

OCCURRENCE OF ETIOLOGICAL AGENTS CAUSING SUBCLINICAL MASTITIS IN MORADA NOVA AND SANTA INÊS EWES

(OCORRÊNCIA DOS AGENTES ETIOLÓGICOS CAUSADORES DE MASTITE SUBCLÍNICA EM OVELHAS DAS RAÇAS MORADA NOVA E SANTA INÊS)

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There are several relevant health problems in sheep rearing while few studies address the diagnosis of ovine mastitis, especially in breeds suitable for meat production. This study aimed to determine the occurrence of the etiologic agents of subclinical mastitis in ewes of Santa Inês and Morada Nova breeds at the time of drying and their susceptibility to develop the disease when subjected to the same management conditions. We analyzed 250 breasts of 130 Santa Inês ewes and 143 breasts of 77 Morada Nova ewes. Milk samples were collected at the time of drying and submitted to the California Mastitis Test, somatic cell count and microbiological analyses. The occurrence of subclinical mastitis in ewes of Santa Inês and Morada Nova breeds was statistically analyzed using the chi-square test. Chi-square significant values, close to the tabulated values, were adjusted according to Yates continuity correction. The occurrences of animals with infectious subclinical mastitis were 33.1% and 35.1% in Santa Inês and Morada Nova breeds, respectively, and did not differ significantly. From the breasts of Santa Inês ewes evaluated, 20.4% had subclinical mastitis with the following etiologic agents and their occurrences: coagulase-negative *Staphylococcus* (CNS) (46%), coliforms (22%), *Streptococcus* spp. (12%), *Corynebacterium* spp. (6%), *Micrococcus* spp. (6%), *Staphylococcus aureus* (2%), coagulase-positive *Staphylococcus* (2%) and mixed infection of CNS and *Streptococcus* spp. (4%). Furthermore, from the evaluated breasts of Morada Nova sheep, 21% had subclinical mastitis with the following etiologic agents and their occurrences: CNS (56.7%), coliforms (13.3%), *Corynebacterium* spp. (10.0%), *Staphylococcus aureus* (10.0%), *Micrococcus* spp. (6.7%) and *Streptococcus* spp. (3.3%). CNS can be considered the most important etiological agent of subclinical mastitis in sheep. Both breeds, Santa Inês and Morada Nova, have the same chances of developing subclinical mastitis when subjected to the same management system.

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