

ABDOMINAL ULTRASOUND FOR PREGNANCY DIAGNOSIS IN RABBITS: IS IT AN INTERESTING ALTERNATIVE?

¹KASSY G.S.; ²UBIRAJARA I.T.; ³SAULO H.W.; ⁴LUIZ F.C.G

¹Pontificia Universidade Católica do Paraná (PUCPR), Rodovia BR 376 - Km 14
Bairro Costeira, São José dos Pinhais, Paraná, Brazil . Email: kgomes13@hotmail.com

²PUCPR, Brazil. Email: ubirajara.tasqueti@gmail.com

³PUCPR, Brazil. Email: meca@pucpr.br

⁴PUCPR, Brazil. Email: fgtc@outlook.com

ABSTRACT

Introduction: An early pregnancy diagnosis is one of the important factors to improve productivity in a rabbit production. The most common method is abdominal palpation, but some experience is required to achieve a good success rate. Ultrasonography is used as a tool for pregnancy diagnosis in many animals, including rabbits. But there is not a study of success rate of pregnancy diagnosis in this species. The aim of this study was to determine the rate of success in diagnosis of pregnancy in rabbit does using real time ultrasound scanner. Methodology: Twenty sexually mature female rabbits of New Zeland White, California and Chinchila breeds were randomly allotted to two groups (10 rabbits/group, one rabbit/ cage). Rabbits in the group I were the control group (non-pregnant), and the Group II was composed of pregnant does. All females of group II were mated with sexually active bucks and the day of mating was considered as the Day 0 of pregnancy. This study was performed at 7-days intervals, from Day 7 after mating until Day 28 of pregnancy. All animals were scanned using a linear probe of 5.0 MHz attached to a Piemedical Medley DP 3200 real time scanner. The abdominal ventral region of each rabbit was shaved and ultrasound gel was used to perform the exam. The ultrasound scans were performed randomly by the same operator, who did not know the group of origin of each female, with the animals maintained in lateral recumbent position.

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Results: At 7 days of pregnancy the failure rate was 35% because some difficulties to discern embryonic vesicles from other abdominal structures were found. On 14th, 21st and 28th days the success rates were 100%, being possible to visualize the pregnancy existence easily. Conclusion: Abdominal ultrasonography is an efficient alternative for pregnancy diagnosis in does after the 14th day of pregnancy.

Key words: ultrasonography, female rabbit, success rate.



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