

Supplement trial

Barley-supplemented lambs from 3IN1FEEDERS on Alfalfa pasture achieved significantly higher weight gain compared to lambs on Alfalfa pasture alone.



Barley sup. achieves 1:1 conversion

Background:

Livestock are frequently grazed on high performance crops and pastures to ensure high growth rates, but the forage consumed can have excessive protein and limited energy and carbohydrates.

Supplementing stock with cereal grains can balance all these dietary issues and deficiencies.

Results:

Stock offered 100grams/day of barley gained 350grams/day of live weight – those without gained just 250grams/day of live weight.

An added benefit was that lambs were away quicker, consuming less fodder and allowing more lambs to be finished on the Alfalfa pasture.

Trial outline

Duration:	50 days
Equipment:	4 x 1800 in the supplement group
Quantity:	approx. 800 lambs in the supplement group and 800 in the control group
Stock type:	weaned lambs
Feed amount:	100grams/day of barley

Comments from the trial operator

The high quality pasture has high protein levels but doesn't always allow stock to reach potential weight gains.

Adding grain and straw helps balance the diet by increasing carbohydrates and fibre.

I introduced the 3IN1FEEDERS to lambs and ewes in spring and it didn't take long for stock to get used to the system of getting barley from the feeders.

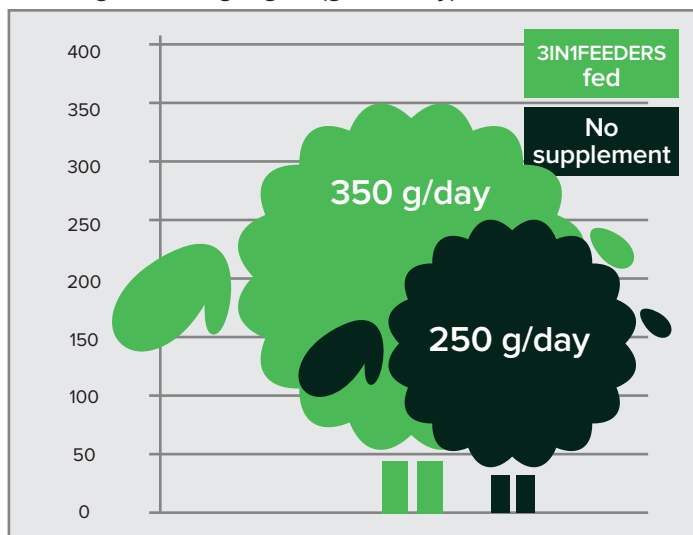
Lambs are naturally inquisitive - grain is like lollies to them.

The study was anything but scientific – It is only over one season with one group, but the results are exciting.

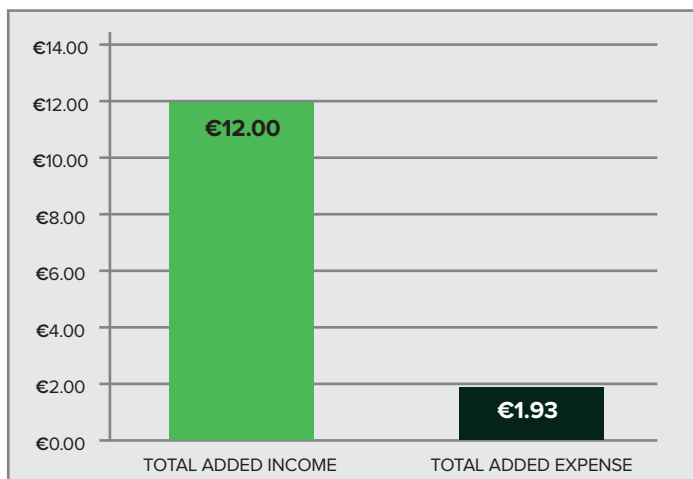
I grow 72 acres of barley to keep supplement costs low but the system should work with bought-in barley, as the returns are significant.



Average live weight gain (grams/day)



Added income versus added expenses per head



Added feeding expenses and income

Number of lambs	800
Feeding duration (days)	50
Average barley consumption/day/head (kg)	0.1
Barley cost (tonne)	€140
Total barley cost	€440
Labour*	€80
Depreciation**	€1020
TOTAL EXPENSE	€1,540
TOTAL EXPENSE/LAMB	€1.93
Added growth rate/day/head (kg)	0.1
Value of live weight/kg	€2.40
TOTAL INCREASED INCOME***	€9,600
TOTAL INCREASED INCOME/LAMB	€12.00
TOTAL INCREASED PROFIT	€8,060
TOTAL INCREASED PROFIT/LAMB	€10.08

* The feeders were filled twice, taking two hours to fill all feeders each time at a rate of €20/hour.

** This is calculated by multiplying a depreciation rate of 15% and the investment of four feeders, €6800.

*** This doesn't include the added potential to finish more lambs on the Alfalfa because they are sold quicker with lower pasture consumption.

About the trial operators

Bill and Sheila Wright operate a 950 acre dry stock farm in Cave, 28km Northwest of Timaru, New Zealand, where they farm 850 breeding ewes, 250 hoggets, 130 bull calves, 130 rising 2 y.o. bulls and graze 500 dairy heifers. They also finish 1500 lambs per year on 170 acres of Alfalfa.