A note on the muscle, fat and bone contents of Portuguese light lamb carcasses

J. A. Simões e I. A. Mendes
Estação Zootécnica Nacional,
Fonte Boa, 2000-763 Vale de Santarém
Tel. 243767300  e-mail ezn.inia@mail.telepac.pt

Resumo

A total of 72 lambs weighting between 10 - 13.0 kg (category C of the European Union grading for light lambs) from the Bragançano, Campaniço, Merino Preto e Serra da Estrela breeds were studied. These breeds represent 66.8% of the Portuguese sheep population. Evaluations were made at the same subcutaneous fat contents in the carcass (88.5 g kg\(^{-1}\)). Small, significant (p<0.05) differences in the range of muscle and bone contents were found; the ranges being 30 and 25 g kg\(^{-1}\), respectively. These variations led to significant differences in the muscle:bone ratios, the highest value being 3.30 and the lowest 2.73. Significant differences were also found in the content of higher-priced joints (leg+chump, loin+ribs and anterior ribs) and in the proportion of kidney knob and channel fat (kkcf) (9 g kg\(^{-1}\)). No significant differences were found in the content of total fat (subcutaneous, intermuscular and kkcf) and in the muscle:total fat ratios.

Key words: lamb, carcass, breed.