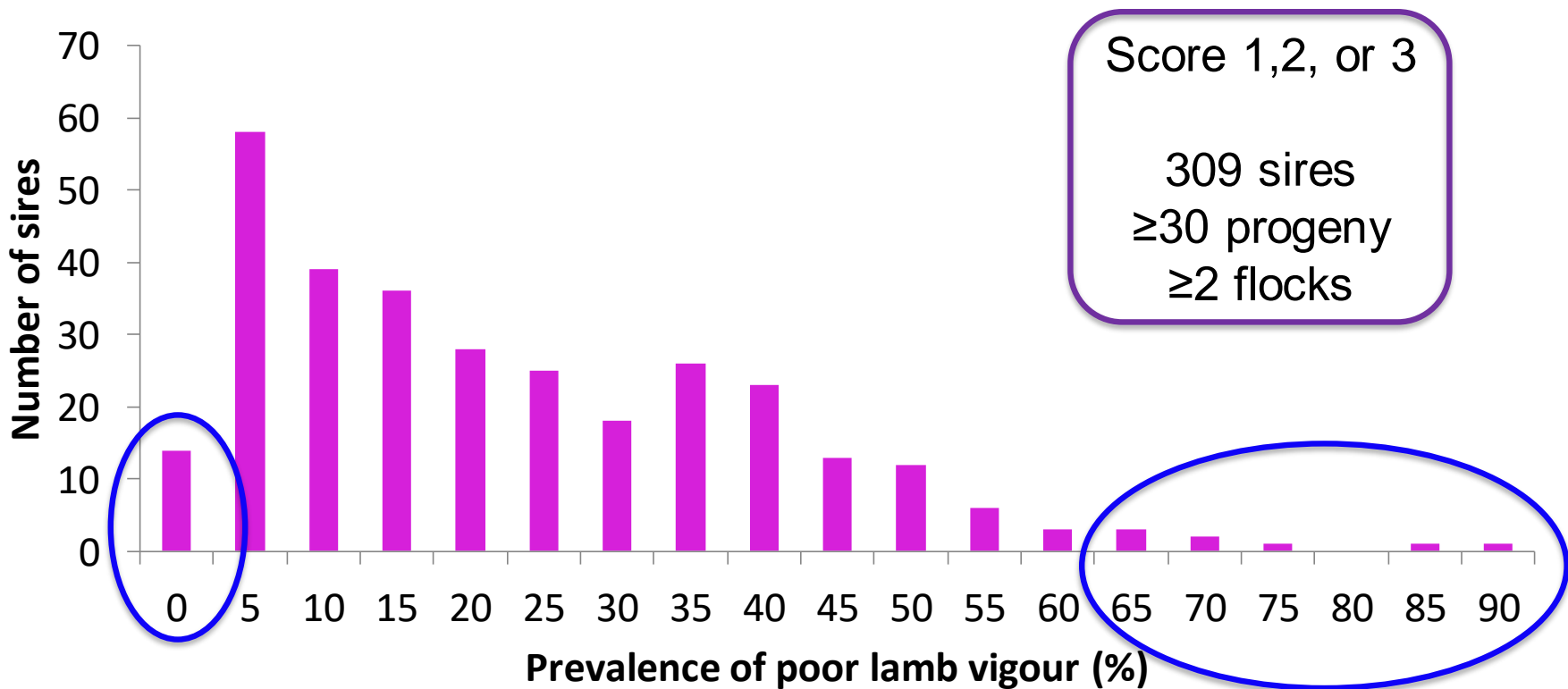


| Score | Description | Lamb vigour |
|-------|-------------|-------------|
| 1 | Very poor | 2.2 |
| 2 | Poor | 2.0 |
| 3 | Average | 15.7 |
| 4 | Good | 38.2 |
| 5 | Very good | 41.9 |

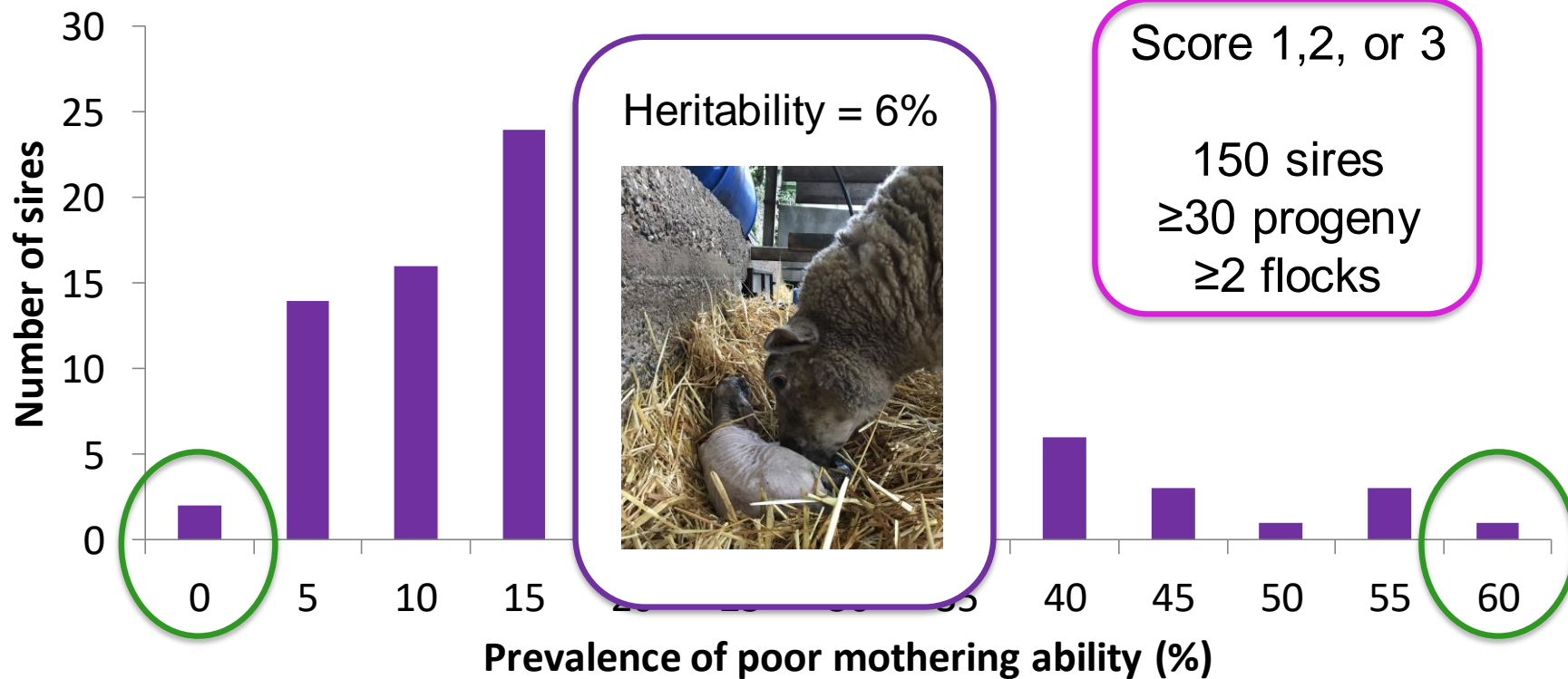
Breeding goal

- For any trait to be included in a breeding goal – 3 criteria
 1. Socially or economically important
 2. Exhibit genetic variation
 3. Measurable on a large scale
 - Or correlated with a trait that is

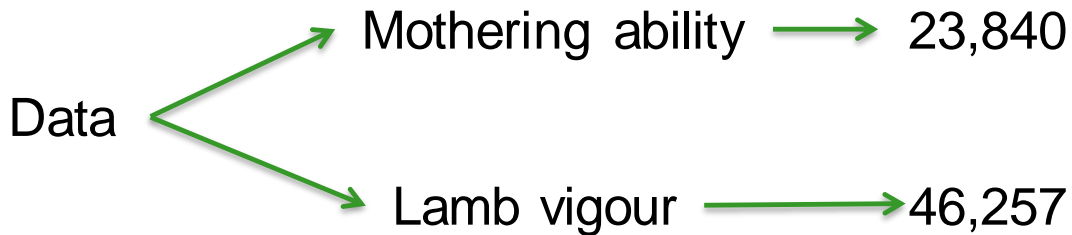
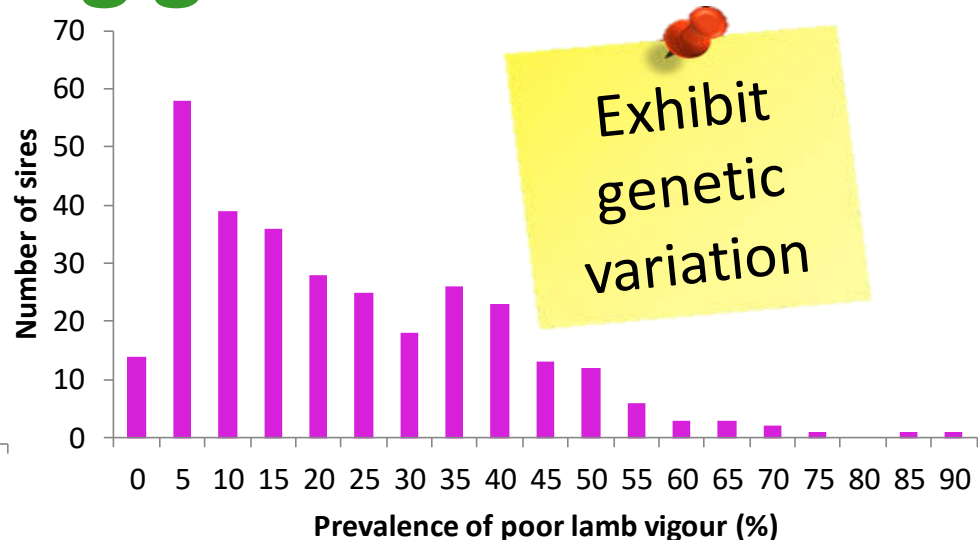
Sire prevalence – poor lamb vigour



Sire prevalence – poor mothering ability

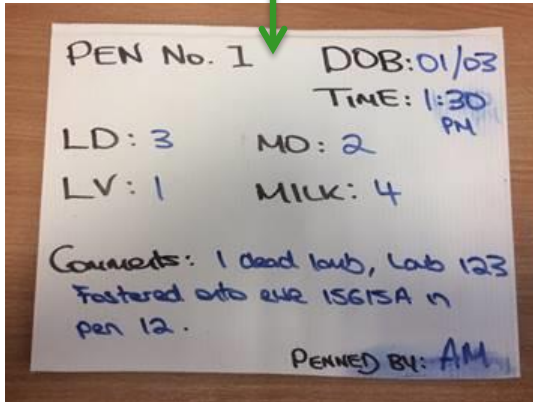


Breeding goal



Measurable on a large scale

Recording the traits



Conclusion



| Trait | Terminal | Replacement |
|--------------------------------|----------|-------------|
| Days to slaughter | 34.10% | 10.75% |
| Carcase conformation | 6.60% | 2.08% |
| Carcase fat | 12.68% | 4.00% |
| Single lambing difficulty | 2.11% | 0.76% |
| Multiple lambing difficulty | 1.14% | 0.41% |
| Lamb survival | 42.12% | 15.21% |
| Health – Dagginess | 1.15% | 0.17% |
| Health - Lameness lamb | 0.11% | 0.02% |
| Health - Lameness ewe | | 0.04% |
| Maternal days to slaughter | | 10.96% |
| Maternal carcase conformation | | 2.53% |
| Maternal carcase fat | | 4.87% |
| Ewe mature weight | | 14.13% |
| Maternal lamb survival | | 20.49% |
| Maternal single lambing diff | | 0.21% |
| Maternal multiple lambing diff | | 0.11% |
| Number of lambs born | | 13.26% |



Relationship between traits

Breeding values for individual animals

