

Intake, digestibility and weight gain of ½ Boer goats fed saltbush hay.

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Abstract

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Resumo:

The objective of this work was to evaluate the effect of adding 8.4, 18.8, 31.2, and 48.3% of saltbush hay, in diets fed to ½ Boer goats, on nutrient intake and digestibility, body weight gain, and feed conversion. Thirty two male goats, with average body weight (BW) of 20.82 ± 1.46 kg were used in a randomized complete block design that lasted for 80 days. Diets were fed at 9:30 and 15:30 h. The animals were housed in individual stalls and their weights were recorded every 15 days after 18 hours of fasting. At day 61, 24 animals were housed in metabolic cages and plastic bags were used for feces collection to estimate ingredient digestibility. The addition of saltbush hay in the diets promoted a quadratic response on DM intake. The minimum and maximum intakes of DM (53.11 and 104.27 g.kg⁻¹, 75) were observed in the diets with 8.4 and 48.3% of saltbush hay, respectively. The total and daily BW gain had a linear behavior, with the highest values of 207.5 kg and 12.42 g.day⁻¹, respectively, for diets with 31.2% of saltbush hay. No significant difference ($P > 0.05$) was observed for feed conversion, averaging 5.77. There was a linear effect on digestibility of DM and CP, where the lowest digestibility was found with 8.4% saltbush hay and 74.9% of spineless cactus for both variables. There was no significant difference in the digestibility of OM, TC, NFC, and NDF, averaging 74.72, 75.45, 93.74, and 50.66%, respectively. Saltbush hay proves to be a very viable alternative to feed goats, especially in semi-arid regions, since its use up to 48.3% increases the digestibility and nutrient intake and promotes BW gain of 140 g.day⁻¹ in ½ Boer goats.