

Evaluation of rearing performance in young raccoon dogs with different hair coat types

S u m m a r y

Raccoon dogs are one of the least studied species of carnivorous fur animals and the youngest species to be bred in cages. At recent auctions, Polish raccoon dog skins were sold on average for 35% lower prices than Finnish skins. Comparison of Polish and Finnish raccoon dogs for conformation showed highly significant differences for almost all the parameters analysed in favour of Scandinavian animals. The hair coat of Polish raccoon dogs is characterized by thicker hair of the coarse type, low density of the undercoat and improper undercoat length to guard hair length ratio, which is conducive to hair coat matting. The aim of the study was to determine the effect of mating raccoon dogs with different hair coats (Polish and Finnish) on reproductive performance and growth of young. The study was conducted at the Experimental Station of the National Research Institute of Animal Production in Chorzelów. There were 3 experimental groups, of 12 females each. Group I contained Polish-type raccoon dogs, group II Finnish-type raccoon dogs, and group III animals obtained from the crossing of Finnish-type males with Polish-type females. Polish-type raccoon dogs had the largest litters. There were highly significant differences between the groups in the number of pups born and reared. The highest mortality (8%) during the period when young raccoon dogs stayed with their mothers was found in group I. Finnish-type animals were characterized by lower reproductive parameters: the highest percentage of females killing their litters and the lowest number of pups reared per litter, with zero mortality. In October, Finnish-type animals were heavier than Polish raccoon dogs and crossbreds by 14% and 10%, respectively. The differences were statistically significant. Comparison of the results for phenotype evaluation of raccoon dogs with different hair coat types shows highly significant differences in terms of size and hair coat quality. The highest score for all conformation traits was given to animals from group II. Crossbred raccoon dogs from group III improved their size and hair coat quality in relation to the foundation animals.