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Veterinarni Medicina

Effect of triacylglycerols of medium-chain fatty acids on growth rate and mortality of rabbits weaned at 25 and 35 days of age

Skrivanova E., Skrivanova V., Volek Z., Marounek M.:

Veterinarni Medicina, 54 (2009): 19-24

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Three hundred Hyplus rabbits reared on a commercial farm were weaned at the age of 25 days and 300 rabbits were weaned at the age of 35 days. Early-weaned and conventionally weaned rabbits were assigned to three groups and fed diets supplemented with protected palm fat (PPF), coconut oil (CO) and an oil containing triacylglycerols (TAG) of caprylic and capric acid (Akomed R) at 10 g/kg. The principal fatty acids in these supplements were palmitic, lauric and caprylic acid, respectively. Diets were fed until slaughter at 77 days of age. Mortality of early-weaned rabbits fed the diet supplemented with oil containing TAG of caprylic and capric

acid (25%) was significantly lower than that of rabbits fed PPF (45%), and non-significantly lower than mortality of rabbits fed CO (37%). Corresponding mortality rates in rabbits weaned at 35 days of age were 6, 14 and 16%. In all groups, the highest mortality occurred in the 2nd and the 3rd week after weaning. The final body weights of surviving early-weaned rabbits were not significantly different. In conventionally weaned rabbits, however, final body weight was significantly lower in rabbits fed PPF. It can be concluded that under practical field conditions early weaning represents a risk for animal health and leads to a high mortality of young rabbits. The negative effect of early weaning can be alleviated by commercially available TAG of caprylic and capric acid.

Keywords:

rabbits; early weaning; lipid supplements; mortality

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