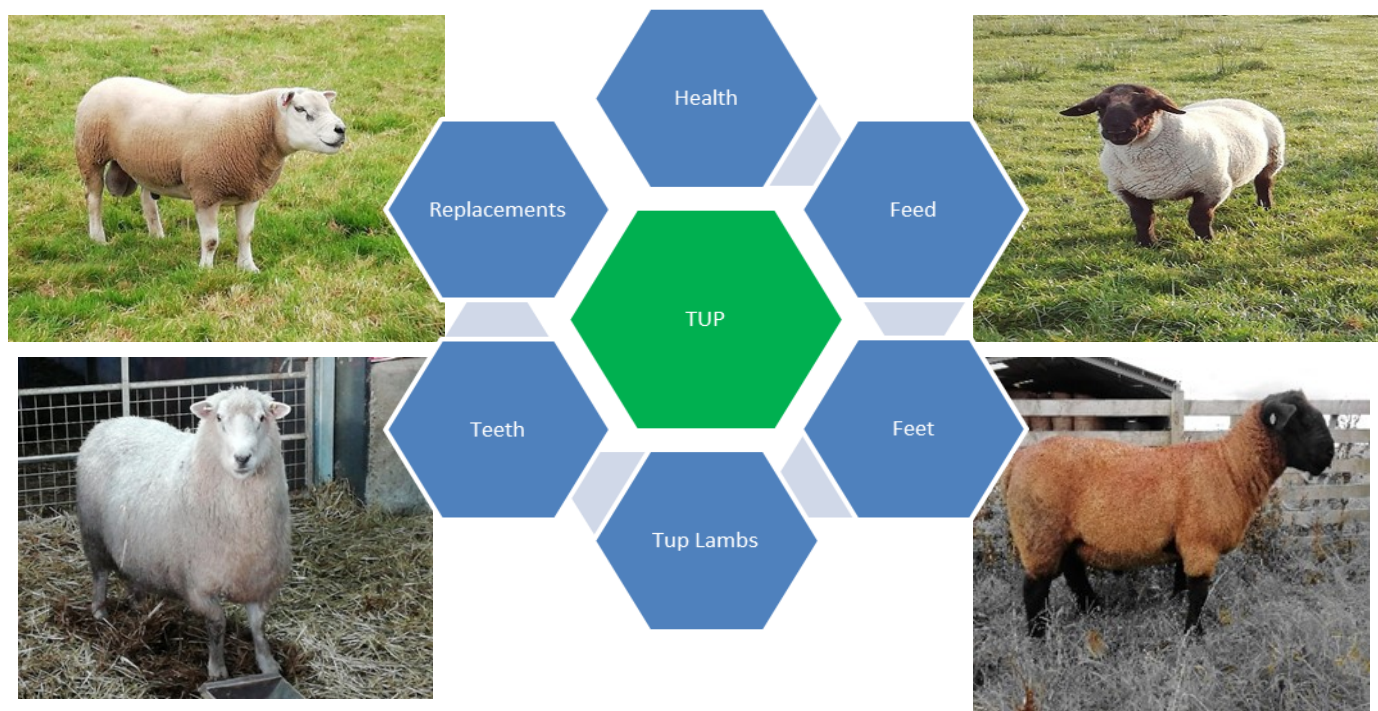


Guidance Note : Prepare for Topping – A Recipe for Success

When preparing for topping there are many aspects to try and get right !



The Tup

Feed

- *If feeding your tup prior to tugging, ensure a specialist tup compound is fed
- *Feed to make him fit, not fat. Aim for condition score 3.5 – 4 at start of mating
- *Overfat tups are more likely to be lazy and not do their job

Ewe feeds are unsuitable, due to mineral balance which if fed to rams can lead to urinary calculi (Stones or gravel)

Feet

- *Ensure feet are checked well in advance of tugging
- *Any problems must be rectified timeously
- *Regular foot bathing prior to tugging can help keep feet sound

Tup Lambs

- *Be careful with use of tup lambs
- *Avoid leaving with ewes for too long (better with a large number for less time)
- *Ensure lambs are mature enough (5-7months old)

Tup lambs may be more suitable for small groups of later breeding ewes, proving their fertility and genetics until the following year for larger mobs of earlier breeding ewes.

Teeth & Testicles

- *Ensure sound in the mouth
- *Testicles should be firm, equal and move freely
- *The epididymis, located at the bottom of each testicle, should be equal in size and smooth.

Replacements

- *Purchase from good health status flocks
- *Quarantine new tups and aim to purchase 7 weeks prior to use
- *Conduct a Tup MOT

A Tup MOT should ideally be conducted 6 weeks prior to tugging

Health

- *Treat external parasites either by dipping or pour ons
- *Worm and fluke dose prior to tugging
- *Potentially vaccinate for foot diseases if known problem, always consult vet

The Ewe

Flushing

- *Better grass 3 weeks prior to tugging
- *Increases ovulation rate and therefore lambing rates
- *Older ewes will respond better to flushing than young ewes

Overfat ewes have a detrimental effect on fertility

Condition Score

- *Aiming for 3.5 for lowland crofts
- *Aiming for 2.5 for hill ewes
- *Avoid ewes being too fat and also too thin

Health

- *Treat for worm/fluke by dosing prior to tugging
- *vaccination programmes for abortion
- *Vaccination for clostridial diseases.

Vaccines can be used for Toxoplasmosis and Enzootic abortion

Feet

- *Regularly check feet throughout year but especially prior to tugging
- *Consider vaccination for feet diseases in conjunction with your vet
- *Regular foot bathing may also help



TOP TIPS

- Sort Ewes into their tugging groups 10 days prior to tugging
- Using raddle or keel lets you monitor the effectiveness of the tup
- Changing the tup after 16 days can give you extra protection in case a tup is not working properly
- Avoid grazing red clover or eating red clover silage at tugging time as this can effect ewe's fertility. Breeding ewes should avoid eating red clover for 6 weeks before and after tugging