

# Highlights of the survey – triplet lamb management

Increasing lambing percentage has the potential to increase profit on farm. This also results in more triplet-lambs born. From November 2019 until March 2020 sheep farmers from the UK, Ireland and New Zealand were asked about their thoughts on management of triplet lambs. The survey was conducted by SRUC, AgResearch, The University of Edinburgh and Teagasc. The results from 510 farmers who participated in the survey are shown here.

United Kingdom	Ireland	New Zealand																																										
<p><b>Participants: 186</b>                      England: 90                      Wales: 22                      Scotland: 53                      Northern Ireland: 20                      *: 1</p> <p>43% were female, 57 % were male</p> <p>Age distribution of UK responses (%)</p> <table border="1"> <tr><th>Age Group</th><th>Percentage (%)</th></tr> <tr><td>under 25 years</td><td>15.1</td></tr> <tr><td>25-34 years</td><td>19.9</td></tr> <tr><td>35-44 years</td><td>20.4</td></tr> <tr><td>45-54 years</td><td>23.7</td></tr> <tr><td>55-64 years</td><td>14.0</td></tr> <tr><td>65 years or older</td><td>7.0</td></tr> </table>	Age Group	Percentage (%)	under 25 years	15.1	25-34 years	19.9	35-44 years	20.4	45-54 years	23.7	55-64 years	14.0	65 years or older	7.0	<p><b>Participants: 259</b>                      East Coast: 45                      Southeast: 39                      Southwest: 24                      West: 83                      Midlands: 33                      Northwest: 35</p> <p>14% were female, 0.4% described in another way, 85% were male.</p> <p>Age distribution of Irish responses (%)</p> <table border="1"> <tr><th>Age Group</th><th>Percentage (%)</th></tr> <tr><td>under 25 years</td><td>5.0</td></tr> <tr><td>25-34 years</td><td>12.7</td></tr> <tr><td>35-44 years</td><td>22.0</td></tr> <tr><td>45-54 years</td><td>33.6</td></tr> <tr><td>55-64 years</td><td>19.3</td></tr> <tr><td>65 years or older</td><td>7.3</td></tr> </table>	Age Group	Percentage (%)	under 25 years	5.0	25-34 years	12.7	35-44 years	22.0	45-54 years	33.6	55-64 years	19.3	65 years or older	7.3	<p><b>Participants: 65</b>                      North Island: 27                      South Island: 38</p> <p>29% were female and 69% were male and 1.5% preferred not to say.</p> <p>Age distribution of NZ responses (%)</p> <table border="1"> <tr><th>Age Group</th><th>Percentage (%)</th></tr> <tr><td>under 25 years</td><td>4.6</td></tr> <tr><td>25-34 years</td><td>32.3</td></tr> <tr><td>35-44 years</td><td>21.5</td></tr> <tr><td>45-54 years</td><td>18.5</td></tr> <tr><td>55-64 years</td><td>18.5</td></tr> <tr><td>65 years or older</td><td>4.6</td></tr> </table>	Age Group	Percentage (%)	under 25 years	4.6	25-34 years	32.3	35-44 years	21.5	45-54 years	18.5	55-64 years	18.5	65 years or older	4.6
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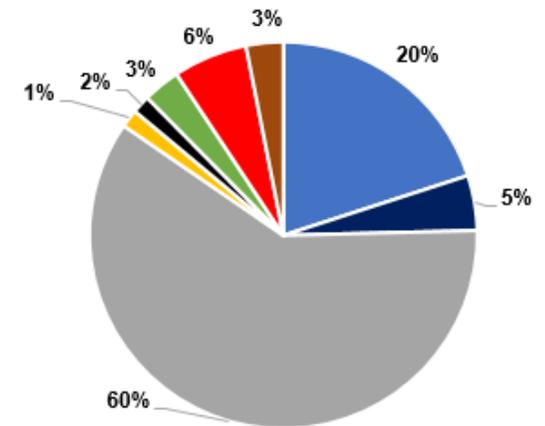
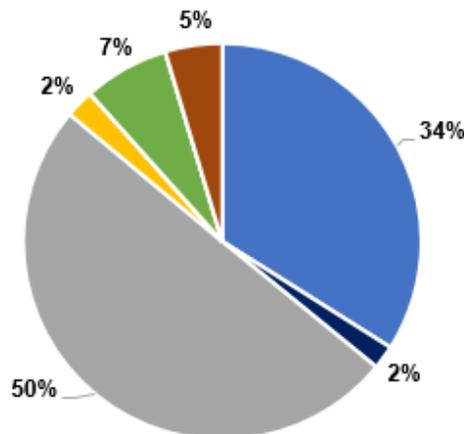
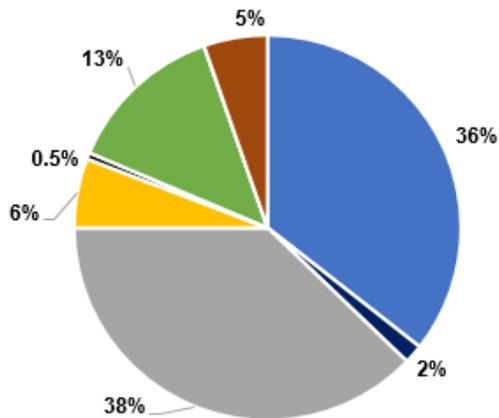
United Kingdom

Ireland

New Zealand

- Sheep farm
- Combined sheep and beef farm
- Combined sheep and deer farm
- Combined sheep, beef and deer farm

- Dairy sheep farm
- Combined sheep and crop farm
- Combined sheep, beef and crop farm
- Other



**Average flock size: 489**

85% of participants scanned their ewes  
62 % housed their animals part of the year  
Average scanning % for 2019: 184%  
Average lambing % for 2019: 172%

**Average flock size: 182**

89% of participants scanned their ewes  
71% housed their animals part of the year  
Average scanning % for 2019: 181%  
Average lambing % for 2019: 166%

**Average flock size: 2520**

86% of participants scanned their ewes  
94% had their sheep on fenced pasture all year round and **never** housed.  
Average scanning % for 2019: 177%  
Average lambing % for 2019: 150%

## How did participants manage their triplets?

More than half of UK and Irish participants always supplement their triplet lambs with colostrum.

More than half of UK and Irish farmers adopt one triplet off the ewe compared to only 10% of New Zealand farmers. Instead, two thirds of NZ farmers rear all triplets with their mothers compared to less than 20% of UK and Irish farmers.

All participants agreed that lamb losses was the biggest cost of triplet lamb management. More than 50% of New Zealand farmers also rated ewe losses as a cost of triplet lamb management, compared to less than 20% of UK and Irish farmers.

72% of participants from all countries are satisfied with their triplet management.



We would like to thank all involved in the survey for their contribution. Further work is underway to explore the additional data collected to characterise differences between countries in triplet management strategies. This survey is part of a wider research initiative to identify factors and approaches to improve triplet lamb performance to contribute to sustainable, ethical and profitable sheep production.