

Market channels for prime kids

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In spite of great progress made by the production sector in herd size and organization, as well as in rearing methods, the trade in prime kids remains quite traditional in France.

The market requires young animals weighing from 7 to 10 kg, with dressing percentage varying between 65 and 67 % for kids fed with goat milk and slaughtered at 3 weeks, and between 60 to 63 % for those fed with milk replacer and slaughtered at 5 or 6 weeks.

Being seasonally produced and quite expensive as compared to other meats, but having the advantage of being a well-characterized traditional product, prime kids are commercialized mostly by poultrymen who play a technical and commercial role, slaughtering, as well as buying from the producer and selling-off the carcasses valorizing the fifth quartier (skin and rennet stomach).

The present dilemma of the market can be roughly described by the following conflict: whereas the grazers and the skin transformers want heavier kids (10 to 12 kg liveweight), dealers and some consumers are looking for animals of 6 to 7 kg liveweight, easier to commercialize and having white meat. It seems that the commercial trend is towards light kids.

II. — FREE COMMUNICATIONS

I) NUTRITION AND FEEDING

Trials on protein supplementation of lambs

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When the same protein level is used throughout the fattening period, optimum crude protein content of concentrated feed for lambs ranges about 16 % of the dry matter according to our results. However, the protein supply may be reduced during fattening. In male lambs, a diet change from 20 % crude protein, before they reached 25 kg, to 11 % crude protein later, gave the same results as a constant 16 % crude protein ratio. Females did not react so efficiently to this change.

— Animal performance and concentrate feed efficiency were little affected if soyabean meal