

Evaluation of Milk Production of an Algerian Rabbit Population Raised in Aures Area

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Abstract : In order to characterize rabbits does of an Aures local population raised in Algeria, a study of their milk yield was realized in the experimental rabbitry of El Hadj Lakhdhar University. Milk production of does was measured every day during the days following 215 parturitions. It was estimated by weighing the female before and after the single daily suckling (10-15 min between the two weighing operations). The various calculated parameters were the quantity of milk produced per day, per week and the total quantity produced in 21 days, as well as the intake of milk by young rabbits. The analysis concerned the effects of the number of successive litters (3 classes: 1 to 3 and more) and of the average number of the number of young rabbits suckled per litter (6 classes: from 1-2 kits to more than 6). During the 21 days of controlled lactation, the average litter size was 6 ± 3 . The rabbits of the Aures area produced on average 2544.34 ± 747 g in 21 days that is 121 g of milk/day or 21 g of milk/kit/day. The milk yield increased from 526, 1035, 1240 and 2801 g to 760, 1365, 1715 and 3840 for week 1, 2, 3 and the total period of lactation, respectively. Nevertheless, milk production available per kit and per day decreased linearly with kits number in the litter for each of the 3 weeks considered. On the other hand the milk yield was not affected by the weight at birth of kits.

Keywords : milk production, litter size, rabbit, Aures area, Algeria

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