

CONSTRUINDO SABERES, FORMANDO PESSOAS E TRANSFORMANDO A PRODUÇÃO ANIMAL

EFFECT OF PRECOCITY ON AGE AT CALVING AND WEIGHT AT WEANING AMONG COLOMBIAN BRAHMAN CATTLE

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Introduction: The Brahman breed is widely employed for meat production in Colombia because of its resistance to heat and humidity. In addition, it responds quite favorably to poor pastures at a nutritional level. Nevertheless, it is necessary to find strategies for enhancing its production and reproduction potential in Colombia. **Objective:** To verify the effect that age at first calving has on cow age at calving and suckling weight at weaning during four calvings of Brahman cows in the Colombian lower tropic. **Materials and methods:** Analyses were conducted using records of animals born between 1975 and 2006 at a farm located in the Obando municipality, in Valle del Cauca, Colombia. Data regarding weight at weaning (WW) and cow age at calving (CAC) were obtained from 84 cows during 4 consecutive calving orders (CO1 to CO4). Cows were assigned to one of three groups (GR1 to GR3) based on their age at first calving (CAFC). The groups were: precocious (≤ 30 months), mildly precocious (30 to 33 months) and late calving (≥ 34 months). This information was taken into account for comparing average cow performance in all 4 calvings based on GR and using descriptive statistical measures along with an analysis of variance. The variation sources considered were, calving season, GR, sex and age at weaning. The SAS software (version 9.2) was used for this purpose. **Results:** Only the most relevant results are shown. The mean values for WW were 263.19 ± 34.41 , 258.60 ± 20.81 and 854 ± 61.28 . For CAC, it was 254.86 ± 34.54 , 261.5 ± 24.34 , 1119.9 ± 102.7 for GR1, GR2 and GR3 for CO1, respectively. For CO4, these values were 286.00 ± 44.87 , 259.27 ± 13.41 , 2104.70 ± 164.44 for WW and 277.21 ± 29.46 , 263.50 ± 11.45 , 2363.40 ± 139.22 for CAC and groups GR1, GR2 and GR3 respectively. In general, WW had a tendency to increase for each GR across all four CO. In addition, significant differences between GR were observed only in CO1 ($p=0.0244$). CAC varied between each GR across all CO ($p<0.0001$). The values for R^2 ranged from 0.23 to 0.52 for WW and from 0.26 to 0.72 for CAC. **Conclusion:** Although there are no significant differences between the groups regarding WW, the authors suggest that the cows from the studied livestock company should be brought into production at early ages, since the cows from GR1 and GR3 showed an average significant difference of 258.63 days at weaning for CO4. This amount of time is nearly equivalent to an additional weaning period.

Keywords: analysis of variance, reproductive parameters, low tropic

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