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Book of **ABSTRACTS**

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Meeting dates

23, 24, 25 and 26, November 2021

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ARTIFICIAL INSEMINATION WITH TWO DIFFERENT VAGINOSCOPES OF CHURRA GALEGA BRAGANÇANA EWES

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Artificial insemination (AI) is the oldest reproductive technology used in animal production. It consists in the artificial deposition of semen in the female reproductive tract. The dissemination of this technic in sheep has been limited by the ewe cervix morphology and the difficulties to cryopreserve semen. AI efficiency depends on several factors as genetic, environmental conditions, feed, female energy status, production system, reproduction control protocol, semen collection and preservation methodologies, seminal doses volume and concentration, number of parturition, lambing-AI interval, AI technic, equipment's and materials, semen deposition site and inseminator skills.

Objectives:

The main goal of this paper was to compare the efficiency of two vaginoscopes in the AI of Portuguese Churra Galega Bragançana (CGB) ewes.

Materials and methods:

This study was performed at Braganza (latitude 41° 48' 33''N, longitude 6° 44' 3''W and Altitude 670 meters) between April 1st and June 5th. Forty-nine CGB ewes aging between 2 to 8 years were used. Body condition was scored according to the Australian classification table. In April 12th ewes estrous was synchronized by long term FGA (20 mg) or CIDR (0.35 g) treatments and the injection of 500 UI of eCG at vaginal devices withdraw. Ovarian response to treatments were assayed by progesterone plasmatic levels. Blood samples were collected for 5 days' post eCG administration. Ewes were artificially inseminated 53 + 1 hours after eCG injection with chilled semen using a IMV vaginoscope (n = 23) or a new vaginoscope developed by Ovígén (n = 26). Ejaculates were collect by artificial vagina. Semen analysis was performed using a computer-assisted sperm analysis (CASA) system.

Results:

Selected ejaculates presented a volume ≥ 2.0 ml, a sperm concentration $\geq 3.0 \times 10^9$ cells/ml, a motility $\geq 75\%$ and a percentage of normal sperm cells $\geq 75\%$. Insemination doses contained at least 200×10^6 sperm cells. Pregnancy diagnosis was performed by ultrasonography 41 days after AI. All ewes presented progesterone plasmatic levels higher than 0.5 ng/ml for the first five days' post eCG injection. About 81.6% of all ewes were pregnant 41 days after AI. Neither age nor body score condition affected significantly fertility rate ($P > 0.05$). The synchronization protocol had not statistically significant on fertility rate (FGA + eCG: 84.6% vs. CIDR+ eCG: 78.3%; $c^2=1.6$; $P > 0.05$). The type of vaginoscope had also not statistically significant on fertility rate (IMV: 87.0% vs. Ovígén: 76.9%; $c^2=3.4$; $P > 0.05$).

Conclusions:

In conclusion both vaginoscopes result in high fertility rates. However, the Ovígén vaginoscope is easier to use since it allows to pin the vaginal opening of the cervix.