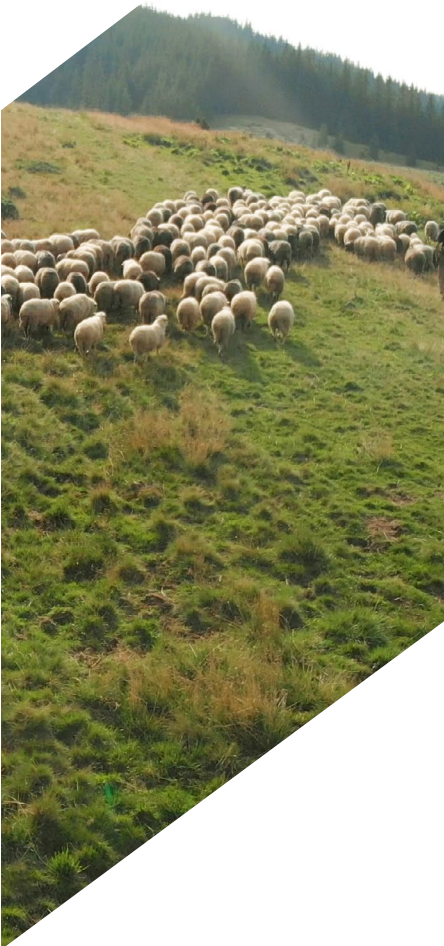




Farm
Advisory
Service

Sheep



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for farm business
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Introduction

Markets and price drivers

As of June 1, 2025, Defra census figures recorded the UK sheep flock at 30.48 million head, reflecting a 2% decrease from the previous year. This marks the lowest recorded population since 2011. The female breeding flock totalled 14.78 million head, representing a 1% decline compared to 2024. As a result of this, the UK lamb production witnessed a further decline of 3% in 2025. This is a record low and equals 437,500 less lambs than expected.

The European national flock continues to decrease from the 2.5% decline reported in 2023. EU sheep meat production is expected to decrease by just under 5% in 2024, with a further 1% drop forecasted for 2025. The largest decline in European production during 2023/24 was observed in Italy, followed by the Netherlands and Spain. Factors driving this reduction include high input costs, challenging weather conditions leading to reduced grazing availability, and disease challenges, most notably bluetongue. Some countries are resorting to finishing animals at lighter weights to offload stock in difficult climatic conditions. In the first seven months of 2025, several EU countries saw a sharp decrease in sheep meat production, Ireland saw one of the largest reductions with production down 14%. The EU's largest sheep meat producer, Spain, reported a reduction by 3%. This will likely cause stronger EU demand for UK sheep meat providing further hope for the industry.

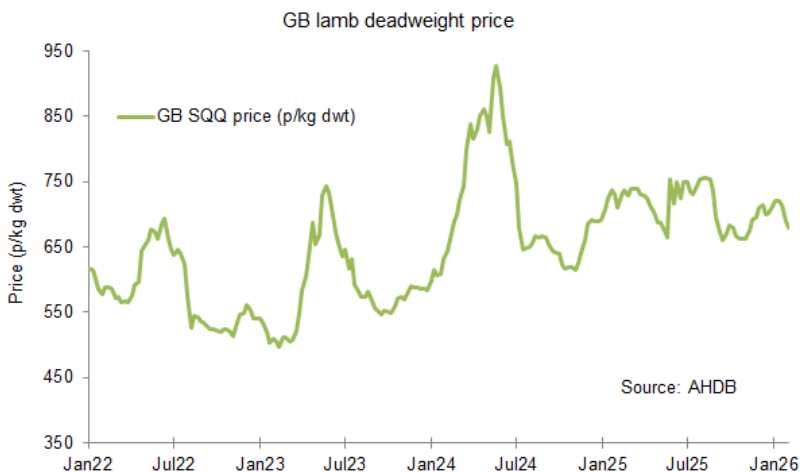
The UK remains the third largest sheep meat exporter, with over 95% of exports to the EU, competing with continental producers, New Zealand and Australia. To address the seasonality of supply and carcass balance issues, the UK exports whole and half carcasses, predominantly to France, Germany and Spain, and imports legs and loins from New Zealand and Australia. The expected reduction in EU production will support the UK export market but the decline in domestic production will limit export potential.

The free trade agreement between Australia and the UK has now been in place since the end of May 2023, leading to an increase in the quantity of Australian sheep meat imported to the UK. January 2025 saw a 30% increase in Australian sheep meat imports compared to the previous year. The Australian flock continues to expand with production efficiency also seeing a marked increase, however, closer markets such as China, USA and the Middle East are still proving more attractive for Australian producers. New Zealand remains the primary importer for the UK market with 64% of imports as of March 2025. 2024 witnessed a 7.6% decline in the lamb crop due to weather challenges leading to a strengthening in lamb price. This may risk NZ export capability particularly against Australia, however, it is unlikely we will witness this in the short term.

UK domestic lamb consumption has been declining for decades, but Islamic festivals continue to sustain demand. Ramadan (expected 18th February 2026), Eid al-Fitr (expected 20th March 2026), and Qurbani/Eid al-Adha (expected 27th May 2026) (dates depend on moon phases) will likely boost hogg prices in February/March 2026.

Lamb is a premium product; it is expensive compared with other proteins, such as chicken and pork, and is therefore vulnerable to changes in consumer financial pressures. There is optimism for increasing demand in the future as inflation decreases and wages improve. Domestic demand for roasts, burgers and processed lamb and steaks have increased year on year. Stewing, steak and chops are the highest value retail cuts.

Producer price is significantly influenced by seasonality of supply as shown in the chart below. Most producers finish their lambs off grass or forage crops, therefore weather influences lamb supply and thus, lamb price. However, there is a trend for increasing lamb price seen year-on-year.



Marketing

Prime lamb sales are typically traded on the spot market, with prices heavily influenced by the timing of sales due to seasonal production patterns. Old season lamb tends to gain value towards the Easter market as supply declines. However, producers face higher costs to either accelerate lamb growth for early markets or delay sales for better prices in early spring. As the season progresses into summer, the market sees an influx of lambs, exceeding domestic demand and increasing reliance on European customers.

The auction market typically accounts for 50% of sheep sales across the UK. Like the cattle market, the live auction system provides an important service. It is a mechanism that brings together sheep and customers to establish a transparent price. The most common method to spread risk,

when selling at livestock auctions, is to target multiple sales per year. The future price may be influenced by buyer feedback. Similarly, when selling direct to processors, an improved price may be achieved if a large number of in-specification lambs can be delivered at pre-arranged times.

Supermarket specification lamb accounts for most domestic sales. However, a butcher's lamb is also a sizeable market (c. 10%). Over 40% of the lamb marketed is out of specification. Exports include the heavy lamb trade to northern European countries, particularly France, which accounts for approximately 56% of sheep meat exports. Belgium and Luxemburg are particularly important outlets for E and U grade lambs.

Technical performance

Sheep enterprise margins are inevitably sensitive to the sales price. However, there is limited opportunity to influence the overall market and greater potential exists through improving production efficiency within the farmgate. Top performing flocks consistently rear more lambs, sell more finished (if they are on the right land type) and use less purchased inputs. Whilst fixed costs on these top performing farms may be lower, they are also spread over more kilos of lamb sold (higher output).

Subsidies and support

The Scottish Upland Sheep Support Scheme (SUSSS) is a coupled support payment for sheep to provide additional support to producers on poorer quality rough grazing found in Scotland's basic payment region three. The payment rate in 2024 was £63.49 per ewe hogg. This is an annual payment; the actual payment rate is determined by the number of hogg applications each year. The full payment is made during the spring/summer following the year when the claim is made. This support has not been included in the 2025/26 budget gross margins due to the specific nature of scheme eligibility. See the Rural Aid Schemes section for more details.

General Reference Data

Sheep feeding

Suggested daily rations (kg fresh matter) for Scottish Blackface ewes (60 kg lwt) during pregnancy using average quality baled silage (DM 300g/kg, ME 10.5MJ/kg DM) and hay (DM 830g/kg, ME 8.3MJ/kg DM). Concentrate feeds requirements over 0.5kg/d should be split between two feeds.

Weeks before lambing	Single-bearing ewes		Twin-bearing ewes	
	Silage	Concentrates	Silage	Concentrates
8	2.8	0	3.2	0
6	2.8	0	3.2	0.25
4	2.7	0.25	2.7	0.4
2	2.6	0.35	2.7	0.4

	<i>Hay</i>	<i>Concentrates</i>	<i>Hay</i>	<i>Concentrates</i>
8	1.1	0	1.1	0.2
6	1	0.25	1	0.35
4	0.9	0.4	0.8	0.55
2	0.85	0.55	0.7	0.85

Suggested daily rations (kg fresh matter) for crossbred ewes (e.g., mule, 75 kg lwt) during pregnancy using average quality baled silage (DM 300 g/kg, ME 10.5 MJ/kg DM) and hay (DM 830 g/kg, ME 8.3 MJ/kg DM).

Weeks before lambing	Single-bearing ewes		Twin-bearing ewes	
	<i>Silage</i>	<i>Concentrates</i>	<i>Silage</i>	<i>Concentrates</i>
Mid-pregnancy	2.8 *	0	3 *	0
8	3.3	0	4	0
6	3.2	0.1	3	0.3
4	3.1	0.25	2.8	0.5
2	3	0.4	2.8	0.75

	<i>Hay</i>	<i>Concentrates</i>	<i>Hay</i>	<i>Concentrates</i>
Mid-pregnancy	1 *	0	1.1 *	0
8	1.4	0	1.4	0.15
6	1.3	0.2	1.2	0.4
4	1.2	0.4	1.1	0.65
2	1.1	0.6	1	0.95

* restricted amount fed. Requirements in mid-pregnancy can also be met with grazed grass or forage crops such as swedes or fodder beet.

Concentrates based on high quality compound, e.g. ME 12.5 MJ/kg DM and 18% CP (fresh basis). Any single concentrate feed more than 0.5kg/day should be split between two equal feeds for best performance. Farmers lambing their flocks from mid-April can meet the pregnant ewe's requirements on well managed grass alone.

Wool

High processing costs and weak consumer demand are negatively affecting wool prices both domestically and globally. In the backdrop of this is the long-term issue of rising production of lower-cost, oil-based synthetic fibres and the availability of cheaper wool from other countries. However, with growing awareness of environmental impacts and the provenance of products, there is an argument for the relevance of UK wool. Most wool is marketed through the British Wool Marketing Board. For more details of wool prices, charges, collection centres and grading depots, please contact the BWMB (www.britishwool.org.uk).

Hard Hill

PHYSICAL DATA

Breeds	Blackface, South Country & Lairg type Cheviot		
	Lambs reared (%)		
	70%	85%	100%
Ewe hoggs wintered	Away	Away	Away
Lamb crops per ewe (avg)	4	4	4
Ram flock life (seasons)	3	3	3
	/100 ewes tupped		
Rams (no.)	3	3	3
Lamb numbers:			
marked	73	88	103
sold/retained	70	85	100
sold: finished lambs	0	0	0
store lambs	44	59	74
flock replacement	26	26	26
Ewe numbers:			
draft/cast	14	15	16
mortalities	12	11	10
Wool sales (kg)	160	160	160
Concentrate feeding (kg)	1,800	1,900	2,000
Hay reserve (/annum) (kg)	2,000	2,000	2,000

Basis of data:

1. Lambs are assumed sold at or by the autumn sales 2025 (estimated price).
2. Lambing percentage reflects the range of performance found; lamb mortality may be greater depending on the location.
3. Mortality in ewe hoggs is assumed to be 3%.
4. Ewe concentrate feeding – 18% CP, ideally a balanced compound with feeding of ewes selected on the basis of scanning results. Assumes self-feed blocks are used on less accessible hills although expensive per unit of energy, ME range 8.5 to 12 MJ/kg DM, total block intake can range from 25-100 blocks/100 ewes.
5. Higher performance can result from better winter nutrition and provision of improved summer grazing for selected ewes, particularly those nursing twins.
6. Grazing is not charged.
7. Hay bought in.
8. Reflects hill farms based in north and west of Scotland.

Hard Hill

GROSS MARGIN DATA

			Lambs reared (%)		
			70%	85%	100%
OUTPUT			£/100 ewes tupp'd		
Store Lambs	44 @	£90	3,960	-	-
	59 @	£90	-	5,310	-
	74 @	£90	-	-	6,660
Draft/cast ewes:	14 @	£110	1,540	-	-
	15 @	£110	-	1,650	-
	16 @	£110	-	-	1,760
Wool sales 160kg @ £0.36/kg			58	58	58
			5,558	7,018	8,478
Less:	ram replacement (net)		600	600	600
			<u>4,958</u>	<u>6,418</u>	<u>7,878</u>
VARIABLE COSTS					
Sheep feed @ £310/t			558	589	620
Away wintering ewe hogs at £25/head (inc. haulage)			650	650	650
Vet, medicines & dips			548	558	568
Commission, levies, haulage, shearing, scanning & tags			778	916	1,054
			<u>2,534</u>	<u>2,713</u>	<u>2,892</u>
Gross margin before forage			<u>2,424</u>	<u>3,705</u>	<u>4,986</u>
Forage variable costs: hay @ £150/tonne			300	300	300
Total Variable Costs			<u>2,834</u>	<u>3,013</u>	<u>3,192</u>
GROSS MARGIN			<u>2,124</u>	<u>3,405</u>	<u>4,686</u>

Sensitivity-Change ±

£10/hd in all lamb sales	440
£10/hd in draft ewe price	140
£50/tonne in concentrate price	90
3% in lambing rearing rate	119

Change in Gross Margin/100 ewes (£)

440	590	740
140	150	160
90	95	100
119	159	200

Moderate Hill

PHYSICAL DATA

Breeds	Blackface, South Country & Lairg type Cheviot		
	Lambs reared (%)		
	80%	90%	100%
Ewe hoggs wintered	Away	Away	Away
Lamb crops per ewe (avg)	4	4	4
Ram flock life (seasons)	3	3	3
	/100 ewes tupped		
Rams (no.)	3	3	3
Lamb numbers:			
marked	83	93	103
sold/retained	80	90	100
sold: finished lambs	0	10	15
store lambs	54	54	59
flock replacement	26	26	26
Ewe numbers:			
draft/cast	14	14	16
mortalities	12	12	10
Wool sales (kg)	160	160	160
Concentrate feeding (kg)	1,800	1,900	2,000
Hay reserve (/annum) (kg)	3,000	3,000	3,000

Basis of data:

1. Lambs are assumed sold at or by the autumn sales 2025 (estimated price).
2. Lambing percentage reflects the range of performance found.
3. Mortality in ewe hoggs is assumed to be 3%.
4. Ewe concentrate feeding – 18% CP, ideally a balanced compound with feeding of ewes selected on the basis of scanning results. Assumes self-feed blocks are used on less accessible hills although expensive per unit of energy, ME range 8.5 to 12 MJ/kg DM, total block intake can range from 25-100 blocks/100 ewes.
5. Higher performance can result from better winter nutrition and provision of improved summer grazing for selected ewes, particularly those nursing twins.
6. Grazing is not charged.
7. Reflects hill farms based in Central Scotland

Moderate Hill

GROSS MARGIN DATA

OUTPUT	Lambs reared (%)		
	80%	90%	100%
	£/100 ewes tuppied		
Finished lambs: 10 @ £111	-	1,110	-
15 @ £111	-	-	1,665
Store lambs: 54 @ £90	4,860	4,860	-
59 @ £90	-	-	5,310
Draft/cast ewes: 14 @ £120	1,680	1,680	-
16 @ £120	-	-	1,920
Wool sales 160kg @ £0.36/kg	58	58	58
	6,598	7,708	8,953
Less: ram replacement (net)	600	600	600
	<u>5,998</u>	<u>7,108</u>	<u>8,353</u>
VARIABLE COSTS			
Sheep feed @ £310/t	558	589	620
Away wintering ewe hoggs at £25/head (inc. haulage)	650	650	650
Vet, medicines & dips	548	558	568
Commission, levies, haulage, shearing, scanning & tags	870	981	1,097
	<u>2,626</u>	<u>2,778</u>	<u>2,935</u>
Gross margin before forage	<u>3,372</u>	<u>4,330</u>	<u>5,418</u>
Forage variable costs:			
0.6 ha hay @ £384/ha	230	230	230
Total Variable Costs	<u>2,856</u>	<u>3,008</u>	<u>3,165</u>
GROSS MARGIN	<u>3,142</u>	<u>4,100</u>	<u>5,188</u>

Sensitivity-Change ±	Change in Gross Margin/100 ewes (£)		
£10/hd in all lamb sales	540	640	665
£10/hd in draft ewe price	140	140	160
£50/tonne in concentrate price	90	95	100
3% in lambing rearing rate	146	179	209

Improved Hill

PHYSICAL DATA

Breeds	Hill breeds inc Blackface hill type, NCC		
Lambing period	Assumed to commence 2nd week April		
	Lambs reared (%)		
	110%	120%	130%
	Home	Home	Home
Ewe hoggs wintered			
Lamb crops per ewe	4	4	4
Ram flock life (seasons)	3	3	3
	/100 ewes tupped		
Rams (no.)	3	3	3
Lamb numbers:			
marked	113	123	133
sold/retained	110	120	130
sold: ewe lambs	10	20	30
finished lambs	10	20	30
store lambs	62	52	42
flock replacement	28	28	28
Ewe numbers:			
draft/cast	14	15	16
mortalities	10	9	8
Ewe hoggs purchased	0	0	0
Wool sales (kg)	250	250	250
Concentrate feeding (kg)	1,800	1,900	2,000
Silage (ha)	2	2	2
Hay reserve (/annum) (kg)	0	0	0
Bedding straw - 6wk period (kg/day)	80	80	80
Improved permanent pasture assumed (ha)	7.0	7.0	7.0

Basis of data:

1. Estimate of stock prices autumn/early winter 2025.
2. Ewes are first tupped as gimmers.
3. Ewe concentrate feeding – ideally a balanced compound 18% CP.
4. Approximately 14 ewes/hectare on improved pasture (125kg N/ha, see Grassland-Grazing section) assumed alongside hill grazing (not costed) and silage aftermath (70kg N/ha, one cut, see Grassland Silage and Aftermath, Grassland section).
5. Straw bedding based on 80 kg/day for 100 ewes housed over a 6-week lambing period.
6. Silage yield and quality 6t DM/ha; ME 10.5 MJ/kg DM.

Improved Hill

GROSS MARGIN DATA

			Lambs reared (%)		
			110%	120%	130%
			£/100 ewes tupped		
OUTPUT					
Ewe lambs:	10 @	£165	1,650	-	-
	20 @	£165	-	3,300	-
	30 @	£165	-	-	4,950
Finished lambs:	10 @	£119 (36kg lwt)	1,190	-	-
	20 @	£119	-	2,380	-
	30 @	£119	-	-	3,570
Store lambs:	62 @	£104	6,448	-	-
	52 @	£104	-	5,408	-
	42 @	£104	-	-	4,368
Draft/cast ewes:	14 @	£115	1,610	1,610	1,610
Wool sales 250kg @	£0.36/kg		90	90	90
			<u>10,988</u>	<u>12,788</u>	<u>14,588</u>
Less:	ram replacement (net)		600	600	600
			<u>10,388</u>	<u>12,188</u>	<u>13,988</u>
VARIABLE COSTS					
Sheep feed @	£300/t		540	570	600
Vet, medicines & dips			698	708	718
Bedding straw @	£119/t (bought-in)		400	400	400
Commission, levies, haulage, shearing, scanning & tags			1,201	1,344	1,487
			<u>2,839</u>	<u>3,022</u>	<u>3,205</u>
Gross margin before forage			<u>7,549</u>	<u>9,166</u>	<u>10,783</u>
Forage variable costs:					
2 ha silage @	£223/ha		446	446	446
improved permanent pasture @	£202/ha		1,414	1,414	1,414
			<u>1,860</u>	<u>1,860</u>	<u>1,860</u>
Total Variable Costs			<u>4,699</u>	<u>4,882</u>	<u>5,065</u>
GROSS MARGIN			<u>5,689</u>	<u>7,306</u>	<u>8,923</u>
GROSS MARGIN per forage ha			632	812	991
Sensitivity-Change ±			Change in Gross Margin/100 ewes (£)		
10 p/kg lwt in finished lamb price			35	69	104
£5/hd in all lamb sales			410	460	510
£5/hd in cast ewe price			70	70	70
10% lamb rearing rate			929	1,109	1,289

Draft Blackface Ewes

PHYSICAL DATA

Breeds	Draft Blackface to a terminal or crossing sire		
Lambing period	Commencing mid-March		
	Lambs reared (%)		
	130%	140%	150%
Ewe flock life (seasons)	1.5	1.5	1.5
Ram flock life (seasons)	3	3	3
	/100 ewes tupped		
Rams (no.)	2.5	2.5	2.5
Lamb numbers:			
marked	133	143	153
sold/retained	130	140	150
sold:			
store	13	14	15
finished	52	56	60
breeding	65	70	75
Ewe numbers:			
sales	64	64	64
mortalities	3	3	3
purchased	67	67	67
Wool sales (kg)	250	250	250
Concentrate use:			
Ewe concentrate: ME 12.5 MJ/kg, 18% CP (kg)	3,000	3000	3,000
Forage: hay - 12,600 kg and aftermath grazing (ha)	2.5	2.5	2.5
grazing (ha)	7.0	7.0	7.0
Total forage (ha)	<u>9.5</u>	<u>9.5</u>	<u>9.5</u>
Bedding straw (kg/day)	80	80	80

Basis of data:

1. This enterprise often supplies ewe lambs for a crossbred flock enterprise on farm, therefore all ewe lambs might be kept. Estimated breeding stock prices, autumn, help determine the value of this.
2. Estimate of finished and store lamb prices, summer and autumn 2025.
3. Silage yield and quality 6 t DM/ha; ME 10.5 MJ/kg DM.
4. Liveweight of lambs at sale: 36 kg, 32 kg store or sold as ewe lambs for breeding.
5. Straw bedding based on 80 kg/day for 100 ewes housed over a 6-week lambing period.
6. Approximately 14 ewes/hectare on improved pasture (125kg N/ha, see Grassland-Grazing, Grassland section) assumed alongside hill grazing (not costed) and silage aftermath (70kg N/ha, one cut, see Grassland Silage and Aftermath, Grassland section).

Draft Blackface Ewes

GROSS MARGIN DATA

OUTPUT	Lambs reared (%)		
	130%	140%	150%
	£/100 ewes tupped		
Ewe lambs: 65 @ £180	11,700	-	-
70 @ £180	-	12,600	-
75 @ £180	-	-	13,500
Finished lambs: 13 @ £119 (36 kg lwt)	1,547	-	-
14 @ £119 (36 kg lwt)	-	1,666	-
15 @ £119 (36 kg lwt)	-	-	1,785
Store lambs: 52 @ £104	5,408	-	-
56 @ £104	-	5,824	-
60 @ £104	-	-	6,240
Cast ewes: 64 @ £110	7,040	7,040	7,040
Wool sales 250kg @ £0.36/kg	90	90	90
	25,785	27,220	28,655
Less: ewes purchased - 67 @ £120 ram replacement (net)	8,040	8,040	8,040
	667	667	667
	17,078	18,513	19,948
VARIABLE COSTS			
Ewe concentrate @ £300/t	900	900	900
Vet, medicines & dips	742	753	763
Bedding straw @ £119/t (bought-in)	400	400	400
Commission, levies, haulage, shearing, scanning & tags	2,197	2,294	2,395
	4,239	4,347	4,458
Gross margin before forage	12,839	14,166	15,490
Forage variable costs:			
silage @ £223/ha	558	558	558
grazing @ £202/ha	1,414	1,414	1,414
Total Variable Costs	6,211	6,319	6,430
GROSS MARGIN	10,867	12,194	13,518
GROSS MARGIN per forage ha	1,144	1,284	1,423

Sensitivity-Change ±

Change in Gross Margin/100 ewes (£)

£5/hd in store lamb price	260	280	300
£5/hd in breeding stock value	325	350	375
£5/hd in cast ewe price	320	320	320
£5/hd in ewe purchase price	335	335	335
10% lamb rearing rate	1,866	2,009	2,153

Crossbred Ewes

PHYSICAL DATA

Breeds	Large crossbred (75-85kg) e.g. Scotch Mule, Mule-cross		
Breed of ram	Terminal Sire		
Lambing period	Commencing early April		
	Lambs reared (%)		
Lambing period	140%	160%	180%
Lamb crops per ewe (avg)	4.5	4.5	4.5
Ram flock life (seasons)	3	3	3
	/100 ewes tupped		
Rams (no.)	2.5	2.5	2.5
Lamb numbers:			
marked	142	162	182
sold/retained	140	160	180
sold: finished lambs	120	140	160
store lambs	20	20	20
Ewe numbers:			
culls	17	17	17
mortalities	5	5	5
gimmers purchased	25	25	25
Wool sales - ewes, rams & hoggs (kg)	270	270	270
Ewe concentrate: ME 12.5 MJ/kg DM, 18% CP (kg)	4,500	4,500	4,500
Forage: improved grazing (ha)	7.0	7.0	7.0
silage (ha)	2	2	2
Total forage (ha)	<u>9</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>9</u>
Bedding straw (kg/day)	<u>80</u>	<u>80</u>	<u>80</u>

Basis of data:

1. Estimates of gimmer, finished and store lamb and cast ewe prices, autumn 2025. Finished lambs at 42 kg, store 34 kg.
2. Bedding straw based on 80 kg/day for 100 ewes housed over a 6-week lambing period. This can be deducted if no housing required.
3. Modern rams are capable of running at 80/100:1 in lowland flocks, stocked tightly.
4. Approximately 14 ewes/hectare on improved pasture (125kg N/ha, see Grassland-Grazing, Grassland section) assumed alongside hill grazing (not costed) and silage aftermath (70kg N/ha, one cut, see Grassland Silage and Aftermath, Grassland section).
5. Silage yield and quality 6 t DM/ha; ME 10.5 MJ/kg DM.
6. Concentrate feeding will vary; systems with higher silage quality and better pasture utilisation will use less concentrates.

Crossbred Ewes

GROSS MARGIN DATA

OUTPUT

	Lambs reared (%)		
	140%	160%	180%
	£/100 ewes tupped		
Finished lambs: 120 @ £139 (42kg lwt)	16,680	-	-
140 @ £139	-	19,460	-
160 @ £139	-	-	22,240
Store lambs: 20 @ £116	2,320	-	-
20 @ £116	-	2,320	-
20 @ £116	-	-	2,320
Cast ewes: 17 @ £130	2,210	2,210	2,210
Wool sales 270kg @ £0.49/kg	132	132	132
	21,342	24,122	26,902
Less: gimmers purchased - 25 @ £220	5,500	5,500	5,500
ram replacement (net)	667	667	667
	15,175	17,955	20,735
VARIABLE COSTS			
Ewe concentrate @ £300/t	1,350	1,350	1,350
Vet, medicines & dips	835	845	855
Bedding straw @ £119/t (bought-in)	400	400	400
Commission, levies, haulage, shearing, scanning & tags	1,996	2,220	2,443
	4,581	4,815	5,048
Gross margin before forage	10,594	13,140	15,687
Forage variable costs:			
silage @ £223/ha	446	446	446
grazing @ £202/ha	1,414	1,414	1,414
Total Variable Costs	6,441	6,675	6,908
GROSS MARGIN	8,734	11,280	13,827
GROSS MARGIN per forage ha	970	1,253	1,536

Sensitivity-Change ±

Change in Gross Margin/100 ewes (£)

£5/hd in all lamb sales	700	800	900
£5/hd in cast ewe price	85	85	85
£5/hd in gimmer price	125	125	125
10% lamb rearing rate	1,900	2,178	2,456
30% change in stocking rate	424	424	424

Pure Maternal Flock

PHYSICAL DATA

Breeds Mid-sized (60-70kg) e.g. Lleyn, Romney, Aberfield, Easycare
 Lambing period March - April

	Lambs reared (%)		
	140%	160%	180%
Lamb crops per ewe	4.5	4.5	4.5
Ram flock life (seasons)	3	3	3
	/100 ewes tupped		
Rams (no.)	2.5	2.5	2.5
Lamb numbers:			
marked	142	162	182
sold/retained	140	160	180
sales:			
ewe lambs	25	35	45
finished lambs	74	82	90
store lambs	16	18	20
flock replacements	25	25	25
Ewe numbers:			
culls	18	18	18
mortalities	4	4	4
gimmers purchased	-	-	-
Wool sales (kg)	270	270	270
Ewe concentrate: ME 12.5 MJ/kg, 18%CP (kg)	1,700	1,700	1,700
Forage: grazing (ha)	7.0	7.0	7.0
silage (ha)	2.0	2.0	2.0
Total forage (ha)	9	9	9
Bedding straw (kg/day)	80	80	80

Basis of data:

1. Estimate of ewe lamb, finished and store lamb prices, cast ewe prices, summer and autumn 2025.
2. Finished lambs liveweight at sale, 38 kg, store lambs 32 kg.
3. Bedding straw based on 80 kg/day housed over a 6-week period. This can be deducted if no housing required.
4. Modern rams can run at 80/100:1 in lowland flocks, stocked tightly.
5. Approximately 14 ewes/hectare on improved pasture (125kg N/ha, see Grassland-Grazing, Grassland section) assumed alongside hill grazing (not costed) and silage aftermath (70kg N/ha, one cut, see Grassland Silage and Aftermath, Grassland section).
6. Silage yield and quality 6 t DM/ha; ME 10.5 MJ/kg DM.
7. Concentrate feeding will vary; systems with higher silage quality and better pasture utilisation will use less concentrates.

Pure Maternal Flock

GROSS MARGIN DATA

OUTPUT	Lambs reared (%)		
	140%	160%	180%
	£/100 ewes tupped		
Ewe lambs: 25 @ £160	4,000	-	-
35 @ £160	-	5,600	-
45 @ £160	-	-	7,200
Finished lambs: 74 @ £124 (38kg lwt)	9,176	-	-
82 @ £124	-	10,168	-
90 @ £124	-	-	11,160
Store lambs: 16 @ £118	1,888	-	-
18 @ £118	-	2,124	-
20 @ £118	-	-	2,360
Draft/cast ewes: 18 @ £160	2,880	2,880	2,880
Wool sales 270kg @ £0.49/kg	132	132	132
(add £290/100 ewes for Romney wool)	18,076	20,904	23,732
Less: ram replacement (net)	667	667	667
	<u>17,409</u>	<u>20,237</u>	<u>23,065</u>
VARIABLE COSTS			
Barley, protein & minerals @ £300/t	510	510	510
Vet, medicines & dips	940	952	963
Bedding straw @ £119/t (bought-in)	400	400	400
Commission, levies, haulage, shearing, scanning & tags	1,653	1,859	2,065
	<u>3,503</u>	<u>3,721</u>	<u>3,938</u>
Gross margin before forage	<u>13,906</u>	<u>16,516</u>	<u>19,127</u>
Forage variable costs:			
silage @ £223/ha	446	446	446
grazing @ £202/ha	1,414	1,414	1,414
	<u>1,860</u>	<u>1,860</u>	<u>1,860</u>
Total Variable Costs	<u>5,363</u>	<u>5,581</u>	<u>5,798</u>
GROSS MARGIN	<u>12,046</u>	<u>14,656</u>	<u>17,267</u>
GROSS MARGIN per forage ha	1,338	1,628	1,919

Sensitivity-Change ±

Change in Gross Margin/100 ewes (£)

£5/hd in all lamb sales	575	675	775
£5/hd in cast ewe price	90	90	90
10% lamb rearing rate	1506	1789	2072
30% change in stocking rate	424	424	424

Early Finished Lamb Production

PHYSICAL DATA

Breeds	Suffolk/Continental cross ewe to terminal sire		
Lambing period	Mid-December to end January		
	Lambs reared (%)		
	140%	160%	180%
Lamb crops per ewe (avg)	5	5	5
Ram flock life (seasons)	3	3	3
	/100 ewes tupped		
Rams (no.)	2.5	2.5	2.5
Lamb numbers:			
marked	143	163	183
sold finished	140	160	180
Lamb liveweight at slaughter (kg)	40	40	40
Lamb deadweight at slaughter (kg)	19	19	19
Ewe numbers:			
culls	18	18	18
mortalities	4	4	4
gimmers purchased	26	26	26
Wool sales - ewes, rams & hogs (kg)	270	270	270
Concentrate use:			
ewe concentrate: ME 12.5 MJ/kg, 18% CP (kg)	5,000	6,000	7,000
lamb concentrate (kg)	4,000	5,000	6,000
Total concentrate (kg)	<u>9,000</u>	<u>11,000</u>	<u>13,000</u>
Forage: silage (ha)	2.4	2.4	2.4
grazing (ha)	5.6	5.6	5.6
Total forage (ha)	<u>8.0</u>	<u>8.0</u>	<u>8.0</u>
Bedding straw (kg/day)	80	80	80

Basis of data:

1. Breeding stock prices, autumn 2025.
2. Finished lamb prices, May-June average.
3. Bedding straw based on 80 kg/day for 100 ewes housed over a 12-week housing period.
4. Modern rams are capable of running at 80/100:1 in lowland flocks, stocked tightly.
5. Ewes housed over winter. Lambs creep fed at grass
6. Approximately 18 ewes/hectare on improved pasture (125kg N/ha, see Grassland-Grazing, Grassland section) assumed alongside silage aftermath (70kg N/ha, one cut, see Grassland Silage and Aftermath, Grassland section).

Early Finished Lamb Production

GROSS MARGIN DATA

	Lambs reared (%)		
	140%	160%	180%
OUTPUT	£/100 ewes tupped		
Finished lambs 140 @ £146 (40 kg lwt)	20,440	-	-
160 @ £146	-	23,360	-
180 @ £146	-	-	26,280
Cast ewes: 18 @ £135	2,430	2,430	2,430
Wool sales 270kg @ £0.49/kg	132	132	132
	<u>23,002</u>	<u>25,922</u>	<u>28,842</u>
Less: gimmers purchased - 26 @ £220	5,720	5,720	5,720
ram replacement (net)	667	667	667
	<u>16,615</u>	<u>19,535</u>	<u>22,455</u>
VARIABLE COSTS			
Barley, protein & minerals @ £300/t	1,500	1,800	2,100
Lamb concentrate @ £305/t	1,220	1,525	1,830
Vet, medicines & dips	716	717	718
Bedding straw @ £119/t (home-grown)	800	800	800
Commission, levies, haulage, shearing, scanning & tags	2,100	2,331	2,559
	<u>6,336</u>	<u>7,173</u>	<u>8,007</u>
Gross margin before forage	<u>10,279</u>	<u>12,362</u>	<u>14,448</u>
Forage variable costs:			
silage @ £223/ha	535	535	535
grazing @ £202/ha	1,131	1,131	1,131
Total Variable Costs	<u>8,002</u>	<u>8,839</u>	<u>9,673</u>
GROSS MARGIN	<u>8,613</u>	<u>10,696</u>	<u>12,782</u>
GROSS MARGIN per forage ha	1,077	1,337	1,598
Sensitivity-Change ±	Change in Gross Margin/100 ewes (£)		
10 p/kg lwt in finished lamb price	538	614	691
£5/hd in cast ewe price	90	90	90
£5/hd in gimmer price	130	130	130
£10/tonne concentrate price	90	110	130
10% lamb rearing rate	2,044	2,336	2,628

Low Cost System

PHYSICAL DATA

Breeds	Mid-sized (60-70 kg) Maternal bred ewe		
Lambing period	late April/May		
	Lambs reared (%)		
	140%	150%	160%
Lamb crops per ewe	4.5	4.5	4.5
Ram flock life (seasons)	3	3	3
	/100 ewes tupped		
Rams (no.)	2.0	2.0	2.0
Lamb numbers:			
marked	144	154	164
sold/retained	140	150	160
sales:			
ewe lambs	10	20	30
finished lambs	68	68	68
store lambs	40	40	40
Ewe numbers:			
culls	18	18	18
mortalities	4	4	4
Wool sales (kg)	270	270	270
Concentrate use:			
lamb finishing supplement (kg)	500	500	500
Forage: grazing (ha)	7.0	7.0	7.0
silage aftermath (ha)	1.7	1.7	1.7
Total forage (ha)	<u>8.7</u>	<u>8.7</u>	<u>8.7</u>

Basis of data:

1. Breeding stock price estimates, autumn 2025.
2. Estimate of finished and store lamb prices, autumn 2025.
3. Lambs sold finished October/November, store September/October.
4. Wool shedding breeds can reduce costs further.
5. Liveweight of lambs at sale: 38 kg.
6. Modern rams can run at 80/100:1 in lowland flocks, stocked tightly.
7. Minimal targeted late pregnancy feeding to triplet-bearing ewes, with some feed in reserve for extreme weather. Hoggs should be trained to eat concentrates.
8. Approximately 14 ewes/ha on improved pasture (125kg N/ha, see Grassland-Grazing, Grassland section) assumed alongside silage aftermath (70kg N/ha, one cut, see Grassland Silage and Aftermath, Grassland section).

Low Cost System

GROSS MARGIN DATA

		Lambs reared (%)		
		140%	150%	160%
		£/100 ewes tugged		
OUTPUT				
Ewe lambs	10 @ £160	1,600	-	-
	20 @ £160	-	3,200	-
	30 @ £160	-	-	4,800
Finished lambs:	68 @ £124 (38kg lwt)	8,432	-	-
	68 @ £124	-	8,432	-
	68 @ £124	-	-	8,432
Store lambs:	40 @ £102	4,080	-	-
	40 @ £102	-	4,080	-
	40 @ £102	-	-	4,080
Draft/cast ewes:	18 @ £130	2,340	2,340	2,340
Wool sales 270kg @ £0.35/kg		-	-	-
		16,452	18,052	19,652
Less: ram replacement (net)		533	533	533
		15,919	17,519	19,119
VARIABLE COSTS				
Supplementary feed @ £305/t		153	153	153
Vet, medicines & dips		561	571	581
Commission, levies, haulage, scanning & tags		1,493	1,597	1,702
		2,207	2,321	2,436
Gross margin before forage		13,712	15,198	16,683
Forage variable costs:				
silage @ £223/ha		379	379	379
grazing @ £202/ha		1,414	1,414	1,414
		1,793	1,793	1,793
Total Variable Costs		4,000	4,114	4,229
GROSS MARGIN		11,919	13,405	14,890
GROSS MARGIN per forage ha		1,370	1,541	1,712
Sensitivity-Change ±		Change in Gross Margin/100 ewes (£)		
10 p/kg lwt in finished lamb price		248	248	248
£5/hd in all lamb sales		590	640	690
£5/hd in cast ewe price		90	90	90
10% lamb rearing rate		1411	1571	1731
30% change in stocking rate		538	538	538

Gimmering

PHYSICAL DATA

Breeds

System

Ewe lambs purchased in autumn, wintered on swedes and silage, grazed tightly in summer and sold as gimmers in autumn

	/100 sheep
Mortalities (no.)	2
Wool sales (kg)	270
Concentrate use:	
Barley (kg)	0
Forage: silage (ha)	1.5
swedes (ha)	2.5
grazing (ha)	5.0
Total forage (ha)	<u>9.0</u>

Basis of data:

1. Ewe lamb price, autumn 2025.
2. Estimate of gimmer price, autumn 2026.
3. Silage yield and quality 6 t DM/ha; ME 10.5 MJ/kg DM.
4. Silage and aftermath grazing.
5. Yield of swedes 75 t/ha. See Forage Crops section for swede production costs.
6. Opportunity to rear gimmers on a contract basis or mate the ewe lambs and keep or sell progeny
7. Approximately 20 ewes/ha on improved pasture (125kg N/ha, see Grassland-Grazing, Grassland section) assumed alongside silage aftermath (70kg N/ha, one cut, see Grassland Silage and Aftermath, Grassland section).

Gimmering

GROSS MARGIN DATA

	£/100 sheep
OUTPUT	
Crossbred gimmers: 98 @ £250	24,500
Wool sales 270kg @ £0.49/kg	<u>132</u>
	24,632
<i>Less:</i> Crossbred ewe lambs purchased - 100 @ £180	<u>18,000</u>
	<u>6,632</u>
VARIABLE COSTS	
Concentrates - barley & minerals @ £305/t	-
Vet, medicines & dips	384
Commission, levies, haulage, shearing, scanning & tags	<u>1,903</u>
	<u>2,287</u>
Gross margin before forage	<u>4,345</u>
Forage variable costs:	
silage @ £223/ha	335
swedes @ £171/ha	428
grazing @ £202/ha	<u>1,010</u>
Total Variable Costs	<u>4,060</u>
GROSS MARGIN	<u>2,572</u>
GROSS MARGIN per forage ha	286

Sensitivity-Change ±	Change in Gross Margin/100 sheep (£)
£5/hd in sale price	490

Short Keep Lambs - Winter Finishing on Rape

PHYSICAL DATA

System	Store lambs purchased in September/October, sold finished November/December	
Grazing period: range, low to high		
stocking period (days)		45-75
average (days)		55
Stocking rate: range (no./ha)		40-60
average (no./ha)		50
Liveweight at start (kg)		27
Liveweight at slaughter (kg)		42
Deadweight at slaughter (kg)		19
		/100 lambs
Mortalities (no.)		2
Area of rape (ha)		2
Area of grass 'run-back' (ha)		0.6
Concentrates (cereal) fed (t)		1

Basis of data:

1. Estimate of store lamb price, autumn 2025.
2. Estimate of finished lamb/hogg price, November/December 2025.
3. Performance from lambs grazing rape can vary greatly between years. The requirement for supplementary concentrates is also very variable from year to year, and area to area. Cereal supplementation will be more necessary in higher rainfall areas, and it may be difficult to finish lambs in very high rainfall areas. Small lambs under 25 kg liveweight fail to perform well on rape and should be finished inside. A dry run back area with suitable forage and water should be provided. See Forage Crops section for forage rape production costs.
4. Grazed on pasture without N fertiliser see Grassland-Grazing, Grassland section.

Short Keep Lambs - Winter Finishing on Rape

GROSS MARGIN DATA

OUTPUT	£/100 lambs
Finished lambs: 98 @ £143 (42 kg lwt)	14,014
Less: Store lambs purchased - 100 @ £96	<u>9,600</u>
	<u>4,414</u>
VARIABLE COSTS	
Concentrates - barley & minerals @ £305/t	305
Vet & medicines	192
Commission, levies, haulage, shearing, scanning & tags	<u>1,476</u>
	<u>1,973</u>
Gross margin before forage	<u>2,441</u>
Forage variable costs:	
forage rape @ £172/ha	<u>344</u>
Total Variable Costs	<u>2,317</u>
GROSS MARGIN	<u>2,097</u>
GROSS MARGIN per forage ha	807

Sensitivity-Change ±	Change in Gross Margin/100 lambs (£)
£5/hd in lamb sale price	490

Short Keep Lambs - Indoor Finishing on Concentrates

PHYSICAL DATA

System	Store lambs housed in December, sold finished February
Liveweight at housing (kg)	28
Liveweight at slaughter (kg)	36
Deadweight at slaughter (kg)	16.5
Food conversion efficiency (kg feed/kg lwt gain)	range 7-10
Finishing period (days)	60
Daily liveweight gain (g)	100-150
	/100 lambs
Mortalities (no.)	3
Concentrates: whole barley (kg)	4,020
sugar beet pulp (kg)	1,610
protein supplement (46% CP) (kg)	805
salt/minerals/vitamins (kg)	165
Total mix (kg)	<u>6,600</u>
Silage feeding (kg freshweight)	7,900
Bedding straw (housed period) (kg/day)	80

Basis of data:

1. Estimate of store lamb price, autumn 2025.
2. Estimate of finished lamb price, February 2026.
3. Suitable for late-born smaller lambs, non-standard types, any lambs under 25 kg liveweight and lambs that have failed to finish outside e.g. ram lambs, thin lambs.
4. Profitability depends on rising lamb prices rather than food conversion efficiency.
5. Care should be taken when introducing housed lambs to concentrate feeding where starchy cereals (e.g., barley) are used. Acidosis can often result, causing digestive upsets and in some cases, mortality. Typical feed conversion rate is 8.25 kg concentrate to produce 1 kg lwt (including concentrate fed during introductory period), for Blackface and other hill breeds. Crossbred lambs convert at 7-7.5 kg when gaining from 30-35 kg to 40-45 kg. Minerals will contain no Mg and low P.

Short Keep Lambs - Indoor Finishing on Concentrates

GROSS MARGIN DATA

OUTPUT	£/100 lambs
Finished lambs: 97 @ £143 (36 kg lwt)	13,871
Less: Store lambs purchased - 100 @ £110	11,000
	<hr/>
	2,871
VARIABLE COSTS	
Concentrates homemix @ £294/t	1,940
Vet & medicines	192
Bedding straw @ £119/t (bought-in)	400
Commission, levies, haulage, shearing, scanning & tags	1,464
	<hr/>
	3,996
Gross margin before forage	- 1,125
Forage variable costs:	
silage @ £223/ha	88
Total Variable Costs	<hr/>
	4,084
GROSS MARGIN	<hr/>
	- 1,213

Sensitivity-Change ±	Change in Gross Margin/100 lambs (£)
10 p/kg lwt in finished lamb price	363
£5/hd in store lamb purchase price	500
£10/t in concentrate price	66
10 days in finishing period - straw, feed and silage	425

Long Keep Lambs - Finishing on Swedes

PHYSICAL DATA

System	Store lambs purchased in September/October, run over stubbles and grassland to mid- December, folded on swedes to end March/ mid-April
Liveweight at start (kg)	27
Liveweight at slaughter (kg)	44
Deadweight at slaughter (kg)	21
Finishing period (days)	180
	/100 lambs
Mortalities (no.)	4
Concentrates: barley and minerals (kg)	1,750
Forage: silage (ha)	0.50
swedes (ha)	1.40
Total forage area (ha)	<hr/> <u>1.90</u>

Basis of data:

1. Estimate of store lamb price, autumn 2025.
2. Estimate of finished hogg price, spring 2026.
3. Silage yield and quality 6 t DM/ha; ME 10.5 MJ/kg DM.
4. Yield of Swedes - 75 t/ha. See Forage Crops section for swede production costs. Use winter hardy varieties of swedes after December. A dry run back area with suitable forage and water should be provided. Supplement with additional protein if swede tops lost by frost and no grassy runback available. Provide access to dry lying area.
5. Grazing cost not included.

Long Keep Lambs - Finishing on Swedes

GROSS MARGIN DATA

OUTPUT	£/100 lambs
Finished lambs: 96 @ £147 (44 kg lwt)	14,112
Less: Store lambs purchased - 100 @ £96	9,600
	<hr/>
	4,512
VARIABLE COSTS	
Concentrates @ £305/t	534
Vet & medicines	408
Commission, levies, haulage, shearing, scanning & tags	1,467
	<hr/>
	2,409
	<hr/>
Gross margin before forage	2,103
Forage variable costs:	
silage @ £223/ha	112
swedes @ £171/ha	239
grazing @ £202/ha	-
	<hr/>
Total Variable Costs	2,760
	<hr/>
GROSS MARGIN	1,752

Sensitivity-Change ±	Change in Gross Margin/100 lambs (£)
£5/hd in lamb sale price	480
£5/hd in store purchase price	500