

CONSTRUINDO SABERES, FORMANDO PESSOAS E TRANSFORMANDO A PRODUÇÃO ANIMAL

## MEAT QUALITY FROM EWE LAMBS IN DIFFERENT FINISHING SYSTEMS

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One of the management tools used to raising ewe lambs that deserves attention is weaning at slaughter; ewe lambs raised together with mother until they reach slaughter weight; and "early weaning", which occurs at approximately two months of age. The objectives of this study were to analyze the meat ewe lamb from different termination systems. Sixteen ewe lambs, crossbred Texel x Hampshire Down were separated in two different termination systems: ewe lambs weaned at 60 days and finished in feedlot (Feedlot group); ewe lambs with mother in creep feeding until slaughter (Creep Feeding group). The diet offered for both treatments was composed of 42% of sugar cane and 58% of concentrate, adding 7% of crude glycerin in the dry matter (DM) of the diet. The lambs were slaughtered with a mean live weight of 28 kg, and 24 hours post-mortem samples were collected from meat of the *Longissimus dorsi* muscle for the color and pH measurements of the meat. Meat color measurements were performed using a colorimeter (Konica Minolta®), evaluating the luminosity ( $L^*$  0 = black, 100 = white), the intensity of the red-green color ( $a^*$ ) and the intensity of the color blue-yellow ( $b^*$ ). The pH of the meat was determined using a portable digital potentiometer. The analyses of variance were processed by the statistical package SAS® University Edition and differences were considered significant with 5% of probability. The pH of the meat of the group Creep feeding and Feedlot were different from each other; and the confined animals had an average pH of 5.5, while animals of Creep feeding, mean of 4.7. It is known that the pH of the meat is related to possible pre-slaughter stress, however, the pre-slaughter management of the two groups was the same, and no situation that characterized pre-slaughter stress occurred. Regarding meat color, there was no statistical difference between the groups. The averages for  $L^*$ ,  $a^*$  and  $b^*$  values were 39.39; 16.52 and 7.64 respectively; and they are compatible with the averages found in the literature of lambs. The finishing system used did not change the meat color ( $L^*$ ,  $a^*$  and  $b^*$ ) of ewe lambs. Meat from ewe lambs finished in creep feeding system had lower pH values.

**Keywords:** creep feeding, feedlot, meat color, pH meat, sheep

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