





Meat quality traits of Apennine suckling-lambs traditionally reared in two different seasons in Abruzzo region - Italy

Mazzone G., Lambertini L., Giammarco M., Angelozzi G., Vignola G.

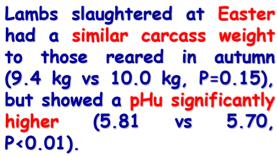
Department of Food Science, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Teramo, Italy

INTRODCTION - In Abruzzo region a semi-extensive farming system, mainly of Apennine breed or its crossbreeds, is still widely practiced to produce a traditional lamb slaughtered at about 60 days of age.

The rearing system is quite well characterized, planning slaughtering around Easter and Christmas and envisaging the use of pasture from midmorning to evening till December for the sheep while lambs, reared permanently into the sheepfold, are fed at evening and night on their mothers milk, receiving a hay and concentrates supplement from 25-30 days to slaughter. Only during winter sheep receive meadow hay and some supplementary foods.



To evaluate the influence of the breeding season on meat characteristics, 80 carcasses of Apennine male lambs, from single birth, 60 ± 3 days old, were purchased, half at Christmas and half at Easter, from the same slaughterhouse.









Meat lightness (L*) and cooking loss of Easter lambs were significantly higher (P<0.05) while their fat content tended to be lower (P=0.10).

The *L. lumborum* fatty acids profile evidenced a similar composition in total SFA while PUFA concentration was higher in the carcasses of lambs slaughtered at Christmas (20 32% vs 16.65%, P<0.01) with a more favourable PUFA/SFA ratio and a significant reduction of their n-6/n-3 ratio (2.60 vs. 3.98, P <0.01).

CONCLUSIONS - These results are to relate to the typical farming system and to the larger amount of milk the lambs bred in Autumn received when the sheep milk production is stimulated by the availability of good pasture.