

Multi-mineral injection has no effect on weaner growth rates.

A pre-winter jab of a multi-mineral treatment did nothing to boost winter weaner growth rates. That was the finding of a two mob comparison trial by Bruce Allan in 2015.

Bruce has been looking at ways of improving the growth rate of his weaners, particularly over winter. The mob growth rate average over the last five years sits at around 50 grams a day.

“Winter is the hardest time to lift growth rates,” he says.

“There’s significant variation within each mob but there’s definitely an opportunity to improve. What I want to be is closer to 100 grams a day.”

To test the potential of a multi-mineral injection he separated weaners into two equal sized mobs and weighed each to get a mob weight average. One mob was injected before going onto a winter swedes and balage feeding regime. Weighing weaners off the crop produced a growth rate difference which was negligible between the two mobs.

He followed up in 2016 with the same multi-mineral injection but wintered weaners on fodder beet for the first time. Unfortunately the crop yield was on the light side.

“We didn’t end up with as much crop as hoped so it probably affected the growth rate average.”

The negligible increase in daily growth has led Bruce to wonder if the most useful “what next” step might be trying the multi-mineral boost in spring rather than winter, given that winter is the most difficult time to lift growth rates.

At a glance:

Bruce Allan

Velvet production and weaner finishing on 79ha (75ha effective) of flat to easy-rolling hills at Charlton, near Gore.

Stock

300 velvet stags, including 50 R2s

130 mixed-age Red hinds

230 weaners including 125 bought-in autumn hybrids

For info on how to assess if your deer are deficient in trace elements and what to do if they are go to www.deernz.org/trace-elements