

TRIPLLET LAMBS GAINING 550 GRAMMES PER DAY ON 'EWE-REKA'

Packie Donnelly, from Rathkenny in Co Antrim, is synonymous with the highest standards of pedigree Suffolk sheep breeding in the UK and Ireland. Over the past number of years his sheep have won Breed Titles at Balmoral Show plus a host of Inter Breed Championships at shows the length and breadth of Northern Ireland. In addition, his Donrho flock won the UK Suffolk Sheep Society National Flock Award back in 2012.



Above: Packie Donnelly with Katie Hall and Joe Murphy of Bonanza Calf Nutrition

"There are currently 40 ewes in the flock," Packie confirmed.

"The 2014 lambing season got underway on New Year's Day. My aim is to produce lambs with good, tight skins, which are well shaped and have ample growth potential. I have also invested heavily in new bloodlines, for use within the flock, and make extensive use of AI throughout the breeding season."

Packie scans all of his ewes prior to lambing, which allows him to identify those carrying twins and triplets.

"The bottom line is to ensure that all the newborn lambs get the best possible start," he stressed.

"In order to make this happen I have traditionally put triplet lambs on to a feeding machine, through which they have ad lib access to milk replacer. My replacer lamb milk of choice is 'Ewe-reka' which is manufactured by Bonanza Nutrition.

"The reality is that any ewe, no matter how milky she is, will be pushed to rear two lambs properly, never mind three.

"Up to this year, the machine used on the farm required me to manually mix the milk. However, we are now using a fully automated version, which mixes the milk when required. The secret to using the machine is to put the lambs on it from day one. It is practice on the farm to tube the newborns with colostrum and to have them sucking from the teat within a short number of hours thereafter."

Bonanza Nutrition's Joe Murphy and Katie Hall were recent visitors to the Donnelly farm.

"To help improve lamb health and performance Ewe-reka is now made with ewes milk," Joe explained.

"Ewe milk has long been used to make cheeses such as Roquefort, Manchego and Bleu D' Auvergne and we have taken the byproducts

Below: Packie's wide Rhona with Basil Bailey of Thompsons of Belfast



of sheep's milk cheese production to make a milk replacer as close to mother milk as it can be. Unlike cow's milk this milk will contain antibodies to specific sheep diseases that will help to keep orphan lambs healthy."

He added:

"Ewe-reka is also made with 4 vegetable oils and plant extracts to minimise clostridia bloat and scour in lambs. Orphan lambs are often prone to these problems, as they have not received enough colostrum at birth."

But of course the proof is always in the eating. During the recent visit Joe and Packie weighed a number of the triplet lambs, currently on Ewe-reka.

"The weights confirm that these lambs are currently gaining 550 grams of liveweight per day," Joe commented.

"This is a more than impressive result for lambs that are just one month old!" To put this in context, he added, "many 4 week old calves don't achieve this level of growth" Packie Donnelly also confirmed that he feeds Thompson's Pedigree Sheep Nuts to all his Suffolk ewes, in order to maximise the quality and quantity of the milk they produce.



Shine Lamb is now called..

Ewe-reka!



It's a better idea to feed lambs **Ewe-reka!** because its made with real ewe's milk

LAMB MILK TRIALS



(Above) Texel X Cheviot lambs being fed Ewe-reka cold adlib.

Normally orphan lambs are reared on milk replacer made with dried cow's milk but now farmers have a choice as Ewe-Reka is made with ewe milk.

Sourced from ewes milked to produce Roquefort and Bleu d'Auvergne cheeses in France it is then carefully dried to maximise the digestibility of the protein and to protect the antibodies in the milk. The improved flavour and natural antibodies have been shown in the right formula to improve lamb growth rates.

In trials carried out with the National Animal Research Institute in France (INRA) the inclusion of ewe milk was

compared to standard lamb milk alongside a range of acids, essential oil and colostrum powders and was found to consistently produce better lambs with lower mortality (Table 1).

Easy to mix Ewe-Reka is also made with 4 oils to maximise digestibility and can be fed warm of cold with bottles or tub or machine adlib feeders. It is available in 5kg/10kg tubs or 20kg bags.



(Above) Cheviot lamb killed out at 18.6kgs (€119) at 10 weeks of age which equates to a growth rate of 460g/day

Table 1 Lamb feeding trial 2011

	Lambs with ewes	Control Standard Lamb milk	Standard lamb with essential oils	Standard lamb with colostrum powder	Ewe-reka made with ewe-milk and essential oils
Number	548	55	172	55	56
Mortality rate %	Not recorded	5.2	5.5	>10%	<5%
Birth weight (kg)*	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.63	3.63
ADG d0-d30 (g/d)	272	225	266	209	320

* estimation



Ewe-Reka can be fed in bottles or cold adlib and is suitable for use in Shepherdess and Ewe 2 feeders.

It's also suitable for use in all automatic feeders and a freeflow version is available for use in Britmix feeders.

LAMBS JUMP OVER GATES TO GET EWE-REKA EWE MILK



Lambs on a County Galway farm, reared on Ewe-reka, are achieving daily live weight gains of 350g.

Brendan Donnellan, who runs a flock of 129 Lleyne ewes at Killure, Ahascragh, near Ballinasloe, decided to try Ewe-reka because it is the only product of its kind manufactured with ewe milk. Also, because it can be purchased in 20kg bags, it proved cost effective.

"I'd also heard of other sheep breeders who were getting exceptional results from the product," explained Brendan, who was introduced to Shine Lamb by Michael Stapleton Farm Supplies.

After just one season, Ewe-reka has become an integral part of his business. The flock at Killure had a scanning percentage of 202%, all in lamb to Brendan's three registered Lleyne rams.

Lambing starts on February 10th with triplets and quads housed for lambing. Newborn lambs are given two feeds of artificial colostrum and Ewe-reka and, thereafter, Ewe-reka only, mixed at a rate of 250g/litre. Brendan feeds his lambs an average of 1 litre per lamb/day.

From day 21, lambs are offered ration, clean fresh water and a small amount of hay.

"The lambs like Ewe-reka so much, one or two will jump sheep hurdles to try to get fed faster," says Brendan.

All male lambs are sold to the factory from a select few that are sold as ram lambs for breeding. Brendan's pet lambs are now out-performing multiples reared on ewes. This year he reared 32 lambs

on Ewe-reka and, at 10 weeks, they averaged 28.5kg, equating to a growth rate of 350g/day – excellent performance on a restricted milk feeding system. There are health benefits too - Brendan did not have one case of bloat this year.

Ewe-reka is a by product of the French and Spanish cheesemaking sector, explained Joe Murphy of Bonanza Calf Nutrition.

"French and Spanish farmers milk sheep to produce cheeses such as a Roquefort, Blue D'Auvergne and Manchego and we use the by-

products from this process to produce our lamb milks.

"These by-products are high in ewe milk protein, especially the proteins that carry antibodies to disease. It is these proteins, along with a special blend of plants extracts, that give Ewe-reka its performance advantage over standard product. Lambs also prefer it because the flavour is ewe milk so that why there jumping over gates to get it."



L-R: Brendan Donnellan and Joe Murphy (Bonanza)