



LAMBING

a Fulfilling EMS Experience

On a recent KT Sheep Walk in the West of Ireland, which took place on a large commercial farm at lambing time, a discussion arose about the benefits of having student vets on the farm during the busy lambing season.

The farmer brought the group to a small outhouse where 11 lambs were happily skipping about and nibbling at hay. He turned to the group and said “there’s 11 lambs that wouldn’t be here if we hadn’t any student vets for lambing” The students had spent time, which the farmer had not had himself, coaxing the lambs along during their first 48 hours. The result was 11, now healthy lambs, who stood every chance of making it to market.

On a busy commercial farm, the lambing season is an incredibly busy, tiring, stressful but rewarding time. A successful lambing season is a culmination of a years hard work and a major indicator of how the farm finances will turn out in any given year. Margins in sheep farming can be tight at the best of times so anything extra, like weak lambs surviving as a result of extra care being given by eager veterinary students is a bonus. This is just one of the benefits of having student vets on farm during busy periods.

The EMS scheme or EXTRA MURAL STUDIES is an essential element of undergraduate veterinary

education. Students must complete on farm placements to gain practical experience in as many aspects of veterinary work as possible. The aim is to learn at the coalface, many aspects of dealing with animals, including the handling, proficiency in routine techniques, and give students first hand experience which will help them to develop as professionals. While such placements are of obvious benefit to the students in terms of hands on experience, they can also be incredibly beneficial to the farmer. Extra hands, ears and eyes never go astray during lambing and can sometimes even make the difference to whether or not time can be taken to have a meal or catch a quick nap during a lull.

It is possible to offer lambing placement to students by contacting UCD Veterinary School directly with all the relevant information about your farm and the placement.

E: vetprogrammes@ucd.ie

T: 01 7166100