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Genetic improvement of sheep and goats in Albania

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Sheep and goat populations or breeds involved in the genetic improvement programmes described

Number of head

There are 500 ewes and 180 goats in the Small Ruminant Station of Korca. In Gjirokastra and Skrapari stations 500 and 250 Muzhake does, and 580 and 360 Recka ewes are kept respectively.

Origin of the breeds or population

All the breeds are imported from different countries.

Description of the production systems of these populations

Size of the flocks, land used, status of property

The mean size of the flocks kept in Korca is 100 heads, kept in 212 Ha. In Skrapari station, the flocks are 80-100 heads kept in 110 Ha. In Gjirokastra station the flocks are 80-100 heads in 100 Ha and 500 Ha winter and summer pastures. They all are government property.

Reproductive management

Artificial insemination is used in sheep. In goats flocks natural mating is used.

Nutrition

During winter (150 days) the animals are fed indoors, during the spring (75 days) they are fed on the artificial pasture of the station. During the summer time they are fed on highlands natural pastures.

Housing

On the winter time, the animals stay on their shelters.

Milking

The ewes and goats are milked by hand.

Manpower

There is one shepherd for every 80 heads of sheep or goats.

Objectives of the breeding programmes

The main objectives are: The conservation and improvement of the characters of pure imported breeds in the station, production and distribution of sires to the farmers for crossing. The conservation and genetic improvement of commune sheep and goats breeds, sire production and their distribution in private farms. Another objective is technical advise for farmers.

Description of the characters to be improved

Characters to be improved are: milk production, fat content, protein content, lambing and kidding rate, birth weight, growing rate, etc. Genetic improvement of milk production of commune sheep and goats breeds in Gjirokastra and Skrapari stations.

Methods of selection or crossing used

Individual selection has been used, but presently index method is being implemented.

Absortion crossbreeding for the crossings between imported sheep breed with Recka has been carried out. The crosses with Ile de France for the improvement of meat production of field sheep is considered very important. The crosses with Havasi and Cigaja are used to improve hills and mountain Recka sheep.

The pedigree method is used in sheep and goats of Gjirokastra and Skrapari station. The sires selection is based on mother performances and their own growing rate.

Reproduction techniques used

AI is used in sheep on natural oestrus, while natural mating is carried out in goats.

Available infrastructure

Farms

Housing for animals: it needs to be reconstructed.

Laboratories and offices: No laboratories.

Computing: No.

Vehicles: No.

Manpower. Number and qualification: There are 60 workers and 6 specialists.

Scientific and technical support

The scientific support is supplied by Animal Husbandry Institute.

Organization

The performance recording and selection are carried out by the station and Animal Husbandry Institute.

Financing

Financing support is supplied by the State budget.

Results obtained

The conservation of genetic values of imported breeds.

The improvement of meat and milk performances in commune breeds through crosses with imported breeds.

Economic benefits

The increasing of meat production of sheep kept in field condition and milk performances improvement of mountain sheep.