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Jersey-Holstein crossbred dairy cows

Intensive grazing system increases milk productivity of Holstein and Jersey-Holstein crossbred dairy cows

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Introduction

In Brazil, despite the lack of accurate statistics on the contribution of each type of system in total milk production, it is known that pastures represent the main feed source in most production systems (IBGE, 2010). However, a major concern with respect to this factor is related to the potential environmental impact the degradation of thousands of hectares of these pastures may have.

Improvements in pasture management in the last decades have led to a great advance in animal production systems in the country. Among them are the adoption of cultivated pastures and the improvement of native pastures, leading to increased stocking rates and productivity (Oliveira et al., 2015).

Besides the intensification of pasture management, producers must seek dairy cattle genotypes with better production characteristics. Therefore, there is growing interest in Holstein cross breeding to increase fertility and improve milk production and composition (Xue et al., 2011). Combining good genetics with sustainable grazing systems is essential to improve milk production and preserve the environment. This experiment was designed to examine the effect of different

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grazing systems on the productivity of milk and its components by Holstein and Jersey-Holstein crossbred dairy cows.

Material and Methods

Twelve Holstein and twelve Jersey-Holstein crossbred dairy cows were used in a 2 x 2 factorial arrangement, represented by 2 cattle genotypes (Holstein and Jersey-Holstein) and 2 pasture systems (extensive with low stocking rate - EXT - and intensively managed and irrigated with high stocking rate - IIR). Cows were kept on pastures and received a dietary supplement (concentrate) formulated according to the NRC (2001) in the rate of 1 kg of concentrate per 3 kg of milk produced. The extensive pasture system was composed of two paddocks, 3.0 ha each, containing Brachiaria spp. and Cynodon nlemfuensis Vanderyst, managed as continuous grazing systems, without fertilization. The intensive managed system was irrigated and cultivated with Panicum maximum Jacq cv. Tanzânia and overseeded with Avena byzantina cv. São Carlos and Loliun multifloram Lan. cv. BRS Ponteio, in autumn. The IIR system consisted of two similar 1.6 ha rotational systems, divided in 27 padocks with 600 m² each, intermittently grazed, with a day of occupation and 26 days of rest. The intensive managed pastures were limed and fertilized with superphosphate and potassium chloride to achieve respectively, 20 mg P.dm⁻³ and 4% K in soil CTC - cation exchange capacity. Nitrogen was applied at the rate of 600 kg ha⁻¹year⁻¹.

Three cows (tracers) of each genotype grazed simultaneously in each replicate of area. All grazing systems were submitted to stocking rate adjustments using the "put and take" technique (Mott and Lucas, 1952) and visual evaluation of forage availability.

Milk yield (MY), 3.5% fat corrected milk (FCM), fat (F), protein (P), lactose (L), total solids (TS) and dry defatted extract (DDE), per area per year (kg ha⁻¹year⁻¹) were evaluated. Data were analyzed by the SAS[®] (SAS Institute, 2002) program, using Mixed Procedure.

Intensive grazing system increases milk productivity of Holstein and 270 Jersey-Holstein crossbred dairy cows

Results

Annual average stocking rates were 1.9 and 2.1 animals ha⁻¹ in EXT and 6.6 and 7.9 animals ha-1 in IIR, for Holstein and Jersey-Holstein breeds, respectively. Consequently, the type of grazing system influenced (P<0.0001) productivity of milk and its components (Table 1). The IIR system increased the productivity of milk and its components, independently of the cow genotype used.

Irrigation and intensive management caused an 258% increase in annual production of milk, when compared to the extensively managed system (63,867 vs.17,839 ha⁻¹year⁻¹). The cattle genotypes did not have any influence on productivity of milk and its components, estimated using the average production of each breed (Table 1).

Forage production in irrigated rotational grazing systems tends to be high, and can increase stocking rate and productivity. However, gains in extensive systems, that present low carrying capacity, may be minimal despite the use of better cattle genotypes (Mendonça et al., 2010).

Item ¹	Genotype		Pasture			P Level		
	Holstein	Jersey-Holstein	Extensive	Intensive Irrigated	SEM ²	Pasture	Genotype	Past*Gen
MY	40,095.0	41,611.0	17,839.0	63,867.0	6,461.6	< 0.0001	NS	NS
FCM	36,915.5	38,231.0	16,228.5	58,918.0	6,007.7	< 0.0001	NS	NS
F	1,207.3	1,248.1	525.1	1,930.3	198.9	< 0.0001	NS	NS
Р	1,300.1	1,366.4	584.6	2,081.9	207.3	< 0.0001	NS	NS
L	1,852.3	1,919.1	823.9	2,947.6	300.3	< 0.0001	NS	NS
TS	4,740.2	4,934.4	2,108.1	7,566.6	764.4	< 0.0001	NS	NS
DDE	3,544.8	3,690.9	1,579.9	5,655.8	569.9	< 0.0001	NS	NS

Table1. Effects of two genotypes and grazing systems on the productivity (kg

¹MY: milk yield; FCM: 3.5% fat corrected milk; F: fat; P: protein; L: lactose; TS: total solids; DDE: dry defatted extract; ²standard error of the means; NS: non- significant (P>0.05);

Conclusions

Intensive management of pastures increases the productivity of milk, collaborating to the sustainability of dairy production, especially in small areas.

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