

Appendix 1

Sheep Welfare Scheme

The Sheep Welfare Scheme was introduced to contribute to the continued development in animal and health welfare in the sheep sector and requires farmers to go beyond the relevant mandatory standards to enhance the standards of animal welfare in the Irish Sheep flock.

This scheme is designed in keeping with Article 33 of Regulation (EC) No 1305/2013 in particular and with the range of European Regulations underpinning the provision of support for Rural Development.

This scheme provides targeted support to those areas of animal welfare identified as making a meaningful positive contribution to sheep welfare, having regard to the systems of production in Ireland and the environment in which Irish sheep production is carried out.

Application Process

The scheme is a four year scheme. Applications for participation in the scheme had to be returned to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine by the 3rd of February 2017.

New entrants, as defined in the terms and conditions of the scheme, can submit applications for participation in the scheme in 2017 and subsequent years.

Payments

The scheme requires participants to undertake and complete two measurable and verifiable Sheep Welfare actions. These actions are based on Flock Type - Lowland or Hill - which is designated using the sheep numbers returned on the 2015 Census.

Applicants choose one action from Category A and one action from Category B as appropriate to their Flock Type (Lowland or Hill) by ticking the appropriate boxes beside each option on the application form.

The various action Categories and choices are as follows -

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*
<u>Category B</u>	<u>Category B</u>

Parasite Control (Faecal Egg Count)	Parasite Control (Faecal Egg Count)
Scanning	Scanning
Flystrike control	Mineral Supplementation Lambs Pre weaning*

* Hill flocks may not choose both Mineral Supplementation of Lambs and Meal feeding of lambs post weaning.

The decision as to which category an applicant belongs to is based on the type of stock (Lowland or Hill) held, or where there is a mix, the ratio stock type held and as reported in the Annual Sheep Census

- Applicants with greater than 50% lowland ewes are required to choose from the options for Lowland flocks
- Applicants with greater than 50% hill type ewes are required to choose from the options for Hill flocks.

The two actions chosen must be adhered to by the applicant for the full duration of the scheme. It is therefore not possible to change actions once chosen.

Payment is €10 per eligible breeding ewes based on the completion of both chosen actions. Failure to complete one or both actions will result in reduced payments and penalties. The number of eligible breeding ewes was based on the average of the number held in 2014 and 2015 as declared on the Sheep census. This is known as the Reference Number.

The number of ewes must be retained and made available for inspection where required for that scheme year.

Payment under the scheme is in two parts. An advance payment is made to participants in November of the scheme year in question, with the balancing payment issuing in Q2 of the following year on completion of the Inspection process.

Inspections

As with all EU funded schemes, an inspection process will be in place including

- on site verification of animal numbers and inspection of record book and documents to confirm actions are carried out
- a percentage of farmers will also be requested to return their record books and documents to DAFM for examination to confirm compliance - cooperation with such requests is a condition of participation in the scheme.

Penalties

Details in respect of penalties are set out in the Terms and Conditions of the Scheme.

Query resolution

Queries can be submitted to the Sheep Welfare Section of the Department. Contact details are as follows:

Post: Sheep Welfare Scheme,
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine,
Government Buildings,
Old Abbeyleix Road,
Portlaoise, Co. Laois, R32 RPA6

Phone: 076/1064420

Email: sheepscheme@agriculture.gov.ie