

CONSTRUINDO SABERES, FORMANDO PESSOAS E TRANSFORMANDO A PRODUÇÃO ANIMAL

TISSUE COMPOSITION AND MUSCULARITY INDEX OF THE LEG OF LAMB OF DIFFERENT SEX AND WEANING AGE

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ABSTRACT: Tissue composition of lamb is one of the factors that determine carcass quality. Thus, this study aimed to evaluate the effects of sex and weaning age on the tissue composition and muscularity index of the leg of the lambs. Thirty-two crossbred Dorper lambs were used, being 16 males and 16 females weaned at two different ages (70 and 100 days) averaging 21.60 kg of live weight at slaughter. From the 10th day of age, the lambs were rearing in a Creep feeding with a diet containing 23.3% of crude protein and 2.95 ME/kg of DM up to the 70 days of age. During this period the lambs remained confined in the sheepfold and followed by suckling in the afternoon and evening. From 70 days to 100 days half the lambs stayed together with the ewes in the field and also received silage and 200 g / day of concentrate. The weaning and slaughter occurred when the lambs reached 70 and 100 days of age. On the carcass the left leg of each lamb was separated and packed in a polyethylene bag and frozen at -18 °C to evaluate its tissue composition. During the dissections, the five main muscles associated with the femur (*biceps femuris*, *semimembranosus*, *semitendinosus*, *quadriceps femoris* and *adductor*) were removed intact and then weighed to calculate the leg muscularity index according to the following formula: $LMI = \sqrt{(W5M/FL)/FL}$, where W5M represents the weight of the five muscles (g) and FL is femur length (cm). A completely randomized design, in factorial outline 2x2 (two sex and 2 age) was used. The means were compared by the Tukey test to 5% probability. There was no significant effect of interaction between sex and age for any characteristic evaluated. There was no significant effect of the age on any variable of the tissue composition studied. On the other hand, there was a significant effect of sex on the percentage of bone and muscle: bone ratio, in which the males had a greater percentage of bone and the females obtained better muscle:bone ratio. It was no effect of age and sex on muscularity leg index. Lambs slaughtered with 70 and 100 days of age had similar tissue composition, however, males present a higher percentage of bone and females a better muscle: bone ratio.

Keywords: bone, Dorper, fat, muscularity, sheep

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