

Andrzej Gugolek, Manfred Oskar Lorek, Dorota Kowalska,
Paweł Janiszewski, Tomasz Daszkiewicz

Effect of housing and feeding conditions on the production results and coccidiosis infection rates of New Zealand White rabbits

S u m m a r y

The objective of this study was to determine whether meat-type rabbits (New Zealand White) can be successfully raised under traditional feeding and housing conditions. The experiment was conducted on 40 NZW rabbits divided into two analogical groups. The male to female ratio was 1:1 in both groups. Control group (I) were kept indoor, in wire cages, under standard commercial farm conditions, and they were fed a complete pelleted diet supplemented with the coccidiostatic drug - robenidine. Experimental group (II) were raised on a small producer's farm, where they were kept on deep litter and fed traditional farm-produced feed (green forage, barley grain, hay, stale bread), with no coccidiostatics. Over the experimental period the animals were weighed at 30, 54, 70 and 90 days of age. On day 30, 56 and 90, feces were sampled for parasitological analysis. The presence of coccidian oocysts was determined by the McMaster technique. At the completion of the experiment (day 90), 10 males selected of each group were culled, skinned eviscerated and carcass dressing percentage was calculated. It was found that rabbits fed a complete pelleted diet and kept under standard farming conditions had higher final body weights, compared with rabbits fed and housed according to the traditional system. There were higher level of coccidiosis infection in group II. It was also demonstrated that the carcass dressing percentage of rabbits was at a comparable level in both groups, and no statistically significant differences were found.