

Blood Profile of Weaner Rabbits Fed Pigeon Pea (*Cajanus cajan*) Meal as Replacement for Groundnut Cake

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Abstract : Pigeon pea (*Cajanus cajan*) seeds contain about 20-22 percent protein and appreciable amounts of essential amino acids and minerals. Hence, this study evaluated the blood profile of weaner rabbits fed *Cajanus cajan* meal (CCM) as a replacement for groundnut cake. Forty weaner rabbits of mixed breed aged 5 - 6 weeks were used for the study, which lasted for 8 weeks. The rabbits were randomly allocated to four treatments (10 rabbits per treatment) in a completely randomized design. Four concentrate diets were compounded by direct replacement of groundnut cake with *Cajanus cajan* meal (CCM) at 0, 50, 75, and 100%, respectively. There were no significant differences ($p>0.05$) among the mean counts of packed cell volume, red blood cell, haemoglobin, and monocyte. The 75% CCM diet had significantly the highest ($p<0.05$). However, rabbits fed diets containing CCM had significantly higher ($p<0.05$) eosinophil than 0%CCM. Rabbits fed diets containing 100%CCM had significantly highest ($p<0.05$) total protein followed by 0%CCM, 75%CCM, and least 50%CCM, while 0%CCM and 75%CCM diets were significantly higher ($p<0.05$) in albumin. However, animals fed diets containing CCM had significantly lower ($p<0.05$) cholesterol content than 0%CCM diet. It could be concluded that *Cajanus cajan* meal could replace groundnut cake up to 100% in the diets of rabbits without any deleterious effect on the blood profile of the animals.

Keywords : blood profile, groundnut cake, pigeon pea, weaner rabbits

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