

Using of Clinical and Hematological Indicators for Determination of Stress Phenomena during the Milking of Ewes

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SUMMARY

- Research has been carried out to evaluate the stress response in machine milking and to determine the suitability of Ascanian Karakul and Ascanian Fine-Flee ed breeds to machine milking on a linear type unit, which was developed by the Laboratory of the Technology and Sheep Breeding Products Processing Production at ITSR "Askania-Nova".
- Determined by the five-point system is the behavioral response of ewes when fixing them in the milking machine, putting milking glasses on the udder nipples and directly during milking. The clinical and physiological state of ewes is determined by the pulse rate and respiratory rate per minute. Temperature measurements were carried out and hematological parameters were investigated.

3.5-3.8

5%,

4.5,

It was established that the clinical indicators of both breeds ewes were within the physiological norm. At the beginning of the study, there was a deviation of the pulse rate from the norm in both groups of animals, and at the end of the study this indicator normalized. The behavioral score in the group of Karakul ewes remained at a rather low level throughout the experience, amounting to 3.5-3.8 points. The average live weight over the experimental period in the group of Fine-Fleeced ewes increased by 5%, which can be attributed to the normal response to stress, and the behavioral score of 4.5, as animals in this group were less fearful during the milking process.

Hematologic studies have revealed a decrease in leukocytes in both groups of animals, both at the beginning and at the end of the experiment. Other blood counts were within the physiological norm, which may indicate that there is no stress effect on the sheep during milking or it is not intense and animals are rapidly adapting to this technological process.

Key words: machine-milking, ewes, stress, clinical, hematologic parameters

INTRODUCTION

In sheep breeding, along with the production of wool, mutton, and lambskin, sheep milk is also important, from which various varieties of cheeses and other highly nutritious products are made, which have no analogues among products of animal origin. The formation of competitive sheep breeding in Ukraine cannot be achieved without the realization of a huge reserve of the industry, which is the production of milk with its subsequent in-depth processing (Turinsky, 1998; Lutsenko, 2005). The solution to the problem of the widespread introduction of sheep milking in the state is constrained by the laboriousness of this technological process and the lack of domestic

inexpensive and reliable means of mechanization that would have low metal consumption, simplicity of design and provide quick accustoming of animals to machine milking when producing high-quality milk for further processing into competitive products.

The aim of the researches was to determine the stress resistance of the domestic breeding sheep to machine milking on a small-sized milking setting, which has a simple design and provides a sufficiently high productivity with minimal labour.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Production tests were carried out under the conditions of the EFSE "Askania Nova" in the Kherson region, Ukraine on ewes of the Ascanian Karakul (n=20) and Ascanian Fine-Fleeced breeds (n=26). These animals were from 2 to 7 years old, so their average age was 5 years old. The animals were milked in a linear-type plant, which was developed in the "Askania Nova" IABSR by the laboratory of the Technology of production and Processing of Sheep Breeding Products.

To study the assessment of the stress response during machine milking of sheep according to a five-point system, we used the indicator of the ewe's behavioral response when they were fixed in the milking machine, putting milking cups on the nipples and directly during milking. The clinical and physiological condition of the ewes is determined by the pulse rate and respiratory movements per minute. Temperature measurements were taken, and the quantitative content of hematological parameters was studied - hemoglobin (g/l), erythrocytes (mil/l), leukocytes (thousand/l), total protein (g/l) (Vlizlo et al., 2012). Since the content of animals' blood proteins can vary significantly depending on their physiological state, the impact on the body of many environmental factors, including stress factor, the total blood protein

fractional composition was analyzed according to the albumin (%), - , - , - globulins (%); and also the protein index was determined (Andreeva et al., 2004).

Statistical processing of research results had been carried by N. A. Plokhinsky method (1969) using the Excel software package.

(%); (Andreeva et al., 2004).

Plokhinsky (1969), Excel.

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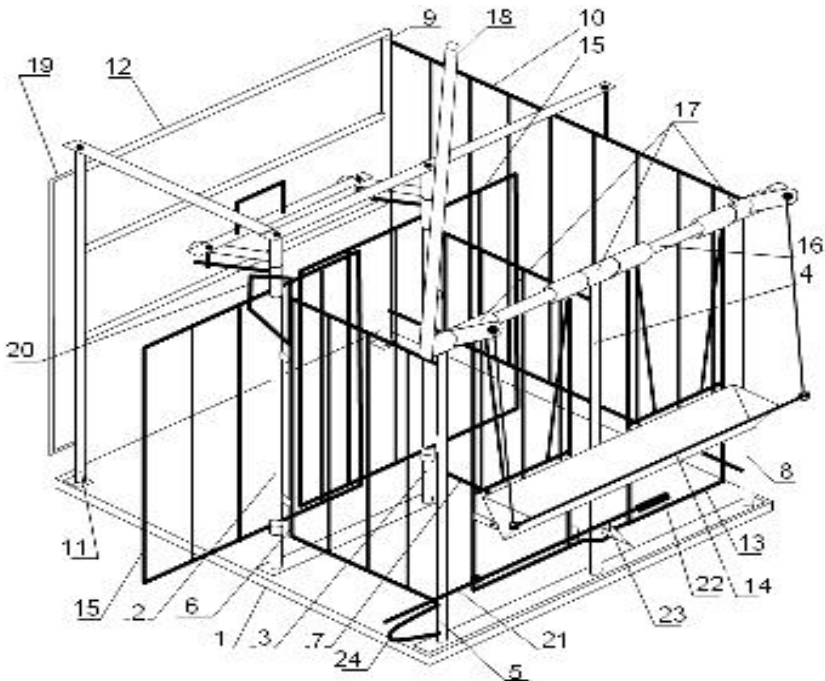
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Structural features and a structural and technological scheme of a double-place installation of a linear type for sheep milking are presented in Figure 1 and 2, which provides high adaptability. The throughput of the installation is up to 120-132 animals per hour and the time spent actually milking one pair of ewes - $65,80 \pm 2,34$ s.

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1. "Milk Line"
 Fig. 1. Two places installation for milking sheep with "Milk Line" components



. 2. -

Fig. 2. Structural-technological scheme of two places linear-type installation for sheep milking

(1) ,
 :
 , 117.0 ± 3,62
 / ,
 111.7 ± 3,89 / ,
 70-80.
 81.4 ± 2.81 / (P <0.001)
 - , 72.6 ± 0.79
 / (P <0,001)
 .
 (3,5-3,8) ,
 - 4.5

- It was established that the clinical indicators of the ewes (Table 1) were within the physiological norm, only at the beginning of the study was there a deviation in the pulse rate from the norm in both groups of animals: in Karakul sheep, 117.0 ± 3.62 beats/min (beats per minute), for Fine-Fleeced - 111.7 ± 3.89 beats/min., with the norm - 70-80. By the end of the study, this indicator returned to normal, and amounted to 81.4 ± 2.81 beats/min (P <0.001) for Fine-Fleeced, 72.6 ± 0.79 beats/min (P <0.001) for Karakul ewes. This state of affairs indicates the successful adaptation of animals to the milking process. Although the behavioral score in the group of Karakul ewes remained at a rather low level throughout the entire experiment (3.5-3.8 points), in the group of Fine-Fleeced it increased and amounted to 4.5 points at the end of the study.

1.

Table 1. Physiological indicators of ewes during milking

Indicator	Ascanian Fine-Fleeced breed		Ascanian Karakul	
	/ start	/ end	/ start	/ end
Breathing, movement/min	18,3±0,63	23,6±2,06	16,0±0,52	18,0±0,47
Heart rate, beats/min	111,7±3,89	81,4±2,81	117±3,62	72,6±0,79
Temperature, °	39,4±0,08	39,3±0,06	39,1±0,09	38,9±0,06
Behavior, score	3,5±0,21	4,5±0,19	3,2±0,18	3,8±0,21
Live weight, kg	53,2±0,86	56,4±0,87	49,1±1,57	47,5±1,49

5% (P <0,05),

3%,

(2)

The live weight index for the period of the experiment in the group of Fine-Fleeced ewes increased by 5% (P <0.05), which can be associated with the behavioral score, since the animals of this group were less shy and quietly consumed more grain during milking, and sometimes even refused to leave the installation after the completion of the process. In the group of Karakul ewes, live weight decreased by 3% because they are more sensitive to the stress load, which was provoked by the previous weaning of the lambs and the movement of the animals to new conditions.

A significant part of the animals refused to eat concentrates feeds during milking until the end of the experiment.

As regards hematological parameters (Table 2), in both groups of animals, a decrease in the number of leukocytes was observed, both at the beginning and at the end of the experiment, which may indicate a deficiency of B vitamins, as well as iron and copper in the animals' diet.

2.

Table 2. Blood indices of the investigated ewes

Indicator	Norm	Ascanian Fine-Fleeced breed (n=26)		Ascanian Karakul breed (n=20)	
		/ start	/ end	/ start	/ end
Hemoglobin, g/l	7-10	7,9±0,07	10,0±0,09	7,9±0,51	7,5±0,13
Erythrocytes, mil/l	7-12	8,6±0,36	8,9±1,41	8,5±0,48	8,2±0,12
Leukocytes, thousand/l	10-13	7,3±0,30	7,02±0,26	7,75±0,06	6,9±0,48
Total protein, g/l	6,0-7,5	6,9±0,11	7,02±0,08	7,2±0,13	5,9±0,97
Calcium, mg/100ml	9,5-12,5	11,2±0,08	10,3±0,14	10,6±0,36	10,4±0,22
Phosphorus, mg/100ml	4,5-6,5	5,9±0,25	5,9±0,22	5,7±0,18	6,1±0,22

Proteins play a leading role in the metabolism of the body. It is known that they are actively involved in most vital processes. Therefore, the study of their dynamics in animal tissues is one of the important indicators of the physiological state of their body. Proteins are necessary for the growth and development of animals, the synthesis of enzymes and hormones.

Due to the ability to form biochemical complexes, proteins take an active part in the transport of nutrient and biologically active (enzymes, hormones, vitamins, macro- and microelements) substances in the body, which also perform a protective function. One of the main indicators of protein metabolism in the body is the content of total protein and protein fractions in the blood.

In our studies, there was observed a deviation from the norm of the protein composition of the blood (Table 3), so at the beginning of the study, the percentage of albumin in both groups of animals was reduced, which may indicate lack of protein during pregnancy and the first months of lactation in the ewes, later this figure returned to normal, and in the group of Karakul ewes even exceeded the norm by 6%, which may be due to slight dehydration of the body. So the concentration of protein in the blood and the ratio of its fractions are relatively

6%,

- constant, but are in continuous dynamic equilibrium with the protein composition of body tissues.

3. Content of total protein and its fractions (g/l) in serum (g/l)

Indicator	Norm	Ascanian Karakul breed			
		Ascanian Fine-Fleeced breed (n=26)		(n=20)	
		/ start	/ end	/ start	/ end
Total protein, g/l	6,0-7,5	6,9±0,11	7,02±0,08	7,2±0,13	5,9±0,97
/ Albumin,%	40-50	28,9±1,33	44,9±4,10	35,2±2,46	56,03±2,64
- globulins,%	12-20	7,6±2,57	6,1±2,21	8,9±3,44	6,7±2,20
- globulins	7-12	7,5±2,40	5,6±0,44	6,7±0,95	4,7±1,26
- globulins	20-35	55,9±2,17	42,1±6,63	49,8±1,33	32,5±4,12
Protein index	0,7-1,0	0,4	0,8	0,5	1,2

- In addition, a decrease in the content of total protein, albumin and gamma globulins in blood serum leads to an increase in catabolic and a decrease in protein synthesizing and immunobiological processes in the body during stress.

- The level of these changes depends on the state of the adaptive mechanisms of their body, due to age and genetic factors, as well as the strength and duration of technological stress factors.

- In both studied groups of sheep, a decrease in - and -globulins was observed, while -globulin was significantly increased, which is typical for chronic liver diseases (hepatitis or hepatosis).

- Since the average age of animals in both groups was 5 years, and with sufficiently intense physiological stresses on the body (annual pregnancy and lactation), destructive changes in the liver can occur.

- Although the total blood protein is within normal limits, but as a result of an imbalance in the fractional composition of proteins, a deviation from the norm of the protein index is observed.

5

CONCLUSIONS

The research results allow us to conclude that the Ascanian selection ewes relatively quickly formed a reflex to the milking process using a two-place installation of a linear type. The results of hematological studies indicate the absence of the effect of stress on sheep during milking, or it is not significant and the animals quickly adapt to this technological process.

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Effect of the Economic Year on the Milk Yield of 'Staroplaninski Tsigai' Sheep Breed

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Original scientific paper

SUMMARY

126

2020 (62)

120-

120

30±3

The objective of the present study is to determine the effect of the economic year on the milk yield of 'Staroplaninski Tsigai' sheep breed. It was conducted with 126 ewes of 'Staroplaninski Tsigai' on the first, second and third lactation in 2019 (64 ewes) and 2020 (62 ewes). The animals were bred in the Experimental Base of RIMSA in Troyan and fed according to specific rates with free access to water, as animals were grazing on a mountain pasture in the months of April-July. Standard 120-day milking yield was determined individually by the amount of milk in each milk control group controlled by AC method of ICAR. The milk yield of the sheep for 120 days was calculated as the sum of the milk yield from the individual control periods (April-July, with an average duration of 30±3 days). The information was processed by the methods of variation statistics.

The effect of the economic year on the studied indicators was established by

ANOVA

F-

t-

Data Analysis, Microsoft Excel 2016.

(F=4.3*)

(50.5 l 46.6

l)

(2019 .).

ANOVA model of one-way analysis of variance. The reliability of the impact of factors was determined by the values of Fisher's F-test. The reliability of the differences between the studied groups – by Student's t-test, using Data Analysis package, Microsoft Excel 2016. A significant impact of the farm year factor (F = 4.3*) on the values of milk yield (50.5 l and 46.6 l) was found in 'Staroplaninski Tsigai' sheep breed. An uncharacteristic form of the lactation curve was observed for the first experimental year (2019).

Key words: 'Staroplaninski Tsigai', milk yield, effect of the year

INTRODUCTION

'Staroplaninski Tsigai' is one of the sheep breeds raised in the region of the Central Balkan Mountain. It is considered that 'Tsigai' breed is not characterized by high milk yield, but the diverse natural and climatic features of the region provide conditions for varying this trait in a very wide range for sheep, which are grazing in mountainous areas (Odjakova et al., 2002).

The composition of sheep milk and its yield varies widely and is influenced by various factors, such as breed, age, lactation stage, season, milking and feeding system, geographical region and others (Fegeros et al., 1995; Kafedjiev et al., 1998; Adrian and Arancon, 2011; Gerchev et al., 2018).

Environmental factors that affect sheep milk yield have been described by a number of scientists (Gonzalo et al., 1994; Cappio-Borlino et al., 1997; Ploumi et al., 1998; Oravcová et al., 2006).

Meteorological factors, such as temperature, humidity, wind speed and radiation, might have an impact on animal comfort and stress levels (Naskar et al., 2012). This in turn leads to a reduction in milk yield, as temperature has a significant direct

(Odjakova e al., 2002).

(Fegeros et al., 1995; Kafedjiev et al., 1998; Adrian and Arancon, 2011; Gerchev et al., 2018).

(Gonzalo et al., 1994; Cappio-Borlino et al., 1997; Ploumi et al., 1998; Oravcová et al., 2006).

(Naskar et al., 2012).

(Silanikove, 2000).
 Gerchev (1998)
 -
 (Gerchev and Mihaylova, 1998).

impact on the biological functions of animals (Silanikove, 2000).

Gerchev (1998) found a tendency for higher milk yield in 'Staroplaninski Tsigai' sheep breed when using mountain and high mountain pastures, which corresponds to the type and phase of development of grassland (Gerchev and Mihaylova, 1998).

In Bulgaria the production of sheep's milk is carried out during a certain season, due to the seasonality in the reproduction of the breeds in our country.

The objective of the present study is to determine the effect of the economic year on the milk yield of 'Staroplaninski Tsigai' sheep breed.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study was conducted with 126 ewes of 'Staroplaninski Tsigai' on the first, second and third lactation in 2019 (64 ewes) and 2020 (62 ewes). The animals were bred in the Experimental Base of RIMSA in Troyan and fed according to specific rates with free access to water, as animals were grazing on a mountain pasture in the months of April-July.

Standard 120-day milking yield was determined individually by the amount of milk in each milk control group controlled by AC method of ICAR. The milk yield for the control day was calculated by multiplying the milk amount obtained in the individual control in the morning by the herd coefficient, which was established for the control day in relation to the amount of morning and evening milk, to the morning milk in case of double milking.

The milk yield for a standard 120-day milking period (April-July) was calculated as the sum of the milk yields from the individual control periods of each sheep.

The control period was 30 ± 3 days on average. The milk yield for one control

126
 2020 . (62) . 2019 . (64)
 -
 -
 120-
 ICAR.
 120-
 (-)
 30±3

ANOVA

F-

t-

Data Analysis, Microsoft Excel 2016.

period is the milk production for the day of the control and the number of days in the control period.

The information was processed by the methods of variation statistics. The effect of the economic year on the studied indicators was established by ANOVA model of one-way analysis of variance. The reliability of the impact of factors was determined by the values of Fisher's F-test. The reliability of the differences between the studied groups – by Student's t-test, using Data Analysis package, Microsoft Excel 2016.

(Zhelyazkova et al., 2014).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Milk yield is highly dependent on the environmental impact and in particular on the forage and climatic conditions during the respective marketing year or more precisely on the feeding and care conditions on the farms (Zhelyazkova et al., 2014).

1. **120**
Table 1. Impact on economic year on a 120-day milking yield

ANOVA	SS	df	MS	F
/ Source of Variation				
/ Between Groups	477.44	1	477.44	4.294 *
/ Within group	13786.53	124	111.18	
/ Total	14263.97	125		

120-

F-

(P<0.05)

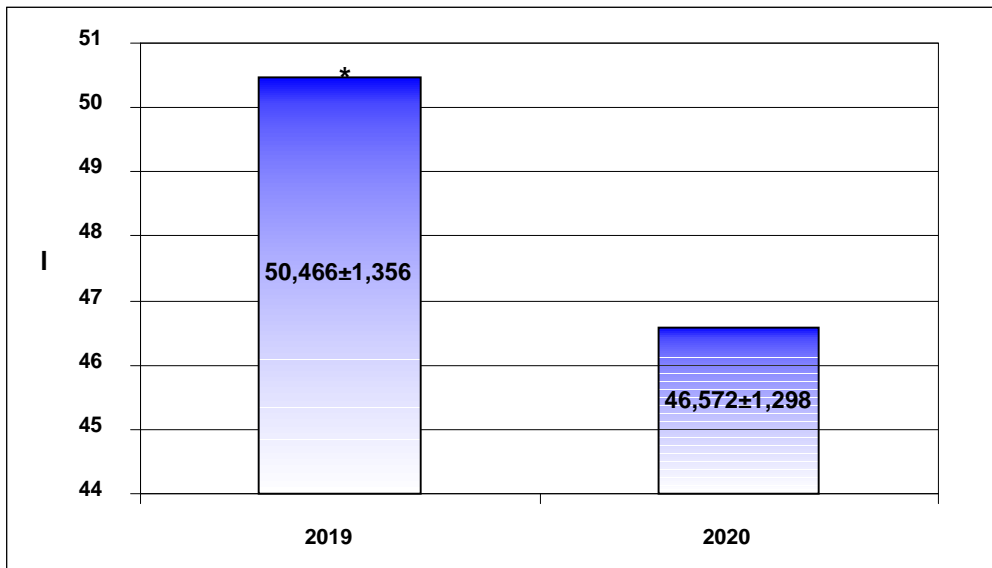
(F=4.294*) (1).

Zhelyazkova et al. (2014)

(P<0.001)

When studying the effect of the economic year on the standard 120-day lactation of sheep, the obtained value of the F-criterion shows a significant impact (P<0.05) of the studied factor on the variation of milk yield (F=4.294*) (Table 1).

Zhelyazkova et al. (2014) found in the Synthetic population Bulgarian dairy that the effect of the economic year was statistically proven with a high degree of probability (P<0.001) on milk yield.



1. (l) 120-
Fig. 1. Average milk yield (l) for a 120-day milking period

1 -

2019 . 50.5 l,
 46.6 l.

2020 . -

(2017).

Gerchev et al.
 (2013) 2.5 .
 41.22 l, 3.5 . 49.31 l,
 2019 .

Genkovski et al. (2003)
 2.5 - 42.40 l; 3.5 . - 46.80 l;
 4.5 . - 45.70 l. 5.5 . 46.40 l,

2020 .
 Popova and Plugin (2003)

Figure 1 shows the milk yield of the studied years. The average value of milk yield of 'Staroplaninski Tsigai' sheep breed in 2019 was 50.5 l, and that in 2020 – 46.6 l. According to this indicator, the lactating animals during the two studied years were within the limits of milk yield indicated in the Catalogue of farm animal breeds in the Republic of Bulgaria (2017).

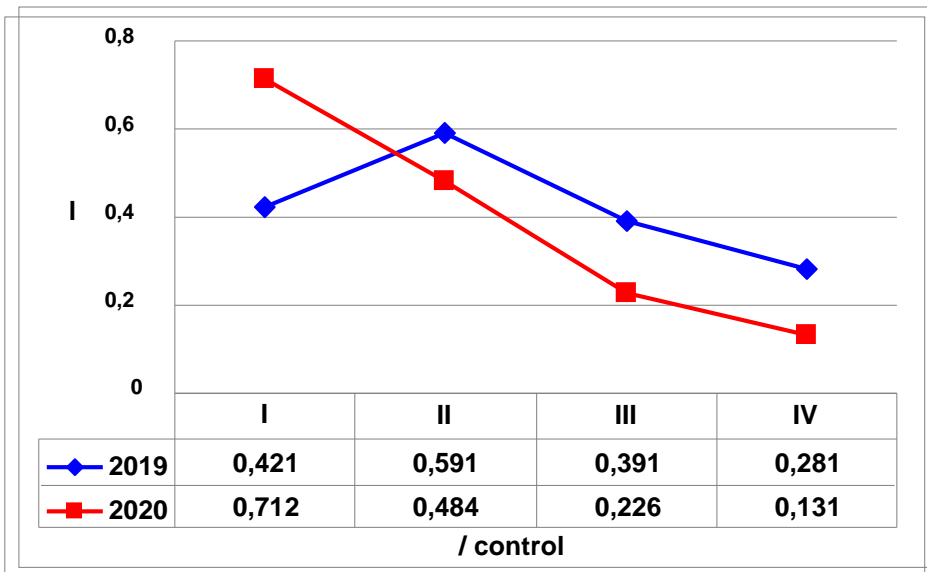
The lower milk yield in 2020 could be partly explained by the higher number of young animals lactating for the first time.

Gerchev et al. (2013) reported for at 2.5 years of age milk yield of 41.22 l, and at 3.5 years of 49.31 l, which was lower than we found in 2019.

Milk yield in 'Tsigai' sheep of different ages was reported by Genkovski et al. (2003) and is respectively: at 2.5 years – 42.40 l; at 3.5 years – 46.80 l; at 4.5 years – 45.70 l. and at 5.5 years was 46.40 l, which is close to the results we obtained in 2020.

Popova and Plugin, (2003) monitored the dynamics of milk productivity of 'Tsigai' ewes, establishing

4- 48.2 l, 75.9 l 94.4 l groups with 48.2 l, 75.9 l and 94.4 l of milk for a 4-month lactation. The high variability of the milk yield and its chemical composition allows high effect in a mass selection of ewes on these grounds.



2.
Fig. 2. Lactation curves for experimental years

(2019 . 2020 .)
 2.

2019 .
 2020 . -
 (2019 . - 0.421 l)
 (, 0.591 l)

2019 .,
 Ivanova (2013),

The lactation curves reflecting the sheep milk amount for the control day for both experimental years (2019 and 2020) are presented in Figure 2. An unusual shape of the lactation curve in 2019 and a curve with a characteristic profile in 2020 are observed. The low milk yield of the first (in 2019 – 0.421 l) compared to the second (respectively 0.591 l) milking control can be explained by the shorter time from the beginning of milking to the first control, due to which the animals have not yet reached their full potential.

Then, by the end of the milking period, the milk yield decreased following the normal patterns of lactation. Similar to what we found for 2019, an uncharacteristic lactation curve was obtained by Ivanova (2013), with a milk yield of the second milking control significantly higher than the first control.

0.281 I IV (.)
 0.591 I II (.) 2019
 . Genkovski and Gerchev (2006)
 -
 -
) 0.712 I, - 0.131 I IV
 (.) 2020 .
 2020 .
 -
 Gerchev (2010)
 3.5-

The data analysis on the average daily milk yield shows that it varied from 0.281 I for IV control (July) to 0.591 I for II control (May) in 2019. Genkovski and Gerchev (2006) also received the highest average daily milk yield in May.

The highest average daily milk yield was found at the I control (April) with 0.712 I, and the lowest at the IV control (July) with 0.131 I in 2020. In April 2020, the milk yield of 'Tsigai' sheep was higher compared to the previous year. Our data coincide with the results reported by Gerchev (2010) for 'Tsigai' sheep aged 3.5 years, for the same month of the year.

CONCLUSIONS

1.
 (F=4.3*)
 (50.5 I
 46.6 I.).
 2.
 2019 .

1. During the study of the effect of the marketing year on the milk yield, a significant impact of the farm year factor (F=4.3*) on the values of milk yield (50.5 I and 46.6 I) was found in 'Staroplaninski Tsigai' sheep breed.

2. An unusual shape of the lactation curve for 2019 was established.

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Effect of the Marketing Year on the Milk Yield of 'Karakachanska' Sheep Breed

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Original scientific paper

SUMMARY

The objective of the present study is to determine the effect of the marketing year on the milk yield of 'Karakachanska' sheep breed. It was conducted with 127 ewes of 'Karakachanska' sheep breed' at the first, second and third lactation in 2019 (63 ewes) and 2020 (64 ewes). The animals were bred in the Experimental Base of RIMSA in Troyan and fed according to the norms with free access to water, as the animals were grazing on a mountain pasture in April-July. Standard 120-day milk yield was determined individually by the amount of milk in each milking control group controlled by AC method of ICAR. The milk yield of the sheep for 120 days was calculated as the sum of the milk yield from the individual control periods (April-July, with an average duration of 30±3 days). The information was processed by the methods of variation statistics. The effect of the marketing year on the studied indicators was established by ANOVA

F-
 – t-
 Microsoft Excel 2016.
 (F=4.6*)
 (46.4 l 34.5 l)

Data Analysis,

- model of one-way analysis of variance. The reliability of the impact of factors was determined by the values of Fisher's F-test.

- The reliability of the differences between the studied groups – by Student's t-test, using Data Analysis package, Microsoft Excel 2016. A significant impact of the farm year factor (F=4.3 *) on the values of milk yield (50.5 l and 46.6 l) was found in 'Karakachanska' sheep breed. There were noncharacteristic lactation curves in both experimental years.

Key words: 'Karakachanska' sheep breed, milk yield, effect of the year

INTRODUCTION

- 'Karakachanska' sheep breed is bred mainly in the mountain and foot-hill regions of Bulgaria. The breed is small-sized, well adapted to the harsh conditions in these areas, besides it is a part of the cultural heritage of people in the region of the Balkans. Local sheep breeds, including 'Karakachanska' sheep breed, are a valuable genetic reserve for the preservation of biological diversity (Stojiljkovic et al., 2015; Staykova and Penchev, 2018).

- The breed is raised to obtain milk, wool and lambs. The sheep milk yield and its composition vary widely and is impacted by various genetic and non-genetic factors (Morsy, 2002; Hamdon, 2005; Oravcová et al., 2006, 2007, 2015; Allah et al., 2011; Komprej et al., 2012; Pacinovski et al., 2016; Gerchev et al., 2018), as well as stress levels (Silanikove, 2000; Naskar et al., 2012; Abecia et al., 2017).

- The objective of the present study is to determine the effect of the marketing year on the milk yield of 'Karakachanska' sheep breed.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

- It was conducted with 127 ewes of 'Karakachanska' sheep breed' at the first, second and third lactation in 2019 (63

(Stojiljkovic et al., 2015; Staykova and Penchev, 2018).

(Morsy, 2002; Hamdon, 2005, Oravcová et al., 2006, 2007, 2015; Allah et al., 2011; Komprej et al., 2012; Pacinovski et al., 2016; Gerchev et al., 2018),

(Silanikove, 2000; Naskar et al., 2012; Abecia et al., 2017).

127

2019 . (63) 2020 . (64)
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 120-
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 ANOVA
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 F-
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 Data Analysis, Microsoft Excel 2016.

ewes) and 2020 (64 ewes). The animals were bred in the Experimental Base of RIMSA in Troyan and fed according to the norms with free access to water, as the animals were grazing in a mountain pasture in April-July.

The standard 120-day milk yield was determined individually by the amount of milk in each milking control group controlled by AC method of ICAR. The milk yield for the control day was calculated by multiplying the milk amount obtained in the individual control in the morning by the herd coefficient, which was established for the control day in relation to the amount of morning and evening milk compared to the morning milk in case of double milking. The milk yield for a standard 120-day milking period (April-July) was calculated as the sum of the milk yields from the individual control periods per each sheep. The control period was 30±3 days on average. The milk yield per one control period is the milk production per the day of the control and the number of days during the control period.

The information was processed by the methods of variation statistics. The effect of the marketing year on the studied indicators was established by ANOVA model of one-way analysis of variance. The reliability of the impact of factors was determined by the values of Fisher's F-test. The reliability of the differences between the studied groups - by Student's t-test, using Data Analysis package, Microsoft Excel 2016.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The variance analysis for establishing the effect of the marketing year on the variation in the 120-day milk yield is reliable (P<0.05) (Table 1).

(1).

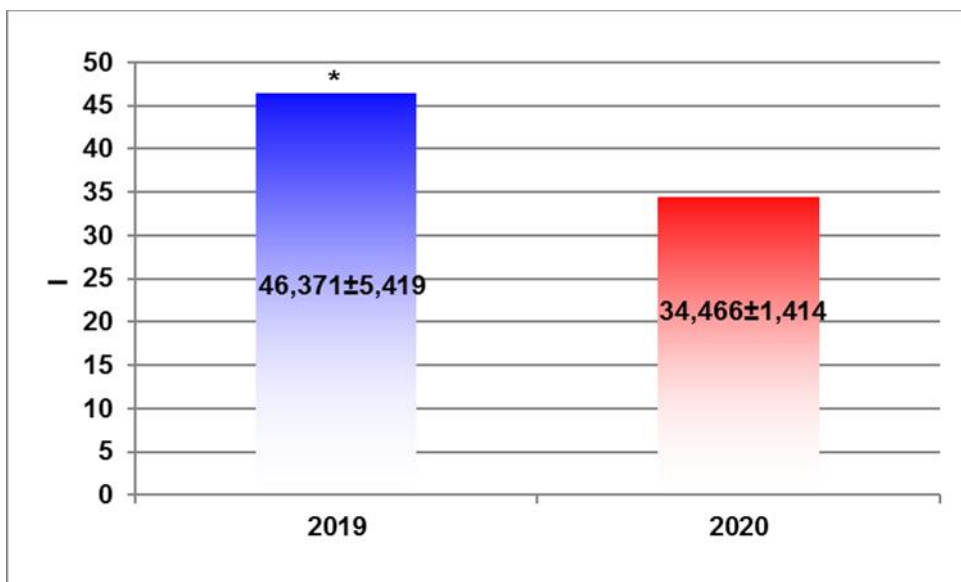
120-
 (P<0.05)

Table 1. Effect of the marketing year on the 120-day milk yield of 'Karakachanska' sheep breed

ANOVA	SS	df	MS	F
/ Source of Variation				
/ Between Groups	4500.32	1	4500.32	4.582 *
/ Within group	122773.9	125	982.19	
/ Total	127274.2	126		

(Zhelyazkova et al., 2014; Staykova et al., 2015). Zhelyazkova et al. (2014) found in sheep from the Synthetic population of Bulgarian milk breed that the effect of the marketing year was proved statistically with a high degree of probability ($P < 0.001$) on milk yield. Figure 1 shows the milk yield in the experimental years. The average value of milk yield of 'Karakachanska' sheep breed in 2019 was 46.4 l and in 2020 was 34.5 l. According to this indicator, the lactating animals during the two experimental years were within the limits of milk yield indicated in the Catalogue of livestock animal breeds in the Republic of Bulgaria (2017), but in 2020 they registered lower milk yield. The lower milk yield in 2020 could be partly explained by the higher number of young animals lactating for the first time.

Milk yield is highly dependent on the environmental impact and in particular on the forage and climatic conditions during the respective marketing year or more precisely on the feeding and care conditions on the farms. Although the genetic potential is determined by the animal breed, the environmental impact has a decisive role in reaching the maximum (Zhelyazkova et al., 2014; Staykova et al., 2015). Zhelyazkova et al. (2014) found in sheep from the Synthetic population of Bulgarian milk breed that the effect of the marketing year was proved statistically with a high degree of probability ($P < 0.001$) on milk yield. Figure 1 shows the milk yield in the experimental years. The average value of milk yield of 'Karakachanska' sheep breed in 2019 was 46.4 l and in 2020 was 34.5 l. According to this indicator, the lactating animals during the two experimental years were within the limits of milk yield indicated in the Catalogue of livestock animal breeds in the Republic of Bulgaria (2017), but in 2020 they registered lower milk yield. The lower milk yield in 2020 could be partly explained by the higher number of young animals lactating for the first time.



. 1. (l) 120-

Fig. 1. Average milk yield (l) for a 120-day milking period in 'Karakachanska' sheep breed

2019 .
 Tsochev et al. (1999), 41.131 l.
 Genkovski et al. (2002) 55.970 l,
 Boykovski (2003) 37.640 l.
 (2019 . 2020
 .) 2.
 (2019 - 0.386 l 0.311 l -
 2020 .) (,
 0.556 l 0.391 l)

- Thus, the milk yield of 'Karakachanska' sheep registered in the current experiment in 2019 was close to that found by Tsochev et al. (1999), which was 41.131 l. The variation on this basis in different authors is very large, as in Genkovski et al. (2002) it was 55.970 l, and in Boykovski (2003) it was 37.640 l.

- The lactation curves reflecting the sheep milk yield for the control day for both experimental years (2019 and 2020) are presented in Figure 2. There were noncharacteristic lactation curves in both experimental years. The lower milk yield of the first (in 2019 - 0.386 l and 0.311 l in 2020) compared to the second (respectively 0.556 l) milking control can be explained by the shorter time from the beginning of milking, due to which the animals have not yet reached their full potential. Then, by the end of the milking period, the milk yield decreased following the normal patterns of lactation course.

- Similar results for a tendency to decrease milk yield at the end of the

et al. (1998) Oravcová et al. (2015).
Petrova

lactation period are shown by the lactation curve in the studies of Petrova et al. (1998) and Oravcová et al. (2015).

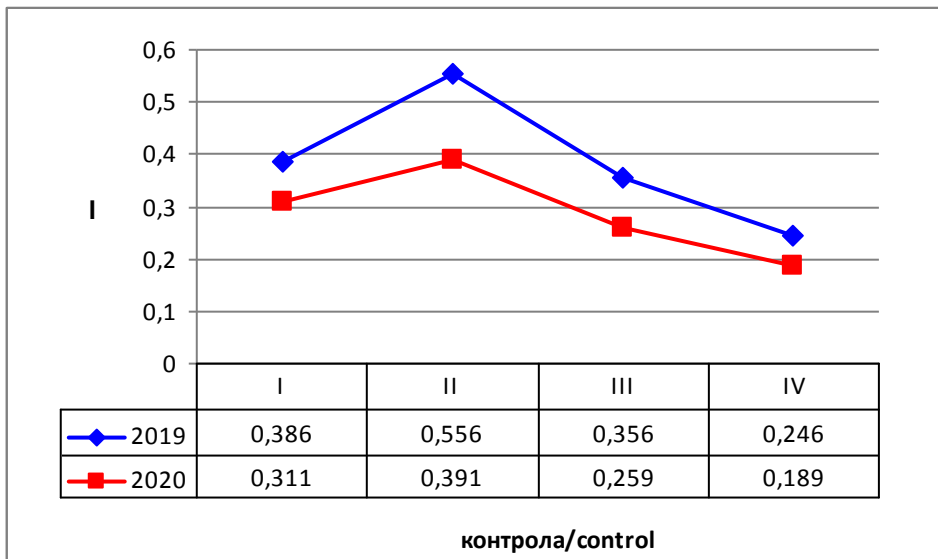


Fig. 2. Lactation curves for experimental years

II (.) 0.556 I 2019
 . 0.391 I 2020 .
 Tsochev et al. (1999).
 : - 0.373 I,
 - 0.473 I, - 0.249 I
 - 0.165 I
 2019 .
 2020 .
 , Gerchev et al. (2017)
 -
 0.368-0.440 I. Genkovski et al. (2002)
 - , 0.580 0.290 I,
 -

In both years, the highest average daily milk yield was established at the II control (May) 0.556 I in 2019 and 0.391 I for 2020, which corresponds to the findings of Tsochev et al. (1999). The values reported by the authors for the average daily milk yield by months are as follows: April – 0.373 I, May – 0.473 I, June – 0, 249 I and July – 0.165 I and is close to what we received.

In May 2019, the milk yield of 'Karakachanska' sheep was higher than in 2020.

In 'Karakachanska' sheep, depending on the pigmentation of the fleece and the head and legs, Gerchev et al. (2017) found a higher average daily milk yield in April – 0.368-0.440 I. Genkovski et al. (2002) reported an average daily milk yield in the period April-July, from 0.580 to 0.290 I, and also reported the highest value of the indicator in April, which does not coincide with the present study.

- However, the average daily milk yield
- established by the two author teams is close
- to the results in the present study.

CONCLUSIONS

- During the study of the effect of the marketing year on the milk yield, a significant impact of the marketing year factor ($F=4.6^*$) on the values of milk yield (46.4 l and 34.5 l) was found in 'Karakachanska' sheep breed.

($F=4.6^*$)
- (46.4 l 34.5 l).

There were noncharacteristic lactation curves in both experimental years.

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Study on the Growth Abilities, Quantity and Quality Indicators of Lamb Meat of 'Kotlenska' and 'Tetevenska' Breeds

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Original scientific paper

SUMMARY

A comparative experiment was conducted at the Experimental Base of the Research Institute of Mountain Stockbreeding and Agriculture in Troyan. Its objective was to observe the fattening abilities, meat yield and meat quality of local sheep breeds, such as 'Tetevenska' and 'Kotlenska' (included in the list of Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry for endangered breeds).

The animals included in the experiment were weaned at 45 days of age at 14-23 kg live weight and intensively fattened for 60 days. As a result of the study, it was found that 'Tetevenska' male lambs had the highest growth intensity, higher average daily growth for the whole fattening period with 0.250 kg, while the 'Kotlenska' male lambs were 0.201 kg. The lowest consumption of fodder in FUG and PDI (Protein digestible in intestine) per 1 kg growth was found in 'Kotlenska' male lambs (5.77 FUG and 897g PDI). Male lambs of the Teteven breed spent 18.63% less FUG and 18.64% less PDI per 1 kg of growth than females of the same breed.

(
45-
kg
14-23
60
- 0,250 kg,
0,201 kg.
1 kg
5,77 897 g
18,63% - 18,64%
1 kg

Male and female lambs of 'Kotlenska' breed had higher values in terms of hot and cold carcass weight than 'Tetevenska' breed.

The 'Tetevenska' female lambs had the highest slaughter yield (42.16%), and the male lambs of the same breed had the lowest (37.72%).

The ratio of bones to meat (coefficient of meat yield) in 'Tetevenska' male lambs was 1: 2.66, and in females was 1: 3.04. The highest coefficient was registered for 'Tetevenska' female lambs and the lowest for female 'Kotelska' lambs.

Key words: 'Tetevenska' sheep breed, 'Kotlenska' sheep breed, lambs, fattening abilities, growth rate, coefficient of meat yield

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30 40 kg (Stankov, 1983; Boykovski, 1995; Nedelchev and Raicheva, 2001; Slavova et al., 2001; Nedelchev, 2005; Ignatova et al., 2005; Slavov et al., 2005; Laleva et al., 2007; Raschidi et al., 2008; Stancheva et al., 2011).

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Key words: 'Tetevenska' sheep breed, 'Kotlenska' sheep breed, lambs, fattening abilities, growth rate, coefficient of meat yield

INTRODUCTION

The growth and development of animals are determined by their hereditary information, environmental conditions (mainly nutrition), and the interaction of these two factors.

The economic efficiency of sheep farming is largely determined by meat revenues and feed costs per unit of production. In a market economy, an in-depth study of the optimal timing for fattening young animals and the most effective pre-slaughter weight is imperative.

Studies by many authors on the fattening and slaughtering abilities and qualities of lamb meat from local (coarse-wool, semi-fine-wool, fine-wool and dairy sheep breeds and their crossings) show that the optimal live weight for slaughter is between 30 and 40 kg (Stankov, 1983; Boykovski, 1995; Nedelchev and Raicheva, 2001; Slavova et al., 2001; Nedelchev, 2005; Ignatova et al., 2005; Slavov et al., 2005; Laleva et al., 2007; Raschidi et al., 2008; Stancheva et al., 2011 etc.).

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 ()
 ,
 25-28 kg
 10,00-13,00 kg
 (Stancheva and Staykova, 2009).
 Cunhal-Sendium et al. (2003)
 , 68-75%
 8,5-13,00 kg.
 Pinkas and Marinova (1984)
 ,
 .
 ()
).

- The preferences of consumers in
 - some European countries (Italy and
 Greece) to consume lamb from so-called
 dairy lambs (light carcasses) and the
 associated certain prices provide for
 lambs to be sold at 25-28 kg live weight,
 corresponding to 10.00-13.00 kg carcass
 weight (Stancheva and Staykova, 2009).

Cunhal-Sendium et al. (2003) from
 their marketing research in Spain concluded
 that 68-75% of the lamb carcasses at the
 market weighed 8.5-13.00 kg.

- Pinkas and Marinova (1984) argue
 - that criteria for the taste and technological
 qualities of meat will in future be included
 as key criteria in the breeding and
 selection programs of different species of
 farm animals.

- The objective of the present study
 - was to establish the fattening abilities,
 meat yield and meat qualities of male and
 female lambs of 'Tetevenska' and
 'Kotlenska' sheep breeds (included in the
 list of Ministry of Agriculture, Food and
 Forestry as being endangered).

MATERIAL AND METHODS

2019

- The comparative experiment was
 conducted in 2019 in the Experimental
 Base of RIMSA in Troyan and the meat
 laboratory of Trakia University in Stara
 Zagora. The animals included in the
 experiment were taken from farms raising
 purebred herds of the above-mentioned
 breeds in the areas of Teteven and Kotel.
 - The total number of experimental lambs
 was 16. Four groups – two of each breed,
 were formed, including four male and four
 female lambs, respectively. Experimental
 animals were weaned at 45 days of age at
 14-23 kg live weight. The groups were
 formed by the method of analogues - an
 equal number of male and female lambs
 and an equal number of singles and twins.
 - The animals were raised freely in boxes
 - on non-removable litter, in accordance
 - with the requirements to the parameters

16.

45-

14-23 kg

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Growth intensity/rate and feed consumption per unit of lamb production are the factors determining the economic efficiency of sheep farming in the foothills and mountains of Bulgaria, and for herds raised without milking, it is crucial.

The data for accumulation of live weight for a 60-day fattening period of lambs from the studied breeds in the region of the Central Balkan Mountain are showed in Table 1.

Table 1. Average live weight of lambs at the beginning and end of the experiment and average daily growth for a 60-day fattening period in kg

Breed	n	Sex	/ Live weight at the beginning of the experiment $\bar{x} \pm S_x$	/ Live weight at the end of the experiment $\bar{x} \pm S_x$	Absolute growth, kg	Average daily gain, kg
'Tetevenska'	4	/ M	16.45±0.61	31.25±1.13	14.80±1.14	0.250±0.02
	4	/ F	16.95±1.05	29.00±0.14	12.05±0.93	0.200±0.02
'Kotlenska'	4	M / M	20.75±1.11	32.75±0.63	12.00±0.58	0.201±0.01
	4	/ F	20.00±1.22	30.00±1.94	10.00±1.13	0.170±0.02

Male lambs of 'Tetevenska' breed had the highest growth intensity compared to those of the other 3 experimental groups. The average daily gain for the whole fattening period was 0.250 kg, while the males of 'Kotlenska' breed was 0.201 kg, which was 20% less. Growth rate of 'Tetevenska' female lambs was also higher by an average of 0.034 kg (by 15%) compared to the analogous group of 'Kotlenska' breed. When the experiment was set, the lowest average live weight (16.45 kg) was registered for 'Tetevenska' male lambs, but in the fattening process they went ahead of the female animals. A higher growth rate was also registered in male 'Kotlenska' breed compared to female with 15%.

The feed consumption in FUG and PDI per 1 kg of growth was the lowest in 'Tetevenska' male lambs (3.93 and 611 g PDI), and the highest in 'Kotlenska'

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5,77 897 g . - female lambs (5.77 FUG and 897 g PDI).
 18,63% - 18,64% - Male lambs of 'Tetevenska' breed spent
 18,63% less FUG and 18.64% less PDI
 1 kg (2). per 1 kg of growth than females of the
 same breed.

2. Feed consumption, FUG and PDI per 1kg of growth

Breed	n	Sex	1kg Feed consumption per 1kg of growth		Fodder units for growth (FUG)	Protein digestible in intestine (PDI)
			Concentrated fodder, kg	Bulky fodder, kg		
'Tetevenska'	4	/ M	2.02	3.56	3.93	611
	4	/ F	2.48	4.37	4.83	751
'Kotlenska'	4	/ M	2.49	4.32	4.81	748
	4	/ F	2.99	5.18	5.77	897

2 - The data analysis in Table 2 shows
 that the male 'Tetevenska' breed
 achieved 1 kg growth with 18.30% less
 FUG and 18.32% less PDI compared to
 those of 'Kotlenska' breed. Female lambs
 of 'Tetevenska' breed spent 16.29% less
 FUG and 16.28% less PDI per 1 kg of
 growth than females of 'Kotlenska' breed.

The established mean values of live
 weight before slaughter, hot carcass
 weight, cold carcass weight and slaughter
 yield by breed and sex are shown in Table
 3.

3. Pre-slaughter live weight, carcass weight and slaughter yield

/ Breed		/ 'Tetevenska'		/ 'Kotlenska'	
n		3	3	3	3
Pre-slaughter live weight, kg	±Sx	30.67±1.36	27.83±0.17	33.33±0.33	30.17±2.24
	C	7.71	1.04	1.73	12.87
Hot carcass weight, kg	±Sx	11.57±0.79	11.73±0.15	13.63±0.38	12.17±1.01
	C	11.80	2.14	4.88	14.43
Cold carcass weight, kg	±Sx	11.28±0.75	11.24±0.11	13.19±0.43	11.83±0.92
	C	11.50	1.71	5.70	13.54
Slaughter yield, %		37.72	42.16	40.90	40.33

The data in the table show that the
 highest pre-slaughter live weight are male
 lambs from the Kotlen breed – 33.33 kg,
 and the lowest from 'Tetevenska' female

- lambs, and the difference is mathematically proven.

- Male and female lambs of 'Kotlenska' breed had higher values in terms of hot and cold carcass weight than 'Tetevenska' breed. There is a mathematical proof of the differences between 'Kotlenska' and 'Tetevenska' breeds. The 'Kotlenska' male lambs were superior to the females in terms of these two characteristics, and the differences between 'Tetevenska' lambs were minimal.

- The 'Tetevenska' female lambs had the highest slaughter yield (42.16%), and the male lambs of the same breed had the lowest (37.72%).

- The yield of 'Kotlenska' lambs occupies an intermediate position, and there is no significant difference between females and males.

- The results of the cutting of the carcasses according to the methodology are shown in Table 4.

- 42,16%,
- 37,72%.

4.

%

Table 4. Weight of the individual parts in the carcass cutting and % of the weight of the half

Parts of carcass cutting	/ Breed							
	/ 'Tetevenska'				/ 'Kotlenska'			
	/ m		/ f		/ m		/ f	
	kg	%	kg	%	kg	%	kg	%
/ Neck	0.484	8.50	0.484	8.26	0.538	8.04	0.397	6.72
/ Shoulder	1.095	19.20	1.048	17.88	1.074	16.05	1.127	19.11
/ Loins	0.601	10.55	0.724	12.35	0.707	10.57	0.574	9.73
/ leg	1.877	32.92	1.805	30.81	2.075	31.01	1.859	31.51
/ Chest	1.220	21.41	1.311	22.37	1.534	22.92	1.341	22.73
/ Belly	0.370	6.49	0.346	5.91	0.493	7.37	0.434	7.35
/ Tail	0.082	1.44	0.090	1.53	0.086	1.29	0.095	1.61

4 From the results shown in Table 4 for the cutting of the left half, it is evident that the leg had the highest weight and the largest relative share of it in all experimental groups.

- The highest average value on this indicator was found in male 'Kotlenska'

2,075 kg (31,01%).
 0,200 kg
 - 1,877 kg
 (32,92%) 1,859 kg (31,51%)
 -
 - 1,805 kg (30,81%).

kg - 1,220 21,43%

67,71%,
 - 66,32%,
 - 66,22%
 - 64,22%.
 61,79%,
 - 56,79%.
 - 23,24%,

- breed lambs with 2.075 kg (31.01%). The average values for leg weight in the other groups yield by about 0.200 kg from that of the above-mentioned group, as in 'Tetevenska' male lambs, the absolute figures are 1.877 kg (32,92%) and 1.859 kg (31,51%) in 'Kotlenska' females, and the lowest in 'Tetevenska' female lambs with 1.805 kg (30.81%).

The established average indicators for the relative share of the weight of the left half in kilograms and percentages in second place are they, and the chest. The lowest is the absolute weight in kg 1.220 and 21.43% in the group of 'Tetevenska' female animals.

It is noteworthy that the averages of the other three groups do not differ significantly. The indicators for the shoulder meat are in the third place, as the differences among groups are relatively small. The results obtained in the rest sections for the weight ratio of the half parts are with similar average values and do not give reason for specifying of breed and sex differentiation.

Data on the content of meat, bones and fat in the individual parts of the carcass after boning, in percentages, are shown in Table 5.

The obtained results show that the highest percentage of meat from the leg was gathered from male 'Kotlenska' lambs, followed by the 'Tetevenska' female lambs with 66.32%, 'Tetevenska' male lambs with 66.22% and the lowest in 'Kotlenska' female lambs with 64.22%. The results are mixed, both between breeds and between sexes. The summarized data show that the highest percentage of meat was obtained from of the group of 'Tetevenska' male lambs with 61.79%, and the lowest from 'Kotlenska' female lambs with 56.79%. The highest relative share of bones in the carcass was registered in the males of 'Tetevenska' breed with 23.24%, followed by the female 'Kotlenska' breed

23,09% - with 23.09% and the lowest in the 'Tetevenska' female lambs with 19.43%.
 - 19,43%. The results for the percentage of fat content are quite different. The females of 'Tetevenska' breed ranked first with 21.81%, and the lowest fat content was registered in males of the same breed with 14.97%.
 -
 21,81%
 -
 - 14,97%.

5.

Table 5. Content of meat, bones and fat in the various parts of the carcass, in %

/ Breed		/'Tetevenska'		/'Kotlenska'	
/	/ Number/sex	3	3	3	3
neck	/ meat	57.81	54.41	47.96	56.55
	/ bones	16.86	17.22	19.27	16.55
	/ fat	25.33	28.37	32.78	26.89
shoulder	/ meat	64.04	60.88	59.36	54.91
	/ bones	21.92	19.97	24.03	25.13
	/ fats	14.04	19.15	16.61	19.96
loins	/ meat	55.82	55.57	53.18	52.56
	/ bones	25.72	19.61	21.64	18.18
	/ fats	18.46	24.72	25.18	29.27
leg	/ meat	66.22	66.32	67.71	64.22
	/ bones	24.58	20.00	21.35	25.76
	/ fats	9.20	13.68	10.94	10.02
belly	/ meat	69.55	57.75	59.30	51.50
	/ bones	-	-	-	-
	/ fats	30.45	42.25	40.70	48.50
chest	/ meat	56.60	51.58	54.66	53.19
	/ bones	30.46	23.78	27.82	29.21
	/ fats	12.95	24.64	17.52	17.60
tail	/ meat	40.08	39.03	35.14	35.44
	/ bones	27.13	23.79	24.71	22.46
	/ fats	32.79	37.17	40.15	42.11
total for the carcass	/ meat	61.79	58.75	58.97	56.79
	/ bones	23.24	19.43	21.60	23.09
	/ fats	14.97	21.81	19.42	20.12

- (-)
 1:2,66,
 - 1:3,024.
 1:2,808,
 1:2,46.

The ratio of bones to meat (coefficient of meat yield) in 'Tetevenska' male lambs was 1: 2.66, and in females was 1:3.024. For 'Kotlenska' male lambs this ratio is 1:2.808, and for female lambs it is 1:2.46. The results show that the highest coefficient of meat yield was registered in 'Tetevenska' female lambs and the lowest in 'Kotlenska' female lambs. In males the trend is reversed, the coefficient in male 'Kotlenska' animals

slightly exceeds that found in 'Tetevenska' ones.

The length measurements of the carcass (large and small) and the circumference of the leg in lambs of both breeds by sex are shown in Table 6.

6.

Table 6. Linear measurement of cold carcass and topographic localization of carcass fats

Breed	n	/ Skin thickness, mm		/ Large length of carcass, cm		/ Small length of carcass, cm		/ Width of carcass, cm		Leg girth, cm	
		±Sx	C	±Sx	C	±Sx	C	±Sx	C	±Sx	C
'Tetevenska'	3	3.83±0.44	19.92	59.33±2.96	8.65	57.33±2.03	6.13	21.67±0.33	2.66	16.00±1.15	12.50
	3	3.50±0.29	14.29	59.67±2.33	6.77	57.00±0.58	1.75	22.00±0.58	4.55	18.00±0.58	5.56
'Kotlenska'	3	4.70±0.36	13.29	62.00 ±4.58	12.80	56.33±3.38	10.40	19.00±0.00	0.00	17.00±0.58	5.88
	3	4.93±0.07	2.34	54.33±1.33	4.25	51.67±1.20	4.03	19.67±0.67	5.87	17.00±0.58	5.88

4,7 mm

– 4,93 mm,

– 3,83 mm

– 62 cm

– 54,32 cm.

5 cm.

22,00 cm

19,00 cm

1 mm

3,50 mm.

21,67 cm

19,67 cm

The highest average value for the skin thickness was measured in 'Kotlenska' lambs of both sexes – in males – 4.7 mm and females with 4.93 mm, and they were superior to 'Tetevenska' lambs by more than 1 mm – respectively with 3.83 mm and, 50 mm. The highest average value for the large length of the cold carcass was registered in 'Kotlenska' male lambs with 62 cm and the lowest in the females with 54.32 cm. The indicators for 'Tetevenska' breed occupy an intermediate position, and there is a significant difference between the sexes. The values for the small length of the cold carcass in 'Tetevenska' breed exceeded 'Kotlenska' breed. In the former, no gender difference was found. The results are significantly different in 'Kotlenska' animals, where the average of the males exceeds that of the females by approximately 5 cm. This tendency is also observed with regard to the widths of the carcasses with 22.00 cm for the female and 21.67 cm for the 'Tetevenska' male lambs and 19.00 cm for the female and 19.67 cm for the male 'Kotlenska' lambs. Within the groups, the male lambs are slightly inferior to the females in both

18,00 cm, a

-
- 16,00 cm.

(Stankov, 1983;
Laleva et al., 2007; Stancheva et al.,
2010; Markova, 2020).

breeds in these indicators. The same table also shows the average values for the circumference of the leg, as the highest value was registered in 'Tetevenska' female lambs with 18.00 cm, and the lowest for males of the same breed with 16.00 cm.

No difference between the sexes was observed in the leg girth of a cold carcass in 'Kotlenska' breed animals. The results from the present study are close in values and correspond to those published by various authors (Stankov, 1983; Laleva et al., 2007; Stancheva et al., 2010; Markova, 2020).

CONCLUSIONS

Male lambs of 'Tetevenska' breed had the highest growth intensity compared to those of the other 3 experimental groups.

The average daily gain for the fattening period (60 days) in 'Tetevenska' male lambs was 0.250 kg, while in males of 'Kotlenska' breed was 0.201 kg, which was 20% less. Growth rate of 'Tetevenska' female lambs was also higher by an average of 0.034 kg (by 15%) compared to the analogous group of 'Kotlenska' breed.

The feed consumption in FUG and PDI per 1 kg of growth was the lowest in 'Tetevenska' male lambs (3.93 and 611 g PDI), and the highest in 'Kotlenska' female lambs (5.77 FUG and 897 g PDI). Male lambs of 'Tetevenska' breed spent 18.63% less FUG and 18.64% less PDI per 1 kg of growth than females of the same breed.

'Tetevenska' female lambs had the highest slaughter yield (42.16%), and the male lambs of the same breed had the lowest (37.72%). The indicators of 'Kotlenska' lambs occupies an intermediate position, and there is no significant difference between females and males, respectively 40.33% 40.90%.

-
.
(60)
0,250 kg,
0,201 kg, 20% -
-
0,034 kg (15%)
1 kg -
3,93 611g , -
5,77 897 g .
18,63% - 18,64% -
1 kg
-
- 42,16%, -
- 37,72.
-
- 40,33% 40,90%.

-	-
67,71%,	
- 66,32%,	
- 66,22%	-
	- 64,22%.
1:2,66,	1:3,024.
	1:2,808,
- 1:2,46.	-
	.

The highest percentage of meat from the leg was gathered from 'Kotlenska' male lambs (67.71%), followed by 'Tetevenska' female lambs with 66.32%, the 'Tetevenska' male lambs with 66.22%, and the lowest was in 'Kotlenska' female lambs with 64.22%.

The coefficient of meat yield in 'Tetevenska' male lambs was 1: 2.66, and in females was 1: 3.024. For 'Kotlenska' male lambs this ratio is 1:2.808, and for female lambs it is 1:2.46. The highest coefficient is registered in 'Tetevenska' female lambs while the lowest in 'Kotlenska' male animals.

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I.

Evaluation of New Slow-growing Chickens Genotypes: I. Growth Performance and Slaughter Traits

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Original scientific paper

SUMMARY

An experiment was conducted to evaluate the effect of genotype on meat traits of slow-growing chickens until they attained a maximum live weight of 3.000-3.200 kg. To this end, six lines of birds were used.

3.000-3.200 kg.

150

The experimental design comprised 150 day-old chickens in each group. The live weight, daily feed consumption and feed conversion ratio were followed out. At the end of the trial at reaching maximum live weight close to group average, slaughter analysis was performed separately for each of genotypes.

70-

2709.29 g,

3334.75 g

84

According to the results, the combination L attained an average live weight for male and female chickens of 2709.29 g at 70 days of age, whereas the combination F attained 3334.75 g at 84 days of age.

- Label Rouge.

63 120
and Jiang (2005)
Label Rouge
2-2,5 kg 12

. Mikulski et al., (2011)

17%. 65-
3,64 kg. Fanatico et al., (2005)

53, 67 81

2.61 kg, 2.50 kg, 2.33 kg 2.11 kg
(FCR): 2.13 kg,
2.68 kg, 2.77 kg 3.58 kg
Tang et al., (2009)

112

2.009 kg
1.689 kg
1.48 kg 1.47 kg

3.000-3.200 kg.

those of Label Rouge. Their production traits have been tested in various husbandry systems up to 63 and 120 days of age. Yang and Jiang (2005) reported that Label Rouge chickens attained a live weight of 2-2.5 kg after 12 weeks.

A number of researchers have evaluated the effect of genotype on growth performance of slow-growing broiler chickens. Mikulski et al., (2011) compared production traits of fast and slowly growing chicken genotypes and found out that at the end of fattening, the live weight of slow-growing birds was 17% lower. At 65 days of age, they attained 3.64 kg. Fanatico et al., (2005) investigated three chicken genotypes – one fast-growing, two medium-growing and one slow-growing under intensive system up to 53, 67 and 81 days of age. The authors reported a final live weight of 2.61 kg, 2.50 kg, 2.33 kg and 2.11 kg and feed conversion ratios (FCR): 2.13 kg, 2.68 kg, 2.77 kg and 3.58 kg respectively. Tang et al., (2009) compared growth performance of one conventional broiler type, one local type and three slow-growing chicken types until 49, 56 and 112 days of age, respectively reporting slaughter weight of 2.009 kg for the conventional type, 1.689 kg for local chickens and 1.60 kg, 1.48 kg and 1.47 kg for slow-growing genotypes.

This experiment was designed to evaluate the effect of genotype on meat performance of slow-growing broiler chickens until they attained a maximum live weight of 3.000-3.200 kg through determination of growth dynamics and evaluation of slaughter traits of fattened chickens.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The subject of the study comprised five genotypes of slow-growing broiler chickens, produced as followed:

I. I E
 II. E
 III. I F
 IV. F
 V. I Ss
 VI. L

«

»

-

: Line E (Barred Plymouth Rock),
 Line Ss (Sussex), Line F, Line L (White
 Plymouth Rock),
 Line (Cornish) Line I.

150

(15-28) (1-14),
 (29-84).

1 (AOCA, 1996).

I. Line I Line E
 II. Line Line E
 III. Line I Line F
 IV. Line Line F
 V. Line I Line Ss
 VI. Line Line L

The experiment was performed in the nucleus farm of the Department of Breeding and Technology in Poultry and Rabbit Farming at the Agricultural Institute - Stara Zagora. To this end, six chicken lines were used. Original maternal forms used in the breeding schedule were Line E (Barred Plymouth Rock), Line Ss (Sussex), Line F, Line L (White Plymouth Rock), and paternal forms: Line (Cornish) and Line I.

To evaluate the effect of genotype on slaughter traits, six groups of 150 unsexed day-old birds, labelled and vaccinated against Marek's disease and coccidiosis were formed.

Chickens were reared on deep permanent wooden shavings litter in line with the technology adopted at the selection base of the Agricultural Institute - Stara Zagora. The chickens had constant access to compound feeds produced at the feed factory of the institute according to their category and age.

Feeding regimen consisted of starter (1-14 day), grower (15-28 day) and finisher (29-84 day). The composition and nutritional value of compound feeds are shown in Table 1 (AOCA, 1996).

1.

Table 1. Nutritional value of compound feed

Nutritional value	1-14	15-28	29-84
	Starter 1-14 day	Grower 15-28 day	Finisher 29-84 day
/ Crude protein, %	21.16	19.37	18.77
/ Crude fat, %	8.18	5.92	5.90
/ Metabol. energy, kcal/kg	1927.77	2148.15	2194.26
/ Crude fiber, %	4.45	4.11	4.12
/ Ca, %	0.97	0.90	0.78
/ Utilisable phosphorus, %	0.80	0.45	0.69
/ Methionine, %	0.46	0.44	0.38
/ Lysine, %	1.19	1.11	0.98

28, 42, 56, 70 84

1, 14,

14, 28 84-

Live weight was monitored at 1, 14, 28, 42, 56, 70 and 84 days of age by individual weighing. Feed consumption for each genotype was determined as difference between the amount of offered and non-consumed feed at 14, 28 and 84 days of age. Livability was checked on a daily basis. On the basis of these parameters, the daily weight gain, daily feed consumption and feed conversion ratios were calculated.

For general assessment of used broiler combinations, the European production efficiency factor (EPEF) was calculated using the formula:

(EPEF)

$$EPEF = \frac{\text{Жива маса (kg) x Преживяемост (\%)}}{\text{Угоителен период (дни) x Разход на фураж за 1 kg прираст}} \times 100$$

$$EPEF = \frac{\text{Live body weight (kg) x Livability (\%)}}{\text{Fattening period (days) x Feed intake per 1 kg weight gain}} \times 100$$

3

12-

22/14.12.2005

At the end of the trial, complete slaughter analysis was done on 3 female and 3 male birds from each group with live weight corresponding to the average of the genotype. After 12-hour fasting, birds were stunned and slaughtered in accordance of stipulation of Regulation 22/14.12.2005 of the Ministry of Agriculture. The grill percentage, weight of different cuts (breast, thighs, wings, neck, ribcage), weight of edible offal (heart, liver, gizzard) and abdominal fat were determined. On the basis of these data, ratios between different body parts were calculated.

(ANOVA/MANOVA LSD post hoc test),

(ANOVA/MANOVA LSD post

Statistica 8 (StatSoft, 2009).

The results were statistically processed (ANOVA/MANOVA; LSD post hoc test), to evaluate the effects of genotype and sex using statistical software Statistica 8 (StatSoft, 2009). Percentage data were arcsine transformed prior to the statistical analysis.

28- VI (L) (662.84 g), IV (F) - 448.80 g (<0.001). Hristakieva et al., (2014) (<0.05). Pauwels et al., (2015) (Cobb 500, Cobb-Sasso 175, Sasso (XL44 x SA₅₁(A)) Sussex (Sussex x SA₅₁(A)) , Cobb 500 , Sussex x SA₅₁(A) - , .

42 VI IV 1276.67 g. 880.43 g. (<0.001) I, II, III, V 714.58 g, 676.74 g, 621.78 g, 549.05 g. Gordon and Charles (2002)

42- , 62-81 56- (3) . (<0.001).

differed significantly from other groups.

By the 28th fattening day, this trend was preserved so that group VI (L) was outlined with statistically significant different live weight (662.84 g), followed by group IV (F) - with 448.80 g (<0.001). These results could be associated to different weight of incubation eggs. In a study performed by Hristakieva et al., (2014) the weight of hatchlings differed significantly among genotypes (<0.05). In another report, Pauwels et al., (2015) evaluated four broiler chicken hybrids with different growth potential (Cobb 500, Cobb-Sasso 175, Sasso (XL44 x SA₅₁(A)) and Sussex (Sussex x SA₅₁(A)) and observed that at 5 weeks of age, the live weight of Cobb 500 birds was the highest whereas that of Sussex x SA₅₁(A) – the lowest.

The age-related genetic potential with respect to live weight differed among studied genotypes. During the first 42 days of life, chickens from group VI exhibited the highest growth performance - 1276.67 g, followed by birds from group IV with 880.43 g. Those groups were substantially superior (<0.001) to performance of groups I, II, III, V with average weights of 714.58 g, 676.74 g, 621.78 g, and 549.05 g respectively.

According to Gordon and Charles (2002), fast-growing broiler chickens were outlined with a rapid growth rate and market weight at 42 days of age, whereas slowly growing broilers attained slaughter weight for 62-81 days.

By the 56th day (ble 3), after sexual dimorphism was already manifested, sex-related differences among the groups were also considered. The analysis of results showed a very significant effect of genotype on age-related live weight dynamics (<0.001).

3.

56 84 (g)

Table 3. Live weight of slow-growing broilers between 56-84 day of age (g)

Age	I- I-group		II- II-group		III- III-group		IV- IV-group		V- V-group		VI* - VI* -group		pooled SEM	p-value		
	I	E	E		I	F	F		I	Ss	L			genotype	sex	genotype x sex
56	1248.49	1209.23	1141.74		1802.50		1065.00		2437.50		45.74					
	1036.67	942.86	894.84		1752.63		924.80		2221.00		46.57					
+	1142.58c	1076.04cd	1018.29d		1777.57b		994.90d		2329.25a		33.39		0.001	0.001	NS	
70	1727.27	1669.57	1624.62		2577.39		1540.00		2932.50		49.35					
	1364.44	1314.00	1308.67		2126.67		1250.00		2486.09		47.86					
+	1545.86c	1491.78cd	1466.64cd		2352.03b		1395.00d		2709.29a		36.15		0.001	0.001	NS	
84	2440.61	2198.75	2275.56		3334.74		1968.24		-----		50.73					
	1775.56	1653.33	1699.29		2660.00		1447.27		-----		44.41					
+	2108.08b	1926.04c	1987.42c		2967.37a		1707.75d		-----		39.98		0.001	0.001	NS	

* VI - L - 70 / * VI group - Line Line L - for 70 days

** (P<0.001)

** Different superscripts within rows indicate statistically significant differences (P<0.001)

56- VI
(L) - 2437.50 g
, 2221.00 g
2329.25 g.
IV (F)
1802.50 g
1752.63 g
(I E), II (), III (I F) V
(I Ss)
70
VI (L)
2709.29 g, IV (F)
2352.03 g,
: I (I E) -
1545.86 g, II (E) -
1491.78 g, III - 1466.64 g (I F)
V 1395.00 g (I Ss).

The best growth performance on the 56th day of life was shown by chickens from group VI (L) - 2437.50 g in males and 2221.00 g in females (average of 2329.25 g for both sexes). Then followed group IV (F) with males weighing 1802.50 g and females weighing 1752.63 g. The birds from groups I (I E), II (), III (I F) and V (I Ss) had statistically significantly lower live weight at that time.

At 70 days of age, group VI (L) had a live weight of 2709.29 g, followed by group IV (F) with 2352.03 g; they were significantly superior to chickens from group I (I E) with average weight of 1545.86 g, group II (E) - 1491.78 g, group III (I F) - 1466.64 g and group V (I Ss) - 1395.00 g.

The comparison between sexes from point of view of sexual dimorphism is also important with regard to live weight uniformity and slaughter processing. Due to the greater difference in live weight between male and female chickens, the use of slow-growing genotypes could influence uniformity and consequences could become more evident with age

84- , ,
 IV (F) -
 3334.74 g , 2660.00 g
 2440.61g () 1775.56 g ()
 2108.08 g.
 II
 (E)
 3.200 kg
 84 2198.75 g
 1653.33 g
 1926.04 g (<0.001). III
 (I F)
 2275.56 g 1699.29 g
 , 1987.42 g.
 -
 -
 84 ,
 F) I (I E) 28.95 %,
 (I E)
 (I F) , 5.72%
 (<0.001).
 4 -
 (g/)
 -
 (1-14)
 VI I
 15.72 g 12.36 g -
 7.74 g
 II (E).

The live weight dependency on genotype and sex was generally preserved until the 84th day of age. It was evident that at the end of the experiment, the slow-growing chickens from group IV (F) attained the highest ultimate live weight: 3334.74 g for males and 2660.00 g for females, followed by group I (I E) with 2440.61 g (males) and 1775.56 g (females) with group average of 2108.08 g.

Slow-growing birds from group II (E) attained the live weight >3.200 kg preferred by consumers on 84 days of age with 2198.75 g for males and 1653.33 g for females and group average of 1926.04 g (<0.001). In group III (I F) attained weight was 2275.56 g for males and 1699.29 g for females (average of 1987.42 g). Their live weights were similar and intermediate in our study.

In general, it could be stated that with regard to the genotype, the difference in live weight at 84 days of age between birds from group V (F) and group I (I E) was 28.95 %, and that between group (I E) and (I F) was 5.72% (<0.001).

Table 4 depicts feed consumption of one chick (g/day) according to growth periods. The highest feed consumption was observed during the starter period (1-14 day) in broilers from groups VI and I - 15.72 g and 12.36 g respectively. The lowest feed intake was found out in group II (E) - 7.74 g.

4. (g/)
Table 4. Feed consumption per chicken (g/day)

Group \ Age	I- I-group		II- II-group	III- III-group	IV- IV-group	V- V-group	VI* - VI* -group
	I	E	E	I F	F	I Ss	L
1-14 / day	12.36		7.74	8.71	11.91	9.09	15.72
15-28 / day	50.08		34.41	41.20	46.88	41.67	65.15
29-84 / day	105.01		75.09	96.24	122.41	79.27	124.44
1-84 / day	78.57		55.78	70.84	89.39	59.87	87.94

* VI - L - 70 / * VI group - Line Line L - for 70 days

28 g/ (L) - 65.15 g/ 15 VI 1 28 662.84 g

50.08 g/ I III (I F) 41.20 g/ , V (I Ss) 41.67 g/ 319.51g.

(29-84) - IV (F) - 122.41 g/ , I III (I E) - 105.01 g/ - (I F) - 96.24 g/ . II (E) - 75.09 g/ . 84 , L, - 3000-3200 g 70- 124.44 g/ . (1-84) IV (F) 89.39 g/ , - 2967.37 g, I (I E) 78.57 g/ , 2108.08 . - II V - 55.78 g/ 59.87 g/ . 84

, Takahashi et al., (2006) 12631 g Ross - 308; 9316 g Paraíso; 6737g Pescoço Pelado; 7359g Caipirinha

1 - (1-14)

Between the 15th and 28th day of life, the daily feed consumption per chick was the highest in group VI (L) - 65.15 g/day. The chicks from that group attained a live weight of 662.84 g at 28 days of age. The tendency was preserved in group I with feed consumption of 50.08 g. In slow-growing broilers from group III (I F), the average daily feed consumption was 41.20 g, and in group V (I Ss) whose live weight was 319.51 g - 41.67 g feed/day.

At the end of the fattening period (29-84 day), the highest daily feed consumption per chick was demonstrated by group IV (F) - 122.41 g, followed by group I (I E) - 105.01 g and group III (I F) - 96.24 g. The least feed intake was that of group II (E) - 75.09 g. The data in abovementioned were registered until the 84th day, and for the genotype L - until the 70th day when it attained the desired live weight of 3000-3200 g. Over that period, one chick from this group has consumed 124.44 g feed per day.

For the entire rearing period (1-84 day), daily feed consumption per one chick from group IV (F) was 89.39 g; in that group, birds had the highest average ultimate live weight (2967.37 g).

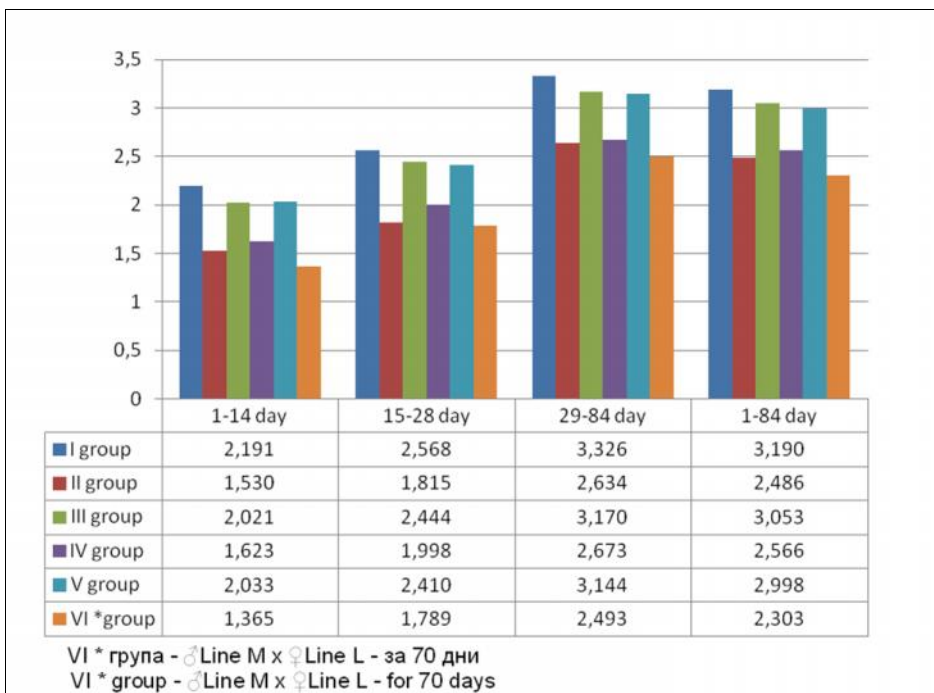
Then followed group I (I E) with live weight of 2108.08 g and daily feed intake of 78.57 g. The lowest feed consumption was found out in groups II and V -55.78 g and 59.87 g respectively. In a 84-day fattening of slow-growing chickens with various genotype, Takahashi et al., (2006) reported total feed consumption of 12631 g for Ross - 308; 9316 g for Paraíso; 6737 g for Pescoço Pelado; and 7359 g in Caipirinha, reared indoor.

Figure 1 shows feed conversion ratios in slow-growing broiler chickens for the respective periods.

During the starter period (1-14 day), feed

(L) - 1.365 kg/ kg
 II IV- (1.530 kg/ kg
 kg/kg). - 48.93% 60.51%
 I-III-V
 L (VI-).

consumption per kg weight gain was the lowest in group VI (L) - 1.365 kg/kg followed by groups II and IV (1.530 kg/kg and 1.623 kg/kg, respectively). A higher feed consumption per 1 kg weight gain by 48.93–60.51% was established in groups I-III-V vs L hybrids (group VI).



. 1. 1 kg
Fig. 1. Feed consumption per 1 kg weight gain

(15-28) , -
 VI - 1.789 kg/ kg,
 II IV- (1.815 kg/ kg
 1.998 kg/ kg). -
 1 kg -
 I-III-V (2.568 kg/ kg;
 2.444 kg/ kg; 2.410 kg/ kg). -
 1 kg
 I-III-V (33.41%; 27.15%;
 26.00%) VI
 (2.493 kg/ kg). -

During the grower period (15-28 day), the tendency in FCR was similar with lowest values in VI group - 1.789 kg/kg, followed by groups II and IV (1.815 kg/kg and 1.998 kg/kg respectively). The highest feed consumption per 1 kg weight gain was found again in groups I-III-V (2.568 kg/kg; 2.444 kg/kg; 2.410 kg/kg). A more progressive increase of feed consumption per 1 kg weight gain during the last fattening period was observed in groups I-III-V (by 33.41%; 27.15%; 26.00% compared to broilers from group VI with 2.493 kg/kg). The difference in FCR vs group VI was lower for groups II and IV: by 5.65% and 7.22%,

II-IV VI- 5.65% 7.22%.
 1 84- ,
 1 kg
 2.303 3.190 kg/kg (1),
 VI- II-IV-
 - 7.94%-11.42%.
 Mikulski et al., (2011).
 2,53 2,56
 65
 -
 1 kg ,
 I- (38.51%), III-
 (32.57%) V- (30.17%)
 VI- (2.303 kg/ kg
).
 Line
 (Cornish),
 Quentin et al., (2003),
 2.4 kg;
 2.23 kg, 2.78 kg/ 1 kg
 42-56 F,M,S
 Wang et al., (2009)
 -
 (<0.05). Castellini et al., (2002)
 ,
 - ,
 - .
 (EPEF),

respectively.

For the entire rearing period (1-84 days), feed consumption per 1 kg weight gain ranged from 2.303 t 3.190 kg/kg (Figure 1), and differences between broilers from group VI and those from groups II-IV ranged within 7.94%-11.42%.

these results of ours for FCR were similar to those of Mikulski et al., (2011). FCR values in their study was from 2.53 t 2.56 in slow-growing chickens reared to 65 days of age under different production systems.

A more pronounced feed consumption per 1 kg weight gain was found out in group I (38.51%), III (32.57%) and V (30.17%) as compared to birds from group VI (FCR 2.303 kg/kg).

The influence of the paternal form Line (Cornish) used in crossbreeding schedule was evident; thus, hybrids were closer to the so-called medium-growing birds as per Quentin et al., (2003) who reported feed consumption of 2.4 kg; 2.23 kg, 2.78 kg/1 kg weight gain between days 42-56 in fast-, medium- and slow-growing broilers. The good results from determination of FCR should be acknowledged. This, in our opinion, was due to the good combination between used lines and to indoor rearing on deep permanent litter.

According to Wang et al., (2009), the live weight and daily weight gain of free-range chickens were significantly lower than those in birds reared indoor (<0.05).

Castellini et al., (2002) also found out that the growth rates and the feed effect in free-range systems were lower compared to standard rearing systems.

The European production efficiency factor (EPEF) – a measure of the level of profiting from the potential of reared

broiler combinations – was used for their more objective assessment.

EPEF includes the main parameters influencing economic results: the live weight of broilers at the end of the experiment, the duration of rearing, feed consumption per 1 kg weight gain and livability.

The analysis of EPEF data (Table 5) in both absolute values and percentage showed the highest values for group VI (M F) – 157.96%, group IV (M F) – 133.75% followed by group II – 87.46%.

The lowest EPEF value was calculated for group I (75.54%), group III (75.16%) and group V (76.45%) due to greater feed consumption during the fattening period.

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5. (EPEF)

Table 5. Productivity index (European Poultry efficiency factor - EPEF)

Groups	Live weight at 84 days of age, kg	Livability rate, %	Feed conversion ratio (kg/kg)	EPEF %	
				absolute	%
I /group (I E)	2.108	96.03	3.190	75.54	47.82
II /group (E)	1.926	94.83	2.486	87.46	55.37
III /group (I F)	1.987	97.00	3.053	75.16	47.58
IV /group (F)	2.967	97.17	2.566	133.75	84.67
V /group (I Ss)	1.707	96.67	2.998	76.45	48.39
VI* /group (L)	2.709	94.00	2.303	157.96	100

VI* - L - 70 / VI* group - Line Line L - for 70 days

Mincheva et al., (2015)

M x L - 210.12

Cobb 500

Ross 308

(EPEF) - 240.76 225.89 (Hristakieva et al., 2014).

Mincheva et al., (2015) have investigated the meat production of fast-growing M x L broiler chickens and reported absolute EPEF of 210.12.

For comparison, conventional Cobb 500 and Ross 308 broilers had EPEF values of 240.76 and 225.89 respectively (Hristakieva et al., 2014).

Tables 6 and 7 present the results

2386.67 g
(M L), VI (M L), IV
(F)

2766.67g, (<0.05).
I (I E) -
1733.33 g (<0.05).

(Fanatico et al., 2005; Aksoy et al., 2010; Wang et al., 2013),

VI (M L) 77.60%,
IV (F) 75.72%.
I, II III 70.46%,
70.56% 69.61%.

IV (F) VI (M L), <0.05

from the slaughter analysis of studied groups of slow-growing broilers from different genotypes.

Table 6 gives data about the slaughter weight of female birds. It was 2386.67 g for group VI (M L), whereas group IV (F) had a slaughter weight of 2766.67 g – statistically significantly higher than all tested broiler combinations (<0.05). Females from group I (I E) had a lower live weight - 1733.33 g on the average (<0.05).

Slaughter traits largely depended on live weight. The genotype-related differences, as well as those associated to the sex of birds influenced bratfertig and grill weights, which followed the same dynamics.

In line with other reports (Fanatico et al., 2005; Aksoy et al., 2010; Wang et al., 2013) affirming a higher slaughter yield in fast-growing chickens compared to slow-growing ones, our experiment confirmed the effect of genotype on this parameter.

Slow-growing female birds with genotype of conventional broilers from group VI (M L) demonstrated the highest slaughter yield 77.60%, followed by group IV (F) with 75.72%. Lower relative proportions of cleaned carcass vs slaughter weight were found out in groups I, II and III with 70.46%, 70.56% and 69.61%.

There were statistically significant differences among the groups with respect to bratfertig and grill weights - <0.05 between groups IV (F) and VI (M L), as well as between groups IV and VI and those with lower absolute values of parameters.

6.

Table 6. Slaughter traits of female broiler chickens

Traits	I- I-group		II- II-group	III- III-group	IV- IV-group	V- V-group	VI* - VI*-group
	I	E	E	I	F	I	Ss
/ Live weight before slaughtering, g	1733.33±33.33 ^c	1546.67±24.04 ^d	1553.33±6.67 ^d	2766.67±63.60 ^a	1446.67±86.67 ^d	2386.67±46.67 ^b	
Bratfertig, g	1221.33±22.51 ^c	1091.33±6.33 ^{c,d}	1081.33±5.36 ^{c,d}	2095±86.12 ^a	995±70.19 ^d	1852±28.04 ^b	
% from live weight	70.46	70.56	69.61	75.72	68.78	77.60	
/ Grill, g	1139±31.80 ^c	1012±5.03 ^{c,d}	1012.33±6.33 ^{c,e}	1983.33±69.44 ^a	933±65.58 ^{d,e}	1672.33±16.37 ^b	
% from live weight	65.71	65.43	65.17	71.69	64.49	70.07	
Boneless breast, g	197.33±8.88 ^c	157.67±15.17 ^c	198.33±3.38 ^c	493±44.31 ^a	152.67±14.33 ^c	373±11.27 ^b	
% / from grill	17.32	15.58	19.59	24.86	16.36	22.30	
/ Thighs, g	405.33±5.55 ^c	349.33±2.33 ^{c,d}	350±5.13 ^{c,d}	592.33±40.44 ^a	328.33±16.70 ^d	504.33±22.48 ^b	
% / from grill	35.59	34.52	34.57	29.86	35.19	30.16	
/ Wings, g	163.67±0.88 ^b	149±1.53 ^{b,c}	153.33±2.40 ^{b,c}	219.33±9.24 ^a	140.33±8.45 ^c	203.33±3.76 ^a	
/ Neck, g	39.67±0.88 ^d	42±2.52 ^d	45.33±6.64 ^d	47.33±4.18 ^{a,d}	34±4.04 ^{b,d}	46.33±2.96 ^{c,d}	
/ Rib cage, g	327±5.03 ^b	326.33±19.32 ^b	238.67±28.26 ^c	584.67±14.26 ^a	270.33±21.11 ^{b,c}	534.67±15.30 ^a	
Edible offal, g	76.33±9.21 ^{b,c}	75±4.93 ^{b,c}	73.33±2.96 ^{b,c}	85.67±4.06 ^c	60.67±3.71 ^b	106.67±4.98 ^a	
Abdominal fat, g	15.67±3.28 ^b	9.33±3.93 ^b	9.33±9.33 ^b	65.67±12.20 ^a	21.67±5.17 ^b	56.67±9.87 ^a	

* VI - L - 70 / * VI group - Line Line L- for 70 days
 ** (<0.05)

** Different superscripts within rows indicate statistically significant differences (< 0.05)

IV VI
 70.07% 71.69%
 Grashorn (2006)
 67.9 70.9%
 IV- (F) 493 g
 (24.86%)
 (<0.05).
 -
 - 592.33
 g IV (F) 504.33g
 VI (M L) (<0.05).
 I, II, III V (

The grill percentage from live weight in groups IV and VI was the highest, e.g. 70.07% and 71.69% respectively.

Grashorn (2006) reported grill percentage from 67.9 t 70.9% of live weight in two slow-growing types of chickens.

The results about the absolute weight and proportion of breast in female birds showed the same trend: group IV (F) was significantly superior by 493 g (24.86%) compared to the other groups (<0.05).

The proportion of thighs, as part of dressed carcass, was the highest in slow-growing chickens: 592.33 g in group IV (F) and 504.33 g in group VI (M L) (<0.05). Relative shares of thighs vs grill weight in birds from groups I, II, III and V (which had lower absolute

-) - 35.59%, 34.52%,
 34.57%, 35.19%
 Mikulski et al., (2011).
 Oblakova et al., (2017)
 , -
 <0.05.
 Almasi et al., (2012).
 Dou et al., (2009) 17,44%,
 18,89% 20,17%
 3,01% 6,28 6,50
 , .
 , 0,92 % 3,31%. Wang et
 al., (2009) ,
 6,50 % 3,01
 .
 -
 84 V
 (140 g)
 (>0.05).
 . -
 -
 IV- (F) 584.67 g, VI
 (M L) 534.67 g,
 -
 .
 Mikulski et al., (2011)
 ,
 -
 , . .
 (<0.05).

thigh weights) were increased to 35.59%,
 34.52%, 34.57%, and 35.19%
 respectively due to lower grill weight.
 These findings supported the data
 reported by Mikulski et al., (2011).

Oblakova et al., (2017) have
 analysed sex-related differences and
 found out that in female chickens, breast
 and thigh weights were statistically
 significantly lower compared to those of
 male chickens (<0.05). The proportion of
 breast from grill in male birds was
 substantially lower vs females, in support
 of previous data of Almasi et al., (2012).

Dou et al., (2009) reported breast
 muscle percentages of 17.44%, 18.89%
 and 20.17% and of abdominal fat of
 3.01% t 6,28 and 6.50 in free-range and
 indoor-reared birds respectively.
 Abdominal fat percentage from grill weight
 varied from 0.92% t 3.31%. Wang et al.,
 (2009) demonstrated that abdominal fat
 percentage in slow-growing female
 chickens was within 3.01–6.50%
 depending on their type and farming
 technology.

The weights of wings and ribcage
 were with lowest values in chickens with
 lower live weight at the end of the 84-day
 fattening period. The chickens from group
 V had a statistically significantly lower
 weight of wings (140 g) vs all other groups
 (>0.05).

The ribcage weight followed the
 tendency shown for live weight. Lighter
 ribcage was found out in birds with lower
 dressed carcass weight. Thus, the ribcage
 of birds from group IV (F) was
 584.67 g, and that of group VI (M L) -
 534.67 g, values, statistically significantly
 higher compared to other groups.

In their study Mikulski et al., (2011)
 demonstrated that the proportion of
 ribcage and neck from dressed carcasses
 of slow-growing chickens was higher.
 These parameters differed also with
 respect to sex, with higher values in male
 broiler chickens (<0.05).

(,)
 VI (106.67g),
 - V (60.67g)
 <0.05. Kokoszynski et al., (2013)
 VI ,
 V (21.67g 56.67 g).
 (7)
 - IV- (M F)
 84- 3306.7 g, 73.65%
 71,10% (
 <0.05). VI
 2693.33 g 66.94%
 - 77.20%
 VI (M L),
 -
 IV- (M F) 73.65%.
 Połtowicz and Doktor (2012),
 84-
 74 % ,
 - IV- (F)
 (3306.67 g),
 VI (M L -
 2693.33 g).
 535. g,
 432 g. -
 255.33g, I - 254.67g (III
 >0.05).

- As to the weight of edible offal
 - (heart, liver and gizzard) with regard to
 - genotype, the highest weight was found in
 - broilers from group VI (106.67 g),
 - and the lowest – in the group with lowest
 - live weight (group V; 60.67 g; <0.05).

According to Kokoszynski et al., (2013)
 the origin of broilers had no significant
 effect on this parameter.

The analysis of data revealed a
 statistically significant effect of genotype
 on abdominal fat weight, with superiority
 of slow-growing broiler chickens from
 group VI with highest values vs group V
 (21.67 g and 56.67 g respectively).

In male chickens (Table 7)
 slaughter traits were considerably higher
 (<0.05) in the same broiler combination:
 group IV (M F) who attained
 slaughter weight of 3306.7 g, with slaughter
 yield 73.65% and grill percentage 71.10%
 by the 84th day of life, followed again by
 group VI with 2693.33 g and grill
 percentage 66.94%.

The slaughter yield in male
 chickens was the highest in group VI
 (M L) - 77.20% despite that their
 slaughter weight was not the highest one.
 Lower slaughter yield was observed in
 group IV (M F): 73.65%.

Połtowicz and Doktor (2012)
 reported relative proportion of bratfertig in
 slow-growing broiler chickens at 84 days
 of age of 74%, therefore, it may be
 concluded that our result was not inferior.

With regard to breast muscles, their
 proportion was higher in group IV
 (F) whose live weight was the
 highest (3306.67 g), followed by group VI
 (M L - 2693.33 g). Absolute
 breast weights were 535. g and 432 g,
 respectively. Statistically significantly
 lighter boneless breast was observed in
 group III - 255.33g, and group I - 254.67g
 (>0.05).

23.96% VI (M L)
 22.76% IV- (F)
 17.95% III , 16.68%
 I , 15.80% II
 15.79% V .

The relative share of breast was the highest (23.96%) in conventional genotype (group VI, M L) followed by birds from group IV (F) with 22.76% .

The breast meat percentage from grill weight was 17.95% in group III, 16.68% in group I, 15.80% in group II and 15.79% in group V.

7.

Table 7. Slaughter traits of male broiler chickens

Traits	Group	I- I-group	II- II-group	III- III-group	IV- IV-group	V- V-group	VI* - VI*-group
	I E	E	I F	F	I Ss	L	
/ Live weight before slaughtering, kg		2320.00±23.09 ^c	2126.67±35.28 ^d	2160±41.63 ^d	3306.67±54.57 ^a	1966.67±33.33 ^b	2693.33±58.12 ^b
Bratfertig, g		1629.67±13.93 ^c	1484.33±20.87 ^c	1559.33±31.62 ^c	2435.33±57.45 ^a	1328.00±31.53 ^b	2079.33±86.20 ^b
% from live weight		70.24	69.79	72.19	73.65	67.52	77.20
/ Grill, g		1526.67±11.29 ^c	1392.67±24.88 ^c	1422.33±23.78 ^c	2351±73.00 ^a	1230.67±30.40 ^b	1803±87.55 ^b
% from live weight		65.80	65.48	65.85	71.10	62.58	66.94
Boneless breast, g		254.67±3.71 ^c	220.00±18.03 ^{c,d}	255.33±17.91 ^c	535.00±15.01 ^a	194.33±11.62 ^d	432.00±30.66 ^b
% / from grill		16.68	15.80	17.95	22.76	15.79	23.96
/ Thighs, g		544.00±8.96 ^{b,c}	495.67±17.38 ^{c,d}	511.33±18.37 ^c	731.33±17.07 ^a	447.67±10.90 ^d	586.67±23.02 ^b
% / from grill		35.63	35.59	35.95	31.11	36.38	32.54
/ Wings, g		221.33±2.60 ^d	196.33±4.70 ^{b,e}	215.33±10.09 ^{c,d,e}	285.67±5.36 ^a	195.00±7.21 ^b	213.67±6.89 ^{b,d}
/ Neck, g		61.00±3.79 ^a	58.67±5.78 ^{a,c}	64±4.00 ^a	65.67±0.88 ^a	48.67±0.33 ^{b,c}	56.67±3.67 ^{a,c}
/ Rib cage, g		454.33±13.78 ^c	445.00±12.29 ^{c,d}	405.67±15.06 ^{c,d}	708.00±30.01 ^a	377.00±42.71 ^d	629±8.50 ^b
Edible offal, g		91.00±4.62 ^c	89.67±2.60 ^c	88.67±6.33 ^c	107.00±5.03 ^b	92.33±1.33 ^c	125±3.21 ^a
Abdominal fat, g		30.67±1.76 ^a	6.00±6.00 ^{b,c}	1±1.00 ^b	23.00±11.59 ^{a,c,d}	12.33±2.91 ^{b,d}	36.67±2.73 ^a

* VI - L - 70 / * VI group - Line Line L - for 70 days

** (<0.05)

** Different superscripts within rows indicate statistically significant differences (<0.05)

35.95% - III , 35.63% I .
 - 36.38%,
 -
 -

An important trait characterising meat traits of broilers is not only the proportion of different cuts with high relative share of meat – breast with or without bone, but also legs that included thighs + drumsticks. Thighs as a part of the dressed carcass presented the largest part of the dressed carcass in slow-growing chickens from group V - 36.38%, 35.95% - group III, 35.63% in group I.

As anticipated, slow-growing genotypes were outlined with lower proportion of breast meat yet with larger

Ristic (2008)

V - 195 g

196.33 g.

IV – (M F)

31%

Mikulski et al., (2011)

(M L) 125g,

(88.67g) <0.05.

Kokoszynski et al., (2013)

Oblakova et al., (2017)

(<0.001).

(7)

36.67 g VI (M L) 1g

III (I F).

2.03% 0.07%

Połtowi z and Doktor, (2012)

56,70 80

1.53%, 1.22% 1.73%

(1 g - 36.67 g). Grashorn

proportion of thighs, which according to Ristic (2008) was an well acknowledged characteristics of this broiler chicken type.

The weight of wings was the lowest in slow-growing chickens from group V - 195 g and group - 196.33 g. The analysis of comparisons of genotypes with heaviest wings from group IV (M F) showed a difference by 31% against fast-growing broilers from group V. In a study of Mikulski et al., (2011) the proportion of ribcage and neck was higher in carcasses of slow-growing chickens.

Edible offal weights (heart, gizzard and liver) was the highest in broiler combination from group VI (M L): 125 g, which were with highest live weight and lowest in the lightest group – group (88.67 g; <0.05).

According to Kokoszynski et al., (2013) and Oblakova et al., (2017) the origin of broilers had no significant effect on this parameter.

The comparison between sexes showed higher edible offal weight in male birds (<0.001).

Abdominal fat percentage in male slow-growing chickens (Table 7) varied from 36.67 g in group VI (M L) t 1 g in group III (I F). In relative units, the respective values were from 2.03% t 0.07% of grill weight.

Having performed slaughter analysis in slow-growing chickens at 56, 70 and 80 days of age, Połtowi z and Doktor, (2012) obtained abdominal fat proportions of 1.53%, 1.22% and 1.73% respectively.

The analysis of data revealed a statistically significant effect of genotype on abdominal fat with superiority of slow-growing broilers from group III, who exhibited the lowest values compared to group V (1 g vs 36.67 g).

(2006) ,
 Mikulski et al., (2011)
 Castellini et al., (2002)
 (<0.05).
 Corzo et al., (2005), Niklova et al., (2007), Koreleski et al., (2008), Almasi et al., (2012)
 9.33
 g 65.67 g
 1 - 36.67g
 Koreleski et al., (2008)
 4.28 %
 . T mová and Teimouri (2010)
 Line
 (Cornish).

- Grashorn (2006) also found no difference in abdominal fat proportion between fast- and slow-growing broilers, whereas Mikulski et al., (2011) reported increased deposition of abdominal fat in slow-growing chickens, and attributed this fact to the rather high dietary energy and protein contents compared to nutritional needs of birds.

- On the other side, Castellini et al., (2002) concluded that the relative share of abdominal fat was higher in fast-growing birds compared to slow-growing hybrids, in line with our results.

- Sex had a significant influence on weight and abdominal fat proportion from grill weight, more pronounced in female birds (<0.05). According to results reported by Corzo et al., (2005), Niklova et al., (2007), Koreleski et al., (2008), Almasi et al., (2012) female chickens had more abdominal fat than males.

- We also found this relationship in our study, with 9.33 g t 65.67 g in females from groups and vs. 1-36.67 g in males.

- Our data did not however agree with those of Koreleski et al., (2008) where abdominal fat share in slow-growing female chickens did not exceed 4.28%.

- T mová and Teimouri, (2010) presumed that these differences resulted from different metabolism, higher competition among males, different capacity for fat deposition, various nutritional needs and more pronounced effect of hormones in females.

CONCLUSIONS

- The results from the present studies demonstrated that among the studied broiler combinations, the best results were obtained in crosses whose paternal form was Line (Cornish).

70	VI	,	-	At 70 days of age, female and male chickens from group VI, conventional broiler type (L) attained an average live weight of 2709.29 g, followed by group IV (F) - 2352.03 g. At 84 days of age, male chickens from group IV (F) attained a live weight of 3334.74 g, whereas females - 2600 g (on the average 2967.37 g; close to target values of this trial). Then followed male and female chickens from group I with average live weight of 2108.08 g, group III - 1987.42 g, group II - 1926.04 g and group V - 1707.74 g.
	(L)			
			- 2709.29 g,	
2352.03 g.	IV	(F)	-	
	84		-	
	IV	(F)	-	
3334.74 g,			2600 g,	
- 2967.37 g			-	
	I		-	
- 2108.08g,	III		- 1987.42 g,	II
- 1926.04 g	V		- 1707.74g.	
K			-	
				The combinations of traits of used hen and rooster lines at the Agricultural Institute - Stara Zagora, were appropriate for production of slow-growing chickens.

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