



Adoption of strategic management to promote gains in meat lambs of Morada Nova breed

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The zootechnical indexes must be improved in order to maximize results in the production of sheep, among the strategies to improve productivity highlights the use of creep feeding (delivery of private supplemental) to reduce the slaughter age of lambs. Therefore, this study was conducted to evaluate the performance and carcass characteristics of lambs Morada Nova with or without supplementation, slaughtered at different ages. Thirty two lambs were selected at birth and randomly divided into 2 groups. The first received breastfeeding and creep feeding from the and the second received breastfeeding exclusively. All lambs were weaned on average at 105 days of age, on this date the slaughter of eight lambs was performed (four lambs from each group). The others remained confined and fed the same diet, according to the nutritional requirements recommended for a daily gain of 200 g (NRC, 2007). Other animals were slaughtered at three subsequent ages: 133, 161 and 189 days of age with 8 lambs at each slaughter, in a factorial arrangement of 4 x 2. Before slaughter, lambs were fasted for 16 hours of solid and liquid diet, and then weighed to obtain the live weight at slaughter (WS). After slaughter the gastrointestinal tract was removed and measured empty body weight (EBW= WS - gastrointestinal content). After evisceration, carcasses were weighed (hot carcass weight= HCW) for determining yield hot carcass weight (YH= HCW/WS x 100) and transferred to cold room (4° C) where they remained for 24 hours. After this period, the cold carcasses were weighed (cold carcass weight= CCW), calculating the yield of cold or commercial housing (YC= CCW/WS x 100) and biological yield (BY= HCW/EBW x 100). The interaction between the effect of supplementation and age of slaughter was not significant. The weaning weight was greater (P<0.05) for supplemented lambs during suckling, compared to non supplemented (16.1 and 13.3 kg, respectively). Likewise, slaughter weight, weight and yield of hot and cold carcass and real income were also higher (P < 0.05) for supplemented lambs. The age at slaughter, slaughter weight, hot carcass weight and cold increased linearly with age at slaughter (P< 0.05). However, the hot carcass yield (46.3 %), cold carcass yield (43.9 %) and biological yield (55.8 %) were similar in the different ages of slaughter. The slaughter age did not affect the carcass yield and private supplemental (creep feeding) is an excellent alternative to promote incremental gains in beef and Morada Nova lambs.

Keywords: Age slaughter, carcass yield, creep feeding, sheep

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