

proves a success



Newborn Suffolk cross North Country Mule twins.



If a ewe that gives birth to triplets has enough milk all three lambs are left with her.

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The lamb size this year has been phenomenal and we just don't have a problem with mis-mothering at all.
- Nick Davies



Nick Davies.

has had a considerable impact and Mr Davies said foetal losses have been roughly halved.

However, he believes the improvement in lambing is also due to the better quality of ewes – a direct result of aggressive culling.

All barren ewes are culled, apart from shearlings, which are given 'a second chance'. "We're not beholden by the quota anymore so there's no point in running them round empty for nearly a year," he said. "And they get fat anyway, which reduces their chances of having twins next year."

This year only 40 ewes scanned barren and Mr Davies is certain this is because he has been so strict on barren ewes in previous seasons.

Ewes are also culled for bad feet, low udders, big teats, mastitis and if they prolapse or fail to show a maternal instinct.

"Since I've been here there's been no tolerance on mastitis, feet or bags. We've also had scenarios with ewes that have just refused to rear a lamb and

we get rid of those too." The culling rate is just below 24 per cent but at least 700 North Country Mules are bought in every year meaning

that the flock is slowly creeping above 3,000 head. No homebred lambs are kept as replacements – all are reared for meat except 600



Each of the sheds has an area where all the essentials are on hand, including drugs and hot water.

Suffolk cross ewe lambs sold for breeding. The replacements are brought from the same two farms every year to maintain 'continuity', particularly in terms of disease status.

The 700 replacements are un-lambd shearlings. They are quarantined for one month and vaccinated for toxoplasmosis and enzootic abortion, wormed, dipped and foot bathed 'before they ever

see one of our fields'. After that each ewe is only ever wormed once a year. "The aim this year is to sell a minimum of 1.7 lambs per ewe," said Mr Davies. "If we can get 1.7-1.75 we'll be happy."



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