

CONSTRUINDO SABERES, FORMANDO PESSOAS E TRANSFORMANDO A PRODUÇÃO ANIMAL

PALATABILITY INDEX OF DIFFERENT ROUGHAGES FOR SHEEP AND GOATS

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Palatability is related to the animal's acceptance of feed, being defined as the result of the physical and chemical characteristics that evoke appetite. Due to the greater or lower palatability, dietary feed selection may occur, interfering with the intake. The objective of this study was to evaluate the palatability index of different roughages for goats and sheep. Was used six females of each species in the experiment. The animals were housed in individual stalls, with two feeders and a drinking fountain. The experimental diets were: cactus *Nopalea* (*Nopalea cochenillifera* - Salm Dyck) cladodes plus urea plus sugarcane bagasse (NUB), cactus *Opuntia* (*Opuntia stricta* (Haw.) Haw) cladodes plus urea plus sugarcane bagasse (OUB), and corn silage (CS). To determine the Palatability Index (PI), two roughages were provided at one time: test 1 - CS versus NUB; test 2 - CS versus OUB; test 3 - NUB versus OUB. The PI was calculated by relating the amount of test roughage consumed in comparison to the control roughage. The observed PIs for the roughages NUB and OUB were 76% and 77%, respectively, in tests 1 and 2. In test 3, the observed PI for the roughage OUB was 93%. As for the PIs for the roughages considering the different animal species, it was observed for sheep (87, 90, and 103%) higher rates than for goats (65, 65, and 83%) for tests 1, 2, and 3, respectively. The limitation of the animal's preference for NUB and OUB compared to the control possibly occurred by inclusion of urea in 2% (dry matter basis on diets), since urea is considered as regulator of intake in animal supplements due to the bitter taste and characteristic odor. Probably goats were more likely to reject NUB and OUB diets than sheep, because of the feeding habit of the animal species, since feed characteristics are more noticeable for goats. When observing the PI of test 3, the roughage preference for NUB is only 7% more than OUB. However, evaluating the preference for the different animal species, it can be observed that the goats reject to a greater degree the roughage OUB, probably due to the thorns contained in the cladodes of this clone of forage cactus. Thus, it was clear the preference of the animals for corn silage in relation to the roughages with cactus. The roughages tested are more palatable to sheep than to goats.

Keywords: acceptance, cactus cladodes, feeding habit, selectivity

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