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SESSION 6: ANIMAL SCIENCE

BREEDING RAMS OF ENDANGERED LIPE ZACKEL SHEEP
-ASSESSMENT OF SOME REPRODUCTIVE TRAITS-

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Introduction: The breeding value of rams is an important measure in sheep management. Testicle circumference and the health of the reproductive tract are essential for ensuring good lambing rate. Breeding rams over 1,5 years should have over 33cm scrotal circumference. Ideal testicles of ≥ 35 cm can ensure sperm production to serve over 40 ewes over the mating season.

Aims: Taking into account the importance of health of the reproductive tract and the testicle size of breeding rams, assessment of the reproductive tract were done in breeding rams of the endangered Lipe sheep.

Materials and Methods: A total of 20 breeding rams in good body condition, aged 2-4 years, from ten flocks of Zackel sheep – Lipe type, were analysed in April 2019 in Serbia. Testicle circumference scoring was done using the morphometric classification: insufficient (≥ 28 cm), weak (28-32cm), good (33-35cm) and excellent (≥ 35). Clinical examination of the reproductive tract included palpation and adsppection method.

Results: The average scrotal circumference was 38.35 cm. The individual scrotal circumference scores were grouped as: poor (1 ram), acceptable (2 rams), good (4 rams) and excellent (13 rams). No pathological findings were registered during adsppection and palpation of the scrotum, testis and epididimis. All the tested testicles were mobile in the scrotum, with well defined epididimis. Adsppection of the prepuce and glans penis resulted in diagnosis of ballanitis (1 ram) and in ballanopostitis (1 ram).

Conclusion: The present research work, supported by the Project TR31085, showed that the size of testicles in the majority of the tested breeding rams of Lipe sheep was satisfactory, with good overall genital health status. Analysing the results, better breeding programmes and improvements can be made, which could strongly support the conservation processes of the endangered Lipe sheep.

Keywords: *Lipe sheep, breeding ram, reproduction*

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