

Results of crossbreeding between Belgian Texel and Moroccan locale breeds of sheep. Carcass characteristics and meat composition.

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An experiment was carried in order to evaluate the performances of Belgian Texel (BT) rams and their progeny when mated to Moroccan local ewes. Three BT rams were mated to Timahdite (T=30) and D'man x Timahdite (DT=30) ewes and compared to purebred ewes D'man (D = 22) and (T = 30) for carcass characteristics and meat composition.

Preliminary results show that, crossbred lambs sired by BT rams were youngest (-7 days) and heavier (+1.7 kg) at slaughtering and have a better dressing-out percentage (+1.2%), when compared to T and D purebreds lambs. They also deposit less mesenteric fat (-197 g) and their carcasses were more compact (+4%) and well conformed (+1.5 points). The BT crossbred carcasses were also shorter (-6 cm) and larger (+2 cm). Furthermore, the half-carcass complete dissection for each genotype indicated that the meat composition by genotype were respectively for muscle, fat and bone: 62.4, 7.62, and 20.10% for TB x DT, 64.96, 7.88 and 19.03% for TB x T, 60.71, 8.51 and 22.35% for T and 57.67, 11.16 and 20.70% for D. These results indicate that BT breed and their progeny have well performed under Moroccan management conditions. Thus BT breed could be considered to improve sheep meat quality in Morocco especially by its utilization in crossbreeding.