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Full Length Research Paper

Reproductive performance of rabbits re-mated at different intervals post-partum

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Abstract

Investigations on post-partum re-mating intervals were conducted using 27 primiparous Dutch and Chinchilla crosses. Three treatments comprising re-mating intervals at 3, 4 and 5 weeks designated Ta, Tb, and Tc, respectively were used for the investigations. Nine does were randomly assigned to each of the treatments. The does were fed concentrate at the rate of 210 g doe⁻¹ day⁻¹, fresh forage and clean water were supplied *ad libitum*. Parameters studied were: Receptivity, Conception rate, Gestation length, Stillbirth, Litter size at birth, Litter size at weaning, Litter birth weight, Litter weight at weaning. Body weight of doe at mating, kindling and weaning were recorded. Results of the study showed that receptivity was higher in Ta and Tb than Tc. Conception rate was significantly higher (P<0.05) for Ta (100.00%), than Tb (56.17%) and Tc (44.53%). Stillbirth recorded significantly higher (P<0.01) value for does re-mated at 3 week intervals (Ta, 3.70%) while Tb and Tc recorded 0.00 and 0.33%, respectively. Litter birth weight of Ta (45.21 g) was significantly lower (P<0.05) than those of Tb (65.53 g) and Tc (63.19 g). Also litter weaning weights of Tb (152.22 g) and Tc (147.22 g) were significantly higher (P<0.05) than that of Ta (101.66 g). In conclusion, although week 3 re-mating interval has higher conception rate than the rest of the treatments, re-mating does at week 4 post-partum appeared better because it recorded no stillbirth and higher litter weights at birth and weaning all of which are indicative of higher reproductive efficiency.

Key words: Rabbit does, re-mating interval, early weaning, reproductive performance.

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