

CONSTRUINDO SABERES, FORMANDO PESSOAS E TRANSFORMANDO A PRODUÇÃO ANIMAL

## EFFECT OF PRE-PARTUM SHEARING ON INGESTIVE BEHAVIOR OF EWES AND THEIR LAMBS

Patricia Alessandra Meneguzzi Metz DONICHT\*<sup>1</sup>, Lucia Trindade FURTADO<sup>1</sup>, Matheus da Silva BERNED<sup>1</sup>, Pedro Hederton Lamberti GOERCH<sup>1</sup>, Fabiano Silva AURÉLIO<sup>1</sup>

\*corresponding author: [patricia.donicht@iffarroupilha.edu.br](mailto:patricia.donicht@iffarroupilha.edu.br)

<sup>1</sup> Instituto Federal Farroupilha – Campus Alegrete, Alegrete, Rio Grande do Sul, Brasil

Perinatal mortality in lambs is one of the main causes that limit the productivity in herds in the South of Brazil, reaching a rate of 30% in some properties. The management of pre-partum shearing leads to an increase in daily forage consumption, altering the ingestive behavior (IB) of ewes, which promotes an increase in placental weight, milk production and generates stronger lambs at birth. The objective was to evaluate IB of ewes, after pre-partum shearing management, and their lambs. Ten Texel ewes, from the herd of *Instituto Federal Farroupilha – Campus Alegrete*, were used, maintained under the same grazing conditions and as a single plot throughout the experiment. The ewes were submitted to ultrasonography diagnosis to estimate gestational age. Forty-five days before the expected date of partum, the ewes were weighted (average of 56.8 kg), evaluated for body condition (2.25 points) and separated into treatments: five were shorn 45 days before partum (45SH) and five were unshorn (UNSH). In the pre-partum period (after shearing), at lambing and in the postpartum period (until lamb weaning), the ewes and their lambs IB were evaluated every 15 days. The IB was carried out from 8 am to 4 pm, observing the activities: leisure, ruminating, feeding and ingesting water, and for lambs, also suckling behavior was determined. The mean temperature of experimental months (2017, from August to November) was 19°C. The completely randomized experimental design was used, with a variance analysis using F test and the means compared using Tukey test (5% significance). There weren't differences between studied variables in pre-partum period, observing averages of 85.4% and 86.5%, for feeding activity; 10.6% and 9.6% for leisure; 3.5% and 3.7% for rumination; and 0.5% and 0.2% for drinking; respectively for UNSH and 45SH ewes. After partum, it was observed that 45SH ewes presented higher ( $P=0.0149$ ) leisure activity (10.2%) than UNSH (5.7%), but no differences were observed in the other activities. Ewes presented 81.4% of feeding; 10.2% of rumination and 0.4% of drinking activities at postpartum period. Lambs had similar IB activities (10.5% vs. 14.6% for feeding; 73.5% vs. 74.3% for leisure; 10.5 vs. 7.6% for drinking; 6.2% vs. 3.5% for suckling activities; respectively for lambs born from UNSH and 45SH ewes). There is no effect of pre-partum shearing on postpartum IB of ewes. Shorn ewes spent more time with leisure at postpartum. There is no effect of ewes' pre-partum shearing on IB of lambs.

**Keywords:** activities, alimentation, lamb mortality, rumination, suckling activity.

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