

The behavior of breed sheep Wrzosówka on the xerothermic grasslands

Summary

The study concerned observation of the behavior of Wrzosówka in xerothermic grasslands. The observations were conducted in xerothermic grasslands: 1 in the Lubuskie voivodeship and 6 – in Western Pomerania, during the period from 1 July to 30 September 2011. The tested flock consisted of 60 breeds of Wrzosówka sheep and 2 moggie goats. During the observations, particular attention was paid to the behavior of animals during grazing including: herd behavior, vital signs as well as response to various stimuli and external factors. The sheep communicated with each other through sound, the sense of smell, hearing and sight. The hierarchy, as being observed in vital signs was subordinated to goats. Goats dominated during the competition for feed, water, and the best sleeping place, at the same attacking sheep. Plant species which were consumed most often by both sheep and goats included: black locust, plum blackthorn, young shoots of grass seedlings of deciduous trees. After the last feed during the day, the herd was going slowly in a quiet place, sheltered from the wind. Older sheep formed a compact group in the middle, driving out younger animals. Goats took place next to the sheep, but did not form a compact group with them. At the presence of badger close to the fence of the grassland, sheep concentrated in a compact group, and struck the feet the soil surface. After two hours of such behavior, badger departed. The presence of a Scenthound Bavarian dog on the quarters was accepted by the sheep completely after two months of common residence.

KEY WORDS: sheep, goats, xerothermic grasslands, behavior