

60-minute farm review

A technical and business assessment for beef and sheep farmers

Step 1: Land area (5 minutes)

Effective forage hectares farmed =ha

Effective total hectares farmed =ha




Step 2: Livestock numbers (5 minutes)

Class of livestock	Number	LU/animal	Total LU
Suckler cows or heifers (700–900 kg) incl calf to weaning		1.3	
Suckler cows or heifers (500–700 kg) incl calf to weaning		1.1	
Bulls		1.0	
Other cattle over 2 years old		0.8	
Other cattle 1–2 years old		0.65	
Other cattle over 3 months to 1 year old		0.35	
Breeding ewes (70–90 kg) with lambs at foot to weaning		0.15	
Breeding ewes (50–70 kg) with lambs at foot to weaning		0.13	
Rams		0.15	
Other sheep 1–3 years old (e.g. unmated replacements)		0.07	
Store lambs (weaning to 12 months old)		0.05	
Other grazing livestock (e.g. horses/deer/pigs)			

Calculate your average stocking rate per hectare by dividing the total LUs by the number of effective forage hectares to obtain your **average number of LUs/hectare** =

Compare your stocking rate to the table below:

Farm type	Good	Moderate	Low
Lowland (non-SDA)	Above 1.8	1.4–1.8	Below 1.4
Upland (non-SDA or SDA)	Above 1.6	1.2–1.6	Below 1.2
Hill (SDA)	Above 1.4	1.0–1.4	Below 1.0

-  If the answer lies in the green area, your stocking rate is good and grassland productivity is likely to be high.
-  If your stocking rate is in the yellow category, then there should be scope to improve stocking rates and improve output/hectare. Grassland may need to be improved through increased lime, phosphate, potash and nitrogen applications, clover content or reseeded. Rotational grazing may also be appropriate. See the AHDB manual *Planning grazing strategies for Better Returns*.
-  An answer in the red area indicates you are at a low stocking rate and there is significant potential to increase output. If you do not wish to keep more livestock, it should be possible to keep current livestock numbers on two-thirds or less of the existing grassland. See the AHDB manual *Improving pasture for Better Returns*.



Step 3: Suckler herd performance (10 minutes)

Total number of cows/heifers put to the bull	(a)	
Total number calved within first 3 weeks of calving period	(b)	$(b)/(a) \times 100 =$
Total number calved within weeks 3 to 6 of calving period	(c)	$(b+c)/(a) \times 100 =$
Total number calved within weeks 6 to 9 of calving period	(d)	$(b+c+d)/(a) \times 100 =$
Length of calving period in weeks		
Average age of heifers at first calving in months		
Total number of calves reared to weaning	(e)	$(e)/(a) \times 100 =$

The calculations in the right hand column in the above table gives the numbers/100 cows. The KPI targets for each of these parameters are outlined in the table below.

Calves weaned per 100 cows/heifers put to bull	Over 94	86–94	Under 86
% of cows and heifers calved within first 3 weeks	Over 65	45–65	Under 45
% of cows and heifers calved within first 6 weeks	Over 80	60–80	Under 60
% of cows and heifers calved within first 9 weeks	Over 90	70–90	Under 70
Calving period – first to last calving (weeks)	12 or Less	12–16	16 or longer
Age at first calving (months)	22–24	24–30	Over 30

If some of your results fall into the amber or red categories, see the AHDB manuals **Optimising suckler herd fertility for Better Returns** and **Managing replacement heifers for Better Returns**.

Step 4: Ewe flock performance (10 minutes)

Number of ewes put to ram	(a)	Scanning % if available =
Number of ewe lambs put to ram	(b)	Scanning % if available =
Number of lambs born alive	(c)	$(c)/(a + b) \times 100 =$ lambing %
Total number of lambs sold/retained	(d)	$(d)/(a + b) \times 100 =$ rearing %

Targets for lowland flocks with no ewe lambs put to the ram:

Scanning %	Over 190	170–190	Under 170
Lambing %	Over 175	155–175	Under 155
Rearing %	Over 165	145–165	Under 145

Targets for lowland flocks with 20% of mated ewe lambs within the flock:

Scanning %	Over 175	155–175	Under 155
Lambing %	Over 160	140–160	Under 140
Rearing %	Over 150	130–150	Under 130

Targets for hill ewes, where a proportion of twins can be accommodated:

Scanning %	Over 135	120–135	Under 120
Lambing %	Over 125	105–125	Under 105
Rearing %	Over 115	95–115	Under 95

If some of your results fall into the amber or red categories, see the AHDB manuals **Optimising suckler herd fertility for Better Returns** and **Managing replacement heifers for Better Returns**.

Step 5: Farm accounts analysis (15 minutes)

	£ total	%
Gross income		
Less livestock purchases and valuation change		
Net income (a)		100 (h)
Direct costs (feed, seed, fertiliser, sprays, vet & med, ear tags, haulage & commission, straw, etc.) (b)		(b/a x 100) = (i)
Gross margin (c)		(h – i) =
Labour costs (paid labour including regular and casual) (d)		(d/a x 100) =
Machinery and equipment costs (fuel, repairs, contracting, leasing, depreciation) (e)		(e/a x 100) =
Property, energy and administration (electric, water, fencing & property repairs, accountant, sundries, building depreciation) (f)		(f/a x 100) =
Rent & finance costs (rent, grazing costs, bank and loan interest) (g)		(g/a x 100) =
Profit/loss		

Net income	100	100	100
Direct costs	Less than 35	35–40	More than 40
Gross margin	More than 65	65–60	Less than 60
Labour costs	Less than 15	15–20	More than 20
Machinery costs and equipment costs	Less than 20	20–25	More than 25
Property, energy and administration costs	Less than 10	10–15	More than 15
Rent & finance costs	Less than 15	15–20	More than 20

Step 6: Comparison with others (15 minutes)

Compare yourself with Farm Business Survey-costed farms. This comparison can be found at farmbusinesssurvey.co.uk/benchmarking

Produced for you by:

AHDB Beef & Lamb

Stoneleigh Park, Kenilworth,
Warwickshire, CV8 2TL

T 024 7647 8834

E comms@ahdb.org.uk

W ahdb.org.uk

@AHDB_BeefLamb

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please email us on comms@ahdb.org.uk

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