



# LAMBING NEWSLETTER

## REALISE THE VALUE OF MARGINAL HILL GRAZING

A new labour saving feed block is being introduced by Rumenco, specifically formulated to support stock during the winter months, grazing on marginal land.

Rumenco technical manager, David Thornton, explains the challenges faced by hill farmers when trying to maintain ewes' condition on variable quality forage in upland areas.



"Although grazing has generally been plentiful due to mild weather this autumn, and ewes are mainly looking in good condition, it's extremely important to maintain this

throughout the winter months in advance of lambing. This can be a challenge for those running upland flocks, as grazing can be very fibrous, and low in protein, which isn't as easy for ewes to digest," he says.

"Marginal grazing, such as heather and cotton-grass, are not only low in digestibility and protein, but also in minerals. The uplands tend to experience higher rainfall, which results in low essential mineral levels, so it's vital to provide nutritional support at this time, when ewes are laying down the building blocks for a successful lambing crop in the spring.

"Our new block, Hill Grazer, is high in urea based protein, which is broken down quickly in the rumen. On-farm trials carried out over the last three winters have seen ewes supplemented with Hill Grazer increased roughage use by at least 10%.

"Trials carried out over the past three winters have shown typical intakes are two to three blocks per week, per 100 ewes.

"With intakes so well controlled, ewes are more willing to

forage for themselves, occasionally visiting the block rather than standing around it, making for an economical system in mid-pregnancy. This 'little and often' approach improves forage intake and digestibility.

"Our block also contains XP, a unique fermentation product containing metabolites which help optimise rumen health, to increase digestibility and feed efficiency." says David.

Realising the value of marginal land is vitally important for hill farmers, which is why Rumenco has specifically formulated a block with 23% protein to balance roughage intake for this niche market, as they really understand the need for a reliable, labour saving, feed solution that fits in with the system.

"Ewes can easily become run down over the winter months, not just visually, but internally. The effectiveness and digestibility of the rumen really drops on wet, poor quality grass, which means ewes can perform poorly and loose condition.

"My advice would be to introduce Hill Grazer feed blocks in early January to prevent ewes getting run-down during the winter, so when you do start to feed ewes higher nutrient density feeds in the run-up to lambing they are in the right condition for a successful lambing," adds David.