OVERSEED OF WINTER FORAGES IN MARANDU GRASS PASTURES: INGESTIVE BEHAVIOR OF F1 HOLSTEIN X ZEBU HEIFERS

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The overseed of the mixture of winter forage species in cultivated tropical monospecific pastures aims at combining the peaks of dry mass production reached at different times for each species, resulting in increased production and the period of pasture utilization. However, with a pro-democracy, a spatially heterogeneous variable with a great breadth of values is fixed in relation to the descriptive characteristics of the condition of this "new" pasture. This spatial variability of the vegetation determines the response of plants and animals to grazing and their characterization is a complex task, due to their natural instability, caused, among other factors, by the selective defoliation of the animals. The objective of this work was to evaluate the ingestive behavior of F1 Holstein x Zebu heifers, grazing Marandu grass irrigated in exclusive cultivation or overseeded with combinations of winter forages. In a completely randomized design, subdivided plot scheme, with four replications, three types of pastures were studied: Marandu grass in exclusive cultivation; Marandu grass overseeded with mixture of white oat, black oat and ryegrass and Marandu grass overseeded with mixture of white oat and leguminous forage plants, white and red clover, over three cycles of grazing (August, September and October). There was no interaction (P = 0.41) of pasture types and grazing cycles for grazing time. The heifers remained longer grazing (P = 0.0001) in overseeded pastures with oats and ryegrass (8.95 h) or oats and clover (9.38 h) than in exclusively cultivated Marandu grass pastures (7.41 h). In relation to the time, grazing time was higher during daytime and in pastures overseeded with oats and ryegrass (7.63 h) or oats and clover (7.96 h) than in exclusively cultivated Marandu grass pastures (5.96 h). A more intense grazing activity was observed between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m., demonstrating a greater adaptation of crossbred animals to the heat stress environment of the tropics. For the time in rumination, there was a significant effect (P = 0.0057) only on the pasture type, less time on rumination in the pasture of Marandu grass overseeded with oats and clover in relation to the exclusive Marandu grass. The time in leisure did not differ (P = 0.11) among the pastures in the three cycles of grazing. The overseed of winter forage in Marandu grass pastures modifies pasture structure influencing the ingestive behavior of crossbred heifers that concentrate grazing activities during the day, prolonging the time spent in grazing when compared to grazing on pastures of Marandu grass in exclusive cultivation.

Key Words: animal behavior, grazing, pasture structure
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