



Lamb Action for Profit

Better Returns from Clover-Rich Lamb Pastures

Boost returns by finishing lambs more rapidly, consistently and cost-effectively from pastures containing higher contents of white clover.

White clover in pastures can increase the rate of lamb gain from weaning to slaughter by 25%, reduce concentrate costs by over £5 per head and counter the summer dip in grass growth.

By increasing forage digestibility, feed intakes and protein supply, clover-rich pastures enable more lambs to be finished earlier from more cost-effective grazing to take greater advantage of higher early autumn prices.

Targets

- Achieve a 20% mid-season content of white clover in lowland pastures.
- Manage lambs to gain at least 200g liveweight per day from grazing.
- Finish over 60% of lambs off grazing at minimal concentrate cost.

Management Guidelines

- **Promote clover growth** in mixed swards by positive management to minimise competition with grass, being aware that clover content will vary widely through the season from a low level in early spring to 30-40% of the sward in late summer.
- **Introduce clover** into grass-only swards as economically and effectively as possible by over-sowing, under-sowing or direct re-seeding.
- Aim for lamb growth rates of over 200g per day to finish stock 4-6 weeks earlier than from grass-only pastures, taking maximum advantage of higher **seasonal prices**.
- Fine-tune **concentrate supplementation** to account for the markedly higher dry matter and protein intakes possible from mixed swards with a good white clover content, particularly during the summer dip in grass growth and quality.
- Maximise the percentage of lambs finished off grazing by giving special priority to late-born stock in both grazing and concentrate feeding, enabling them to catch-up with earlier born flock-mates.
- Monitor growth rates against **pre-set targets** by weighing a sample of lambs regularly and adjusting grazing and concentrates to maintain daily gains.
- Use **rotational grazing** systems to optimise animal performance as well as to maintain output and the most favourable grass-clover mix in the face of seasonal differences in sward growth.
- Match **sward fertilisation** carefully to pasture need, appreciating that clover can fix relatively large amounts of nitrogen each year and thrives best at lower N fertiliser inputs.
- Check **soil pH** and **P and K status** regularly, maintaining a pH of 6.0-6.5 and P and K indices of above 2.0 to support optimal clover production.
- Consider including **new clover varieties** with higher yields, improved disease resistance and greater persistency when renewing or renovating pastures.

More detailed advice, costings, calculators and further information supporting these guidelines are available free of charge to levy payers in a unique interactive Lamb Action for Profit resource at www.eblex.org.uk



Better Returns Programme



ENGLISH BEEF & LAMB EXECUTIVE

Lamb Action for Profit

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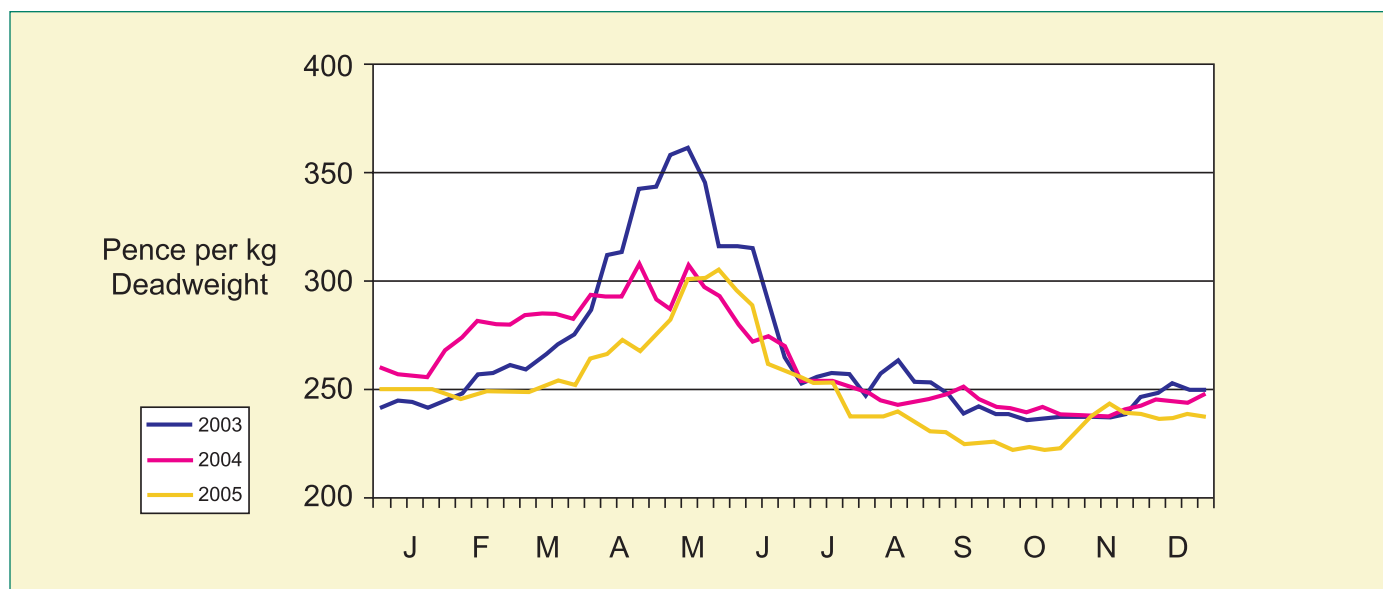
Lamb Performance Standards at Pasture

	Grass	Grass + Clover	Your Flock
Finishing period (days)	120	90	
Dry matter intake (% liveweight)	1.8	2.2	
Amount of concentrates (kg)*	50-60	35-40	
Cost of concentrates (£)†	6.60	4.20	
Liveweight gain (g/day)	150	>200	
Fat class	2-3	2-3	
Killing out percentage (%)	51	48	
Minimum liveweight (kg)	36	36	
Minimum carcase weight (kg)	18	18	

*Amount used from birth until slaughter and assuming that clover and grass reduces concentrate use by 35%

†At £120 per tonne

Lamb Market Trends



Note: In recent years (2004 and 2005) both the level and duration of the seasonal peak in lamb prices has been noticeably less than in the past (2003). This trend needs to be taken into account in production planning.