

CONSTRUINDO SABERES, FORMANDO PESSOAS E TRANSFORMANDO A PRODUÇÃO ANIMAL

PERFORMANCE OF NELORE BOVINES CASTRATED IN CONVERT™ HD364 GRASS HANDLED UNDER GRAZING HEIGHTS

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The objective was to evaluate the performance of cattle under different management strategies in continuous stocking. The experimental area was 16 ha, divided into 16 paddocks of approximately one hectare. A randomized block design with four replications was used. The treatments consisted of four grazing heights (15, 25, 35 and 45 cm) of the *Brachiaria* hybrid convert™ HD364. The animals were evaluated in the spring, summer and fall of 2016/2017, with a duration of 239 days. Three animals per picket were used as testers and height-regulating animals, when necessary. Grass height measurements were performed once a week and the animals were weighed every 28 days. The animals were weighed under fasting 14 hours of food and water. Based on the weighing data the average daily gain (ADG) was calculated, in $\text{kg animal}^{-1} \text{ha}^{-1} \text{day}^{-1}$; the stocking rate (SR), in $\text{UA}^{-1} \text{ha}$ and the live weight gain per area (LWG), in $\text{kg of bw}^{-1} \text{ha}$. The data were analyzed containing the random effects of blocks, and the fixed effects of grazing height and seasons and their interactions, in the case of significance, regression analysis was carried out, evaluating the effect of height in each season. Tukey's test was used for analysis of means (5% significance). For these analyzes SAS was used. It was observed interaction between grazing height x season of the year for SR. In the spring and summer seasons, SR were higher for pastures managed at 15 cm height with 3.66 and 3.57 UA ha^{-1} , respectively, decreasing with increasing grazing height. In the autumn season the maximum SR was estimated at 25 cm, with a SR of 4.27 UA ha^{-1} , and from that time there was a reduction. The highest ADG was observed in the spring season, followed by the summer and lowest in the fall season, with 0.993, 0.802 and 0.553 $\text{kg animal}^{-1} \text{day}$, respectively. The LWG was higher in the summer season with gains of 274.9 kg LW ha^{-1} , followed by spring with 222.5 kg LW ha^{-1} and lower gain observed in autumn with 180.1 kg LW ha^{-1} . The highest LWG was observed at grazing time of 15 cm, which decreased as the height increased. This is due to higher SR in that treatment. Greater grazing intensity provided better animal performance.

Keywords: *Brachiaria* hybrid, stocking rate, handle grass.

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