

Evaluation of body condition score in female lambs under different environmental confinement conditions.

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INTRODUCTION & AIM

The growing demand for sheep meat has encouraged the use of confinement systems, which allow better environmental and nutritional control, favoring productive performance. The objective of this study was to evaluate the effect of different confinement structures on the body condition score (BCS) of young hair sheep ewes during winter..

METHOD

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

Twelve Dorper × Santa Inês ewes (≈40 kg; 12–24 months of age) were used and distributed into two treatments:

Closed confinement: walls of 1.5 m and metal roofing.

Open confinement: wire fence and shade cloth.

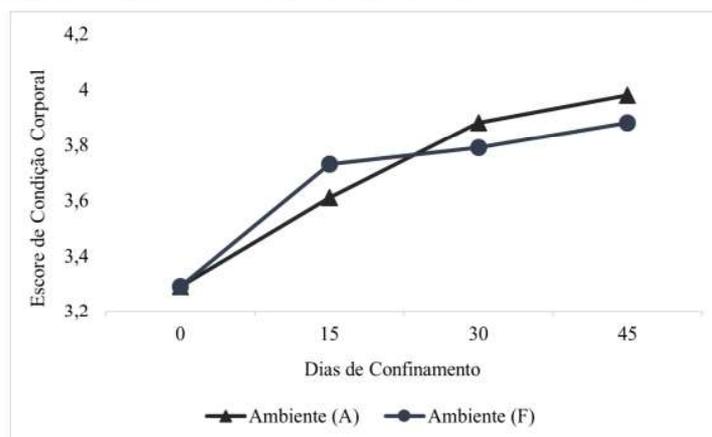
The diet was formulated to promote an expected gain of 0.100 kg/day and was offered at 7:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.

Body condition score (BCS) and body weight evaluations were performed after 16 hours of fasting on July 25, August 8, August 22, and September 12, 2025 (51 days).

Ambient temperature and wind speed were recorded at 7:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m., and 4:00 p.m.

Average temperature ranged from 12.3 to 22.5 °C in the closed confinement and from 14.4 to 25.3 °C in the open confinement.

Figura 2 - Evolução do escore de condição corporal (ECC) ao longo dos dias de confinamento.



- Wind speed ranged from 0.1 to 0.9 m/s in the closed confinement and from 1.6 to 6.5 m/s in the open confinement.
- The average rectal temperature was 39.43 °C, within the thermoneutral range.
- The type of confinement did not influence body condition score (BCS); however, there was a significant effect of time, with an increase from 3.29 to 3.93 throughout the experimental period.

CONCLUSION

Both confinement systems were effective in maintaining animal welfare and improving the body condition of ewes during winter, reaching BCS values considered adequate for reproductive performance.

FUTURE WORK / REFERENCES

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