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Study on dynamics of feed intake in suckling calves

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Introduction

The calf is a non-ruminant until the digestive system develops, however, for that it is necessary to feed a dry diet. The aim of the study was to investigate the voluntary concentrates intake in relationship with age, as well as the growth rate of calves.

Material and method

In the study we used 21 calves divided in 3 groups. Groups 1, 2 and 3 stayed in the study 17, 29 and 50 days, respectively. The body weight at birth and at weaning, total feed and milk consumption and the time the calves spent in the study were measured and used.

The calves were reared in individual spaces, each calf having a useful area of 4 m². The nutrition of the calves was compound of milk, pellets (starter feed), a mixture of concentrates and pellets, silage mixed with concentrates and also hay. The hay and water are administrated ad libitum.

Daily concentrates consumption (kg) was determined by weighing the concentrates fed as well as the leftovers.

Results and discussions

Total feed and milk consumption for group 1 (per calf per day) was 5 kg and 0 L. The results for group 2 were 5,57 kg feed and 3,31 L milk per calf per day. Group 3 had a total feed and milk consumption of 9,57 kg and 5,16 L. At the end of the study the total weight gain for group 1, 2 and 3 was 13 kg, 22 kg and 43 kg, respectively.



The calf housing

Conclusions

The conclusion of the study is that the growth rate is dependent of the age, feed consumption and the period of days of receiving concentrates.