



HOUSING OF FATTENING RABBITS: FAMILIAR AND NOT FAMILIAR LITTERS

F. LUZI¹, C. LAZZARONI², E. HEINZL¹, D. ZUCCA¹, M. VERGA¹

¹Università degli Studi di Milano, Dip. Scienze Animali - Via G. Celoria 10, 20133 Milano, Italy

²Università degli Studi di Torino, Dip. Scienze Zootecniche - Via L. Da Vinci 44, 10095 Grugliasco, Italy

INTRODUCTION

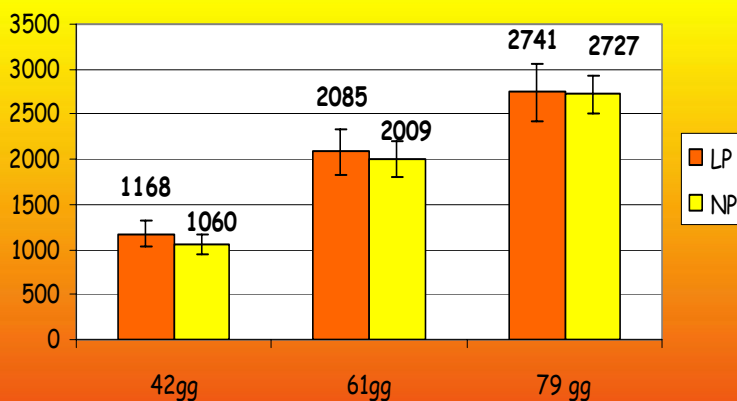
NO SCIENTIFIC STUDIES WERE CARRIED OUT ON THE EFFECTS OF REARING LITTERMATE RABBITS (LR) COMPARED TO NON LITTERMATES (NLR) DURING THE FATTENING PERIOD. STUDYING THE HOUSING OF FAMILIAR DOES IN PAIRS, IT WAS FOUND THAT LOSSES OF ANIMALS DUE TO AGGRESSION WERE REDUCED WHEN FAMILIAR DOES WERE KEPT TOGETHER IN BREEDING UNITS.

MATERIALS and METHODS

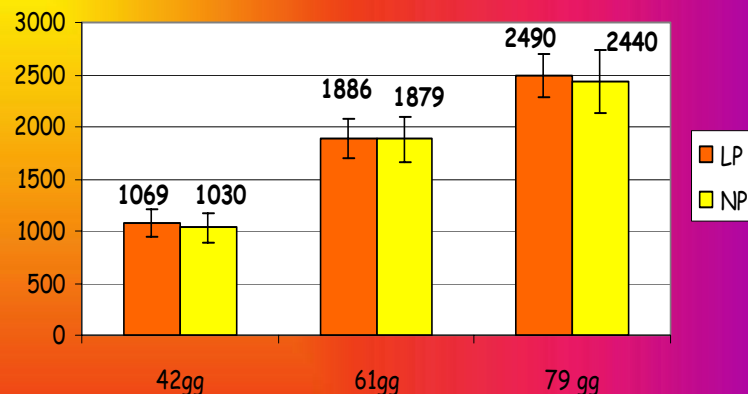
WE USED 80 COMMERCIAL HYBRID PUPS, AT 42 DAYS OF AGE, AND WE GROUPED IN CAGES LITTERMATE RABBITS (LP, N=10) AND NON-LITTERMATES RABBITS TOGETHER (NP, N=10). ALL THE RABBITS WERE WEIGHED INDIVIDUALLY AT THE AGE OF 42, 61 AND 79 DAYS OF AGE.



AVERAGE WEIGHT AT FIRST TRIAL



AVERAGE WEIGHT AT SECOND TRIAL



RESULTS

THE AVERAGE WEIGHT OF LITTERMATE RABBITS WAS ALWAYS HIGHER THAN NON LITTERMATE RABBITS (FINAL WEIGHT IN FIRST TRIAL LR 2741 \pm 314 vs. NLR 2727 \pm 210; IN SECOND TRIAL LR 2490 \pm 215 vs. NLR 2439 \pm 299). AS FAR AS THE MORTALITY RATE IS CONCERNED, DURING THE FIRST TRIAL TWO LITTERMATE RABBITS AND SEVEN NON LITTERMATE RABBITS DIED, WHILE, DURING THE SECOND TRIAL, FIVE LITTERMATE RABBITS AND THREE NON LITTERMATE RABBITS DIED.

CONCLUSION

THE DEGREE OF FAMILIARITY SEEMS TO AFFECT POSITIVELY THE GROWTH LEVEL WITHOUT INCREASING MORTALITY RATE.

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR
daniela.zucca@unimi.it