

THE SITUATION OF RABBIT PRODUCTION AND PRODUCTION PERFORMANCE OF SOME EXOTIC RABBIT IN TURKEY

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Abstract - Rabbit production in modern way in Turkey is new and has not developed yet. Unfortunately, the meat type rabbit production is decreasing in recent years because of several reasons. Nowadays, rabbit production is increasing as laboratory animal at several experimental farms belonging the universities in Turkey. According to the studies at the Experimental Farm of Agricultural Faculty of Cukurova University, there were differences among the New Zealand White, Californian, Chinchilla and Green Line (Valencia Line) for several traits.

INTRODUCTION

Rabbit production in modern and commercial sense in Turkey is new and has not developed yet. Although, the first regular rabbit production studies in Turkey started with the imported New Zealand White breed from the U.S.A. in 1963. Later on the production is increasing and especially between 1970-1975 years a significant rapid development was seen in our rabbit production with the exotic breeds (Anonymous, 1989). Unfortunately, the meat type rabbit production is decreasing in recent years because of several reasons. However, when the animal protein deficiency and exports are considered, the rabbit production development is expected to be improved in the future in Turkey.

THE SITUATION OF RABBIT PRODUCTION

The most common rabbit production breed in Turkey is the exotic New Zealand White originated. In addition to these Californian, Chinchilla, Green Line (Valencia Line) breeds, crossbreeds of various exotic breeds and native breeds are also seen.

Unfortunately, State Statistical Institute (National Statistics) do not provide information about rabbit production, it is difficult to give an exact number of rabbits.

However, the number of rabbits available in Turkey is rather low, and it is known that the production is mostly concentrated in Marmara, West and Middle Anatolian Regions (ANONYMOUS 1989, KOÇAK and SÖNMEZ, 1975).

The production is mainly conducted in simple rabbitry and there are no big rabbit production farms except some medium size ones.

At the moment, some institutions belonging to the Ministry of Agriculture and universities' departments related to the subject are trying to produce some rabbits and are carrying out some studies, which are not significant (KOÇAK 1981, SELÇUK 1985, TESTİK et al, 1989). Nowadays, rabbit production is increasing as a laboratory animal at several experimental farms belonging to the universities in Turkey.

THE PRODUCTION PERFORMANCE OF SOME EXOTIC RABBITS

The production performance of different exotic rabbits breeds under the conditions of Turkey were examined by several researchers (KOÇAK 1981, SELÇUK 1985, TESTİK et al. 1989). They indicated that there are differences among the breeds for many traits as litter size, mortality, litter gain, maturity weight, etc.

Some figures obtained from the studies, which were conducted at the Experimental Farm of Agricultural Faculty of Cukurova University in Adana Turkey, on New Zealand White, Californian, Chinchilla and Green Line (also namely Valencia Line which was imported from Valencia Polytechnic University, Spain) are given in Table I and Table 2.

There were differences among the breeds for mentioned traits in Table I. In general, it is possible to say that the New Zealand White breed showed the best performance according to the mentioned traits, following Californian and Chinchilla breeds, respectively.

Table 2 shows that the Green Line has a better performance than other breeds, although the experiments were done at different periods.

Table 1 : Some traits obtained from New Zealand White, Californian and Chinchilla (Mean \pm SE).

Traits	New Zealand White	Californian	Chinchilla
Litter size (number)	6.0 \pm 0.8	6.8 \pm 0.6	5.0 \pm 0.7
Body weight (g)			
- Birth weight (Male+Female)	73.5 \pm 2.4	69.9 \pm 3.9	74.9 \pm 2.8
- 4 weeks Male	825 \pm 68	887 \pm 67	936 \pm 15
Female	756 \pm 42	791 \pm 51	938 \pm 22
- 8 weeks Male	1565 \pm 85	1492 \pm 93	1675 \pm 33
Female	1573 \pm 54	1414 \pm 89	1657 \pm 38
- 12 weeks Male	2107 \pm 83	2016 \pm 95	2081 \pm 41
Female	2070 \pm 89	1983 \pm 61	2040 \pm 34
- 16 weeks Male	2557 \pm 100	2473 \pm 95	2372 \pm 60
Female	2605 \pm 57	2519 \pm 64	2263 \pm 39
- 20 weeks Male	2940 \pm 68	2986 \pm 45	2632 \pm 59
Female	2968 \pm 38	2908 \pm 56	2501 \pm 49
- 24 weeks Male	3583 \pm 100	3394 \pm 53	3028 \pm 45
Female	3686 \pm 73	3401 \pm 51	2984 \pm 54
- Maturity weight Male	3804 \pm 55	3747 \pm 45	3575 \pm 48
Female	3750 \pm 26	3658 \pm 46	3514 \pm 47

Table 2 : Some traits obtained from Valencia line (Mean \pm SE)

Litter size number	9.0 \pm 1.0
Body weight (Male + Female), g	
5 weeks	925 \pm 76
7 weeks	1584 \pm 84
9 weeks	2057 \pm 94
11 weeks	2532 \pm 89
12 weeks	2950 \pm 85
15 weeks	3072 \pm 87
17 weeks	3287 \pm 86
19 weeks	3409 \pm 83
21 weeks	3600 \pm 90
Maturity weight	3842 \pm 228

However, it would be more appropriate that the studies reported here should be repeated at the same time to have more information about the performances of exotic rabbit breeds used in Turkey.

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