Bull. Anim. Prod. Afr. (1993) 41, 251-255

STUDIES ON WEST AFRICAN DWARF SHEEP: THE INFLUENC OF AGE OF EWE AND PARTURITION INTERVAL ON NEONATAL-LAMB MORTALITY RATE

E. B. Otesile
Department of Veterinary Medicine, University of Ibadan, Nigeria

ABTRACT

Studies were conducted on the influence of age and parturition interval of West African Dwarf (WAD) ewes on birth weight, 'serum immunoglobulin (Ig) concentration and mortality rates in their neonatal lambs. Age of ewe significantly influenced birth weight of lambs with the effect being more pronounced on twin lambs ($P<0.01$) than on singles ($P<0.05$). Among single lambs, those from ewes below 12 months of age had significantly ($P<0.05$) lower birth weights than lambs from older ewes: Among twins, lambs from ewes below 36 months of age had significantly ($P<0.01$) lower birth weights than those from older ewes. There was no significant ($P<0.05$) effect of age of ewe on serum Ig concentration in single lambs. However, twin lambs from ewes below 18 months of age had significantly ($P<0.05$) lower Ig concentrations than lambs from older ewe The neonatal mortality rate for all lambs was significantly ($p<0.01$) affected by age of the ewe, an influence that was mainly contributed by twin lambs from ewes below 18 months of age which had excessively high mortality rates. Parturition intervals of less than six months resulted in the high lamb-mortality rate while the least rate was associated with intervals above eight months.

Keyword