FATTENING PERFORMANCE AND CARCASS TRAITS OF A LOCAL ROMANIAN BREED CROSSED WITH MEAT RAMS

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Introduction

As the sheep population is decreasing continuously and as the lamb meat is facing increasing competition from the other sources of meat, it is very important to increase the efficiency of meat production. Crossbreeding is one efficient way to improve meat production. Studies were conducted on crossing and most of them concluded that crossing may increase the number of lambs and their weaning weight.

Very many meat sheep breeds were developed worldwide, the top ones being the English meat sheep breeds. UK is the country with the largest number of meat sheep in Europe. Breeds such as Suffolk are used to increase the meat production of other sheep breeds. This breed is widely spread in UK and in many other countries worldwide, it is used for meat production, particularly for its high rate of growth and for the exceptional quality of the meat.

OBJECTIVE

The purpose of the paper was to study the fattening performance and carcass traits in F1 hybrid lambs produced by the cross of local Teleorman Black Head (TBH) eves with British Suffolk meat rams comparative with local TBH lambs.

Material and Methods

The researches were conducted in the experimental farm of INCDBNA and they started after lamb weaning. Two experimental groups were formed, with 20 lambs each, the first one with lambs of the local Teleorman Black Head breed, and the second with F1 hybrids (Teleorman Black Head x Suffolk). The lambs were fattened to 40 kg body weight, for 97 days. The two groups were reared within the same conditions of feeding and maintenance. At the age of 180 they had reached an average weight of 42.95±1.05 kg for the hybrid lambs and 39.99±1.31 kg for the local breed lambs. At the end of the experiment 8 lambs from each group were slaughtered in order to determine the slaughter and commercial outputs, the proportion of the different carcass parts, the proportion of butcher parts, the meat to bone ratio (for parts/for entire carcass), specific measurements of the carcass, the chemical composition of the meat including the fatty acids and cholesterol level, separately for each group. The carcasses were cut according to the French method which uses the following parts: leg, loin, rack, shoulder, flank and neck.

Results

Hybrids (1, 2) and TBH (3, 4) lambs carcass

Synthetic data on lambs fattening

Specific carcasses measurements (cm)

Meat to bone ratio

Conclusions

- The fattening period lasted 97 days, when the local TBH lambs started from 17 kg and reached 40 kg, with a total gain of 23 kg; the hybrid lambs started from 18.5 kg and reached 42.95 kg, with a gain of 24.37 kg;
- The average daily weight gain was 6% higher in the hybrid lambs (251 g) than in TBH lambs (237 g);
- The slaughter yield and the commercial yield were higher in the hybrid lambs; the meat to bone ration also was higher in the hybrid lambs;
- The specific carcasses measurements showed that the carcass of the hybrid lambs had higher width, breadth and higher leg parameter than the local lambs, which had higher length, however, than the hybrid lambs.
- No difference in meat quality were determined between the two groups;
- The Suffolk rams transmitted a higher rate of speed to the hybrid lambs, a body conformation closer to that of the meat breeds, with a better dressing, particularly in the areas of high quality meat (leg, rack), a higher slaughter yield and a better meat to bone ratio than the local lambs.