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THE INFLUENCE OF LIVE WEIGHT OF THE WEST AFRICAN DWARF EWE ON NEONATAL LAMB MORTALITY RATE.

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ABTRACT

Investigations were conducted on the influence of live weight of the West African Dwarf (WAD) ewe at parturition on birth weight, serum immunoglobulin (Ig) concentration in lambs and neonatal lamb mortality rate (LMR). Live weight of the dam significantly ($p < 0.01$) affected birth weight of lambs with a 34.9g increase in lamb birth weight per kilogram increase in the weight of dam. Twin lambs, but not singles, from ewes less than 25kg had significantly ($p < 0.05$) lower serum Ig concentration than other lambs. Of the 626 lambs studied, 98 (15.7%) died during the (30 - day) neonatal period. There was a significant ($p < 0.01$) negative influence of weight of dam on neonatal LMR. Every kilogram increase in weight of dam was accompanied by 1.6% decrease in LMR. Excessive mortality rates were recorded among single lambs of ewes below 20kg and twin lambs of ewes below 25kg. The results indicated that the breeding of WAD ewe above 20kg would result in relatively low LMRs.

Keyword
Sheep – Ewe – Live-weight – Serum luminous globalis etc