

## EVALUATION OF WATER CONSUMPTION BY DORPER LAMBS IN RELATION TO AGE GROUP

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### Abstract

Studies of meat production systems mostly have not focused on water intake, and are even scarcer in the case of sheep farming. However, among the elements that make up an animal diet, water is the most important and its consumption can be influenced by the feed, environment, stress, age and other factors. Thus, the objective of this study was to evaluate water consumption in age groups. The work was carried out at the Sheep Unit of the Instituto de Zootecnia (IZ) in Nova Odessa, SP, with 26 registered uncastrated Dorper lambs with an average age of  $102.30 \pm 16.30$  days and average weight of  $26.10 \pm 4.14$  kg, respectively. The experiment involved collective confinement for 60 days, with 15 days of adaptation. The water consumption was quantified using two automatic drinking troughs (Intergado® system). The total diet was offered ad libitum, with 88.44% dry matter, composed of 15% crude fiber and 16.21% crude protein. The animals were divided according to the entrance age in the test (AG), as a function of the mean  $\pm 0.5$ \*standard deviation. The numbers of animals in each AG were 9, 8 and 9, respectively, for AG1 (84 to 114 days of age), AG2 (120 to 126 days), and AG3 (133 to 156 days). The Tukey test at 5% significance was used (SAS). The means observed in the AG1 ( $2.02 \pm 0.604$  L), AG2 ( $2.45 \pm 0.572$  L), and AG3 ( $2.42 \pm 0.558$  L), did not differ from each other ( $p > 0.05$ ), with a general average of  $2.29 \pm 0.591$  liters of water consumed/day. Therefore, the age group at the ages of the lambs in this study did not affect water consumption. More studies on the use of water in production systems should be carried out to devise strategies for more efficient use.

### Keywords

*Ovis aries*, sheep farming sustainable production, water consumption.

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