

Evaluation of pastel foxes breeding results at the Chorzelów
Experimental Station of the National Research Institute
of Animal Production

S u m m a r y

The breeding of the Polish variety of pastel foxes dates back to 1972, when on one of the farms a silver-coloured female gave birth to a litter of silver and beige cubs. In the first years of breeding, pastel animals were reproduced and the mutation consolidated and improved. Breeding work on this species of farm animals was abandoned after the farm in Jeziora Wielkie was closed down. For this reason, at the Chorzelów Experimental Station of the National Research Institute of Animal Production efforts were made to restore the population of pastel foxes based on the material found and obtained from other farms. The aim of the study was to evaluate the results of breeding work with pastel foxes based on the evaluation of reproductive parameters and body conformation, after the herd was brought to the Chorzelów Experimental Station and restored during 2001-2006. Over the 6 years, observations were made on 197 foundation stock females and their progeny. Reproductive parameters and cub mortality were monitored and conformation was evaluated. Analysis of reproductive parameters showed that they varied in particular years. The proportion of bred females ranged from 63 to 86%, but an alarmingly large number of mothers destroyed their litters. In relation to the initial year, the percentage of whelped females increased by approx. 10-16% in 2004-2005 and by 60% in 2006. A total of 312 cubs were reared in this period, including 40% in the last reproductive season. The mortality of young foxes during the period of rearing with mothers ranged from 12.5% to 51.0%. A total of 2.4 to 3.7 cubs were reared per female whelped. The breeding work resulted in the improved reproductive parameters. The number of unmated and titter-killing mothers decreased. The litters obtained were larger and in 2006 a total of 3.7 cubs were reared per female whelped.