FEEDING BEHAVIOUR OF CINTA SENESE AND LARGE WHITE X CINTA SENESE PIGS AT PASTURE

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Abstract: The valorisation of natural pastures through grazing may represent an additional value in livestock farming both in terms of economic value and of product quality. Nevertheless, understanding foraging strategies is crucial for an efficient use of natural resources. This study aimed to compare the feeding behaviour of two genetic types: the native pure-bred Cinta Senese and its crossbreed with Large White. The pigs had available herbaceous pasture, however supplemental feed was distributed. Direct observations were conducted on two herds of grazing pigs during the pasture season from May to September, when natural feeding resources are mostly available. In the trial days, animals were observed by scan sampling every 15 minutes during the daylight hours. The results of GLM analysis revealed that during the middle hours of the day both genetic types appeared less involved in active behaviours (feeding and moving), displaying greater propensity to resting activities (e.g. lying and standing). In particular, movement recurred more frequently during the morning hours in both genetic types. Cinta Senese pigs spend more time in foraging activity, especially in rooting, during the morning than in middle hours of the day, compared to Large White x Cinta Senese pigs. These results confirm the pronounced aptitude of this local breed to the research of natural food.

Keywords: feeding behaviour, grazing, activity, Cinta Senese.

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