Short-Term Progestagen Treatment in Ewes during the Breeding Season

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To characterize the efficiency of oestrus synchronization with short-term progestagen treatment (stFGA), 20 Ile de France (IF) and 19 Churra da Terra Quente (CTQ) ewes were used during the mid-breeding season. At day 0 (D_0), a 40 mg FGA sponge was inserted in all animals and 120 μg cloprostenol was injected. Five days later (D_5), all sponges were removed and ewes were divided into two groups: group A (10 IF and 10 CTQ), treated with eCG (250 UI) at sponge withdrawal and group B (10 IF and nine CTQ), without eCG Blood samples were taken biweekly for progesterone (P_4) determination and four intact rams with harness markers identified the onset of oestrus (first mount). All ewes were cyclic at D_0 but oestrus was detected only in 32 (82%), with no difference ($p > 0.05$) between group or breed. The remaining seven ewes had lower P_4 (< 0.5 ng/ml) between D_{-2} and D_0. The interval between sponge withdrawal and onset of oestrus was 40.5 ± 9.6 h, with no difference between treatment or breed. However, for IF ewes, this interval tended to be shorter ($P = 0.10$) than CTQ ewes (37.8 ± 10.1 h vs 43.3 ± 8.6 h). The pregnancy rate (75%) and prolificacy (1.38) were also similar between treatments and breeds. The stFGA was a good method to synchronize the oestrus in sheep during breeding season: pregnancy rate and prolificacy were not affected by eCG administration.