EFFECT OF REARING SYSTEM AND SUPPLEMENTATION ON FAECAL OOCYST COUNT OF MECHERI LAMBS

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A study was undertaken to assess faecal oocyst count of Mecheri ram lambs under different rearing systems and supplementation. Lambs (40 animals in five groups of eight lambs each) were reared under two systems viz., grazing (T<sub>1</sub>-control, T<sub>2</sub>-concentrate and T<sub>3</sub>-urea molasses mineral block [UMMB] supplementation) and stall feeding (T<sub>4</sub>-concentrate and T<sub>5</sub>-UMMB supplementation) for a period of 150 days. Dung samples were collected from rectum of each animal and the faecal OPG count was made by modified McMaster technique. Means of faecal OPG count of Mecheri lambs revealed that initial values were in the range of 1950 to 3400 with the T<sub>3</sub> group having the highest and T<sub>5</sub> group having the lowest values. The values increased linearly in all the 3 grazing groups as the experiment progressed, corresponding to the changes of season from summer to monsoon, with an exception of a minor reduction in OPG in T<sub>2</sub> group in the period from 30 days to 60 days (3720). In stall fed groups, there was no definite pattern. In T<sub>4</sub> group, OPG values increased up to 60 days, declined at 90 days and again the values increased up to 150 days. For T<sub>5</sub> group OPG values declined from 30 days to 60 days period, then it increased linearly till 150 days. At the finishing stage, T<sub>5</sub> group had the highest OPG count (7220), followed by T<sub>4</sub> (6240), T<sub>2</sub> (5700), T<sub>3</sub> (4840) and T<sub>1</sub> (4500) had the lowest count. At the end of experiment, stall fed groups had higher OPG count than the grazing groups. Supplementation did not have any influence on OPG.

Key words: Mecheri lambs, faecal oocyst count, supplementation, concentrate, UMMB