

Use of protein rich peas in the rabbit

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A series of experiments were made to test a new source of proteins in France, the « Prima » peas, in the feeding of monogastric animals and particularly the rabbit.

This paper summarizes five trials achieved in different laboratories; four of them were done on fattening young rabbits with incorporation levels between 0 and 45 p. 100; the other on breeding rabbits with incorporation levels between 0 and 40 p. 100.

The results showed that until incorporation levels of 30 p. 100, the growth rates of the fattening rabbits remained similar, though a slight non significant rise in the feed conversion ratio was observed as the incorporation level of peas increased in the diet (102 and 103 p. 100 of the control at the incorporation level of 15 and 30 p. 100).

At the extreme incorporation level of 45 p. 100, used to determine an eventual toxic effect, the mortality was not affected, but the growth of the young rabbits was significantly reduced (93 p. 100 of the control) while the feed conversion ratio slightly increased (104 p. 100 of the control).

The control of the breeding dams receiving 40 p. 100 peas in their diet did not show any significant differences as compared with the controls; however, a negative effect on the ovulation rate of the does was noticed, but this has to be confirmed.

Use of ground straw as a source of crude fibre in fattening rabbit feeding, a comparison of two crude fibre levels

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The rabbit needs a ballast in its diet to prevent the risks of diarrhoea often mortal for the animal.

This ballast is generally composed of crude fibre. However, the crude fibre sources usually employed are of variable qualities or relatively expensive. Ground wheat straw available in large quantities was therefore used in replacement of dried lucerne at incorporation levels of 0-9.5 p. 100 and 19 p. 100. Parallel to that, two dietary crude fibre levels were compared : 12 and 9 p. 100. This trial was achieved on 180 animals in individual cages and divided into 5 treatments.

When replacing lucerne by ground straw the growth rates remained identical : 34.0-34.5 and 34.6 g/d, respectively for straw levels of 0-9.5 and 19 p. 100.

On the contrary, with 9 p. 100 crude fibre in the diet as compared with a level of 12 p. 100, a higher mortality rate (19.4 versus 5.5 p. 100,) a similar growth (34.4 g/d) were observed as well as a significant decrease in the feed intake, feed conversion ratio (3.43 versus 3.71 p. 100) and carcass dressing percentage (61.2 versus 62.4 p. 100).
