

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

was partially replaced by dry peas or urea, the latter not exceeding 1.5 % of the concentrate in any case;

— The problem of protein supplementation of farm cereal mixtures is not completely solved. Even if there is free access to cereals and protein feed, over-consumption of the latter is almost always the rule.

Amino acid requirements of preruminant lambs

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The amino acid requirements of preruminant lambs were tentatively determined by different methods:

— ewe milk amino acids are assumed to satisfy the amino acid requirement of lambs and are compared to those of cows milk (Table I);

— the amounts of essential amino acids ingested by lambs in which the protein requirement is satisfied may be used as rough estimations of the amino acid requirements of preruminant lambs (Table 2). This method of evaluation tends to underestimate the requirements for the limiting amino acids of the experimental protein, and to overestimate the requirements for amino acids in excess of that protein.

The requirements for some essential amino acids were directly determined by measuring the nitrogen balance and/or the blood level of free amino acids of lambs fed increasing amounts of those amino acids. Thus, the methionine requirement of preruminant lambs was about 2.0 g/d (Fig. I), i.e. 2.6 g/d of sulphur amino acids.

The amino acid requirements of fast-growing lambs (250 to 300 g/d), evaluated by the different methods, are summarized in Table 5. It may be inferred that amino acid requirements vary according to age and feeding level. The amino acid requirements of 8-day old preruminant lambs fed *ad libitum* seemed to be satisfied by 67 g/d of cow milk protein supplemented by 0.3 g/d of DL methionine and 0.9 g/d of L lysine. When the lambs were 21 day old, they needed 72 g/d of cow milk protein supplemented by 0.1 g/d of DL methionine and 0.5 g/d of L lysine, if fed *ad libitum*: 76 g/d of cow milk protein supplemented by 0.3 g/d of DL methionine if the feeding level was only 80 % of *ad libitum* feed consumption.

Effect of dehydrated pelleted hay on calcium and phosphate metabolism in lambs

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In 3-month-old ram lambs fed dehydrated pelleted lucerne hay, the urinary and faecal excretion of calcium was significantly higher than in control lambs fed normal lucerne hay (Table II). The causes for these differences are still unknown. This may be due to an increase in the speed