

PREVALENCE OF *Toxoplasma gondii* ANTIBODIES IN GOATS

(PREVALÊNCIA DE ANTICORPOS ANTI-*Toxoplasma gondii* EM CAPRINOS)

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Congenital or acquired toxoplasmosis is one of the most common parasitic infections in goats of any age, race and sex. Epidemiological studies carried out in Brazil and around the world show that the prevalence of *Toxoplasma gondii* antibodies ranges from 10% to 86%, regardless of the adopted production system. The objective of this study was to evaluate the prevalence of antibodies to *Toxoplasma gondii* in goats from eight farms in Quixadá, Ceará. Blood samples were collected by jugular venipuncture of 93 male and female little goats, older than four months; 54 does and three bucks (breeders). The blood samples were centrifuged at 3000xg for 10 minutes to separate the serum. Serum samples were stored in Eppendorf ® tubes and frozen at -20°C for further testing by the indirect ELISA using as antigen tachyzoites of *T. gondii*. The study was approved by the Ethics Committee on Animal Use of FCAV - UNESP, under protocol 014465/12. Statistical analyses were performed by the Epi Info 7.0.9.7 software using the Chi-square test. The prevalence of *T. gondii* antibody for the eight properties studied was as follows: 23.33% (35/150) while within the animal categories, they were 15.05% (14/93) for offspring; 37.04% (20/54) for does; 33% (1/3) for bucks.

The statistical analysis showed significant differences between offspring x does (P=0.0006) and offspring x bucks (P=0.004). With respect to gender, the prevalence for does was 25.21% (30/119) while for bucks, it was 16.13% (5/31), but they were not statistically different (P=0.16). The production system adopted in the majority of properties was mixed, that is, they produced meat and milk. All the properties had at least one animal positive for *T. gondii*, demonstrating that infectious forms of the parasite are present in the studied region.

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