

Effect of vitamin and mineral premix on the performances of growing rabbits

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The present work was carried out to test premix effect on the rabbit performance, from 35 to 90 days of age.

The study was made on New Zealand White rabbits weaned at 35 days of age. Weight gain, feed consumption and feed conversion ratio were recorded every week.

The experimental scheme used was a factorial 3×2 design (diet \times sex) in randomized blocks with 4 replications.

The experimental diets were:

A — diet with premix.

B — diet without premix.

C — removal of premix 30 days after the beginning of trial.

The results suggest that:

— Weight gain, feed conversion ratio and feed consumption were not affected by the above mentioned treatments.

— A significant effect of blocks relative to feed conversion ratio and feed consumption, was observed.

Effects of dietary protein level on growth and body composition of New Zealand White rabbits

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This experiment was conducted to determine the influence of two protein levels (13.8 and 17.5 p. 100) on weight gain, feed efficiency and carcass development of New Zealand White rabbits between 5 weeks of age (1 week after weaning) and slaughter (2.4 kg). The two diets were isoenergetic (2 600-2 700 kcal D.E. /kg). The growth rate of the rabbits fed the low protein diet was reduced: a delay of 5 days was observed before they reached the weight of 2.4 kg. Their feed conversion ratio and their energy efficiency were deteriorated (— 10 p. 100 and — 13.5 p. 100, respectively), but their protein efficiency was greatly increased (+ 19 p. 100). The dressing percentage of the rabbits fed the high protein diet was higher (63.1 p. 100 vs 60.6 p. 100), as a consequence of the weight reduction of the following elements: digestive tract, digestive content and skin, and of the weight increase of liver. The carcass composition, as estimated by weight of interscapular and perirenal fat, weight of muscles and bones of hind leg, lipid level of muscular tissue, did not differ between treatments. These results are discussed. It is suggested that the growth rate decrease obtained by reducing the protein level of the diet involved a change in the relative development of organs and tissues.