

Weight gain of hair sheep confined under different environmental conditions.

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INTRODUCTION & AIM

Sheep production has been expanding in Brazil, and confinement systems have been adopted as a strategic alternative to improve productive performance during the winter period, when the availability and quality of pastures are reduced. Different confinement structures may influence thermal comfort and, consequently, the zootechnical performance of the animals. The present study aimed to evaluate the effect of different confinement structures during winter on the total weight gain of young Dorper × Santa Inês crossbred ewes.

All animals received the same diet, formulated to promote an expected average daily gain of 0.10 kg per animal/day. Feed was offered twice daily (7:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.). Body weight was recorded after 16 hours of solid fasting on days 0, 15, 30, and 51 of the experimental period. Data were analyzed using a Generalized Linear Model (GLM), considering the effects of confinement type and days of confinement. Means were compared using Tukey's test at a 5% significance level.

METHOD

The experiment was conducted at the Meat Sheep Production Sector of the JK Campus of the Federal University of the Jequitinhonha and Mucuri Valleys, located in Diamantina, Minas Gerais, Brazil.

Twelve Dorper × Santa Inês crossbred ewe lambs were used, with an average body weight of 40.0 ± 5.1 kg and aged between 12 and 24 months.

The experimental design was completely randomized, with two treatments:



RESULTS & DISCUSSION

- A significant effect of the type of confinement on body weight was observed.
- A significant effect of days of confinement was also detected.
- No interaction between the factors was observed.
- Body weight was higher in the closed confinement system. In addition, a progressive increase in body weight was observed throughout the experimental period.
- Rectal temperature remained within the thermoneutral range for the species and did not differ between the systems.
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CONCLUSION

Closed confinement provides greater total weight gain in young ewes during the winter, representing an efficient strategy for intensifying sheep production during critical periods

FUTURE WORK / REFERENCES

Andrade, I.S.; Souza, B.B.; Pereira Filho, J.M.; Silva, A.M.A.; Parâmetros fisiológicos e desempenho de ovinos Santa Inês submetidos a diferentes tipos de sombreamento e a suplementação em pastejo. *Ciência e Agrotecnologia*, v.31, n.2, p.540-547, 2007.