

## Roger and Hilary Bell Northern Ireland



Roger and Hilary combine a 600 strong flock with turkey rearing and a suckler herd on their farm in Co Antrim, Northern Ireland. In the flock, purebred mules are bought in and these are crossed with a Texel sire. All crossbred ewes are put to Suffolk rams and all ewe lambs are put to Charollais rams.



### Flock Management

The Bells are committed to management recording. It allows them to compare performance year and year and also to compare performance with other producers. Last year they achieved 1.98 lambs sold per ewe across the entire flock.

Shearing takes place in August so ewes are not too covered when they are housed in early January but have enough wool when they go back out after lambing in mid-March. Ewes are scanned when housed and grouped into those carrying singles, twins and triplets and fed only silage. Closer to lambing they get meal from a TMR system with specific feeds formulated for each group. Thanks to a grid system feeding is very efficient. After lambing meal is not fed with ewes and lambs turned out. Silage is cut in May and July each year. If a third cut is taken it's made into bales. Silage analysis is carried out each year.

The flock is wormed and fluked regularly and vaccination programmes are followed. Each time sheep are gathered they are foot bathed with feet pared as needed. An extensive network of laneways and gates allows Hilary to manage the majority of the day-to-day flock management jobs on her own as Roger manages a busy contracting business.

The Bells use Select Sheepware along with a Psion reader and an extension wand for the Psion. Some of the weighing results are shown on the following page.

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## Using Select Sheepware

Roger and Hilary started using Select Sheepware this year. Hilary said **“We find the weighing information particularly useful and regularly weigh the lambs, monitoring weight gain intensively and making finishing decisions accordingly. We use the weights recorded for a range of reasons including finishing, analysing ram and ewe performance and making replacement decisions. We weigh our lambs every two weeks and if daily live weight gain is dropping can make decisions on drenching and vitamin dosing, taking into account faecal egg counts.”**

Some of the results they have recorded are shown below:

### Daily Live Weight Gains—kgs per day

	Ewe Lambs	Ram Lambs
Birth to weaning	0.25	0.28
Weaning to first weighing	0.25	0.29

### Lamb 100 Day Weight by Sire Breed

	100 Day Weights Kg By Ram	Breed average 100 day weights (Kg)
Texel 1	30.70	30.22
Texel 2	30.51	
Texel 3	29.25	
Texel 4	30.06	
Texel 5	30.59	
Suffolk 1	30.16	30.20
Suffolk 2	30.22	
Suffolk 3	30.91	
Suffolk 4	29.51	
Charollais	30.00	30.00

**Roger Bell Agricultural Contracting specialises in fencing and digger work. For more details please ring + 44 (0) 788 5333488.**

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