Influence of body condition score at lambing on milk yield and quality and growth of suckling lambs in Ojinegra sheep

R. Ripoll-Bosch, J. Álvarez-Rodríguez, I. Blasco, M. Joy

CITA, Av. Montañana 930, 50059 Zaragoza, Spain

Objective

To assess the effect of body condition score (BCS) at lambing on mother-offspring performances in Ojinegra sheep breed.

Location of Ojinegra sheep breed

Material and Methods

Animals

- Ojinegra ewes (n=22) divided into High (**H**; 2.75-3) or Low (**L**; 2.5-1.75) BCS at lambing.

Measurements

- Live-weight (LW) (weekly) and BCS (fortnightly).
- Milk production (weekly) by oxitocin and machine milking technique.
- Blood metabolites (weekly): non-esterified fatty acids (NEFA) and β-hydroxybutyrate (BHB).

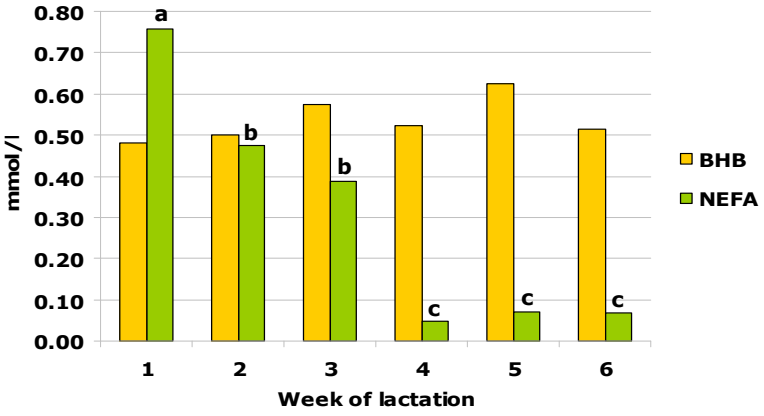
Results

BCS at lambing

- Average daily gain tended to be lower in H lambs (H=128±47 vs. L=168±46 g/d; P<0.10), but lamb LW at weaning was not affected (9.7±1.8 kg, P>0.05).

Week of lactation

- Milk production tended to be greater in the first week than subsequent (937 vs. 789 g/day, P<0.10).
- Protein content was highest at first week (5.0%) and lowest at 3rd and 4th weeks (4.5%).
- The mean milk fat content was 5.6%.
- Plasma metabolites were not affected by BCS at lambing, but week of lactation had effect on NEFA concentration:



Within each parameter, different letter denote statistical differences (P<0.05).

Conclusion

Milk yield and quality and growth of suckling lambs were not affected by the studied range of BCS at lambing

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: Staff of '**AGROJI**' and '**CITA**' for their assistance.
Study supported by MICINN and ERDF (Project INIA PET2007-06-C03-01)

rripoll@aragon.es

EAAP 2010
61st Annual Meeting of the European Association for Animal Production
AUGUST 23rd-27th, 2010 - HERAKLION, CRETE ISLAND, GREECE