THE PALATABILITY OF SEAL MEAL IN SHEEP DIETS

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ABSTRACT
A study was conducted to determine the palatability of seal meal in sheep rations. Different levels of seal meal, ranging from 0 to 14% were included in finishing rations. The effect of seal meal palatability on feed intake was investigated. No significant difference between the different levels of seal meal on feed intake was found in this investigation. Seal meal levels up to 14% have no effect on the palatability of the feed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The average daily feed intake of each group was presented in Table 3 and Figure 1.

Table 3 Average daily feed intake (kg) of each group on a weekly basis and for the whole period

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Week 4</th>
<th>Week 5</th>
<th>Week 6</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1.409</td>
<td>1.321</td>
<td>1.590</td>
<td>1.634</td>
<td>1.781</td>
<td>2.076</td>
<td>1.635</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>0.869</td>
<td>1.059</td>
<td>1.481</td>
<td>1.821</td>
<td>1.960</td>
<td>1.946</td>
<td>1.492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>0.607</td>
<td>1.254</td>
<td>1.381</td>
<td>1.907</td>
<td>1.987</td>
<td>1.911</td>
<td>1.508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>0.710</td>
<td>1.219</td>
<td>1.210</td>
<td>1.723</td>
<td>1.853</td>
<td>1.889</td>
<td>1.434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>0.590</td>
<td>1.179</td>
<td>1.304</td>
<td>1.607</td>
<td>1.977</td>
<td>2.080</td>
<td>1.456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0.611</td>
<td>1.183</td>
<td>1.246</td>
<td>2.000</td>
<td>1.937</td>
<td>2.099</td>
<td>1.513</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During week one and two, the feed intake of group A was significantly higher than any of the other groups. From week three to six, the differences between the groups were not significant.

Figure 1 illustrates the fact that the palatability of seal meal did have an effect on feed intake in the early stages of the trial, but towards the end of the trial, the taste of seal meal grew acceptable to the animals. The difference in feed intake between the groups was not significant for the whole period (p>0.05).

Problems with acidosis did occur, because of the high DMD-value (dry matter digestibility) of the diet. An interesting observation was that with higher levels of seal meal, it appeared that the incidence of acidosis decreased.
CONCLUSIONS
From this data it can be concluded that the palatability of seal meal does not effect intake when it is included in a balanced rations for sheep. It is however important to investigate the possibility of a combination with urea to obtain better results.

The incidence of oxidation and its influence on the palatability of seal meal should also be investigated.

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REFERENCES

Figure 1: The average weekly feed intake of the different groups.