



International Journal of

Environmental & Agriculture Research

www.ijoeear.com

ISSN

2454-1850



Volume-9, Issue-11, November 2023

Preface

We would like to present, with great pleasure, the inaugural volume-9, Issue-11, November 2023, of a scholarly journal, *International Journal of Environmental & Agriculture Research*. This journal is part of the AD Publications series in the field of *Environmental & Agriculture Research Development*, and is devoted to the gamut of Environmental & Agriculture issues, from theoretical aspects to application-dependent studies and the validation of emerging technologies.

This journal was envisioned and founded to represent the growing needs of Environmental & Agriculture as an emerging and increasingly vital field, now widely recognized as an integral part of scientific and technical investigations. Its mission is to become a voice of the Environmental & Agriculture community, addressing researchers and practitioners in below areas.

Environmental Research:

Environmental science and regulation, Ecotoxicology, Environmental health issues, Atmosphere and climate, Terrestrial ecosystems, Aquatic ecosystems, Energy and environment, Marine research, Biodiversity, Pharmaceuticals in the environment, Genetically modified organisms, Biotechnology, Risk assessment, Environment society, Agricultural engineering, Animal science, Agronomy, including plant science, theoretical production ecology, horticulture, plant, breeding, plant fertilization, soil science and all field related to Environmental Research.

Agriculture Research:

Agriculture, Biological engineering, including genetic engineering, microbiology, Environmental impacts of agriculture, forestry, Food science, Husbandry, Irrigation and water management, Land use, Waste management and all fields related to Agriculture.

Each article in this issue provides an example of a concrete industrial application or a case study of the presented methodology to amplify the impact of the contribution. We are very thankful to everybody within that community who supported the idea of creating a new Research with *IJOEAR*. We are certain that this issue will be followed by many others, reporting new developments in the Environment and Agriculture Research Science field. This issue would not have been possible without the great support of the Reviewer, Editorial Board members and also with our Advisory Board Members, and we would like to express our sincere thanks to all of them. We would also like to express our gratitude to the editorial staff of AD Publications, who supported us at every stage of the project. It is our hope that this fine collection of articles will be a valuable resource for *IJOEAR* readers and will stimulate further research into the vibrant area of Environmental & Agriculture Research.



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Haematology and Serum Biochemistry of West African Dwarf (Wad) Goats Fed Selected Tropical Browse Plants

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Received:- 10 November 2023/ Revised:- 16 November 2023/ Accepted:- 24 November 2023/ Published: 30-11-2023

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Abstract— The study explored the effect of feeding different tropical browse plants on the haematology and serum biochemistry of West African Dwarf (WAD) goats under different management system, namely: intensive and semi-intensive system. Bucks in T₂ had the highest Pack cell volume and Haemoglobin mean values of 28.17% and 9.37g/dl. Bucks in T₁ recorded highest mean value in Platelets and Lymphocyte as 238.33x10³/ul and 58.83% respectively. Under intensive system, pack cell volume and Haemoglobin recorded high mean values of 28.08% and 9.33g/dl. Whereas highest value of Platelets 225.25(x10³/ul) was reported under intensive system. PCV recorded high mean value of 34.33% and 29.33% in bucks of T₂ and T₃ under intensive and semi-intensive system respectively. Lymphocyte (L) recorded high mean value of 62.67% in bucks of T₁ under intensive system unlike semi-intensive system that recorded 60.00% in bucks of T₄ as its high mean value. Aspartate aminotransferase (AST) and Alanine aminotransferase (ALT) are statistically significant ($P < 0.05$) even with lower mean values of T₁ (18.17u/l), T₂ (20.83u/l), T₃ (21.50u/l), T₄ (21.50u/l) and T₁ (4.45u/l), T₂ (5.89u/l), T₃ (5.77u/l), T₄ (6.67u/l) respectively. Total protein was noted with high mean value in all the treatments with corresponding values of 64.50g/l, 71.00g/l, 70.33g/l and 72.67g/l. AST, ALT, TP and Globulin recorded high mean values of 25.25u/l, 7.16u/l, 72.00g/l and 27.00g/dl respectively under semi-intensive system, while their low mean values were revealed under intensive system. AST recorded high mean value of 29.00(u/l) in bucks of T₃ under semi-intensive system followed by bucks in T₄ having mean value of 28.00(u/l). Consequently, ALB and GLO in bucks of T₄ and T₂ under semi-intensive system recorded high mean values of 49.00g/l and 29.00g/dl respectively. The study recommends that WAD goats managed intensively to supplementation of bitter leaf (*Vernonia amygdalina*) should be adopted since they showed more stability in the haematological and biochemical serum for maximum production.

Keywords— Tropical browse plants, West African Dwarf (WAD) goats, Serum biochemistry, Aspartate aminotransferase (AST), Alanine aminotransferase (ALT).

I. INTRODUCTION

The West African Dwarf Goat (WAD) is the most important small ruminant breed in West African wetlands, accounting for approximately 38 percent of the region's 38 million goats. (Gall, 1996). This variety has good environmental adaptability and an innate ability to "resist the effects of trypanosome infections. and quot; (Steele, 1996). The feeding behavior of West African Dwarf Goats (WAD) is typically representative of traditional husbandry techniques and these goats forage for their daily nutritional needs. (Daramola *et al.*, 2005). Traditional goat farming in Nigeria is mostly practiced in traditional ways, which leads to poor nutrition and encourages the search for alternative cheap feeds that are in less demand. (Amaefuru, 2002). Smallholders in rural Nigeria are highly dependent on goats due to their socio-economic importance and an integral part of the cultural existence and fabric of Nigeria (Ajala, 2004; Anaeto *et al.*, 2009). Ruminants, including goats, play an important role in improving low consumption of animal proteins in Nigeria and other developing countries. Despite the importance of goats, their production continues to be hampered by the scarcity of fodder quantity and quality at certain times of the year. Nigeria continues to suffer from inadequate quality and quantity of ruminant feed supplies resulting in low ruminant productivity. The problem of lack of fodder can be solved by providing high-quality fodder, but in dry times, when the quality of fodder deteriorates, this is not practical. In addition, traditional forages such as grains and oilseeds available at that time of year are too expensive to feed ruminants. Therefore, there is an urgent need for researchers to find alternative and sustainable food

sources that do not compete with human food. This underlines the need to develop innovative solutions to meet the challenges posed by feed shortages.

Maintaining the nutritional status and physical well-being of goats is extremely important and requires careful monitoring and thorough blood analysis. (Ibhaze and Fajemisin, 2017). Hematological parameters are important indicators used in the monitoring and evaluation of animal welfare and nutritional status, which Babatunde et al. (1992). Analyzing the "hematological and biochemical parameters of WAD goats" can be a means of obtaining valuable information about their potential for productive performance. (Taiwo and Ogunsanmi, 2003). Therefore, analysis of blood samples is a quick and readily available method to evaluate the clinical and nutritional results of nutritional trials. (Babatunde et al., 1992). Ibhaze (2015) stated that there are several factors that cause variations in blood parameters in animals such as "nutrient levels, age, sex, breed and physiological state of the animal". "Blood chemistry parameters such as glucose, total protein, blood urea nitrogen and cholesterol" have been used to assess the nutritional value of cattle (Gleen et al., 2006). Blood chemical profiles, which include parameters such as glucose, lipids and proteins, change in goats when feed or protein is reduced (Irkham et al., 2016). Aletor et al. (2012), "the effect of food on blood and serum chemistry must be extremely important because blood transports gases, nutrients and excretory products in the body". Bawala et al. (2008) emphasized that nutritional research should not be limited to "performance, carcass quality and protein intake" but should also consider effects on blood components. Conducting hematological and biochemical studies is crucial for accurate evaluation of various procedures, feeding habits and medical conditions of animals (Ahmed et al., 2009; Hassan et al., 2012; Okoruwa and Ikhimiya, 2014). However, data on the hematology and serum biochemistry of West African pygmy goats fed a selected tropical plant diet of *Vernonica amygdalina*, *Spondias mombins*, *Alchornea cordifolia* and *Newbouldia* are insufficient. As a result, this study is conducted to address this knowledge.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 Research Design:

The study involved the use of twenty-four WAD goats, which were kept in individual pens and randomly assigned to one of eight dietary treatment groups, with three animals per treatment for the Intensive system and one treatment each for T1, T2, T3, and T4 in the semi-intensive system, using a Factorial Design.

2.2 Study Area:

The study was carried out at the Goat unit of the University of Port Harcourt Teaching and Research Farm, Abuja campus, Choba, Rivers State. Rivers State is in the south-south of Nigeria. The school is "situated on latitude 4° 53' 14" North through 4° 54' 42" N and longitude 6° 54' 00" East through 6° 55' 50" East of the equator" (Ijeomah *et al.*, 2013; Aiyeloja and Adedeji, 2015). It falls within "the humid rain forest of West Africa with a long duration of rainfall (March-November) and a very short dry season. Precipitation occurs in September with an average of 367mm of rain in 182 days and temperature of 25°C-28°C and a very high relative humidity (above 80%)".

2.3 Population for the study:

A total of twenty-four male West African Dwarf weaner goats, aged between six and seven months, were procured from the open market for the purposes of this research. Their housing comprised of well-ventilated individual pens, featuring an open-sided system with corrugated aluminum roofing sheets, block walls, and a cemented floor. The latter was disinfected with Izal solution two weeks prior to the beginning of the research work. Quarantined for two weeks, the animals received vaccination against peste des petit Ruminant (PPR), were dipped in acaricide solution to control endo and ecto-parasites, dewormed using Abendazole suspension and weighed before the commencement of the research work.

2.4 Sample and Sample Techniques:

The plants that were available for browsing were harvested each evening, and subsequently cleared of any potential insects or caterpillars before being weighed. The animals were then provided with the freshly harvested plants the following morning, at approximately 8:00 am, after the pens and troughs had been properly cleaned. The daily feed intake was monitored by calculating the difference between the feed that had been served and the amount that was refused. *Ad libitum* access to fresh and clean water was also provided. The experimental animals were weighed at the outset of the experiment and on a weekly basis throughout the study period, utilizing a hanging measuring scale. The weight gain of the animals was calculated by subtracting their initial body weight from their final body weight at the conclusion of the study. The feed conversion ratio was then determined by dividing the feed intake by the body weight gain.

2.5 Nature/sources of Data

For the intensive system, the browse plants were cut fresh every evening cleaned of any possible insects/caterpillars and the weight obtained before offering them to the animals in the morning. Treatments T₂– T₄ was placed on 75% browse plants and 25% basal diet while T₁ was the control having zero inclusion of the browse plant.

T₁ = conventional feed (Control)

T₂ = *Panicum maximum* + *Vernonia amygdalina*

T₃ = *Panicum maximum* + *Newbouldia leavis*

T₄ = *Panicum maximum* + *Alchornea cordifolia*

For the semi-intensive system, treatment G₁ to G₄ was placed on 75% browse plants and 25% basal diet while G₀ was the control having zero inclusion of the browse plant. The browse plants were placed in each of the paddocks where the experimental animals grazed.

G₁ = Conventional feed (Control)

G₂ = *Panicum maximum* + *Vernonia amygdalina*

G₃ = *Panicum maximum* + *Newbouldia leavis*

G₄ = *Panicum maximum* + *Alchornea cordifolia*

2.6 Method of Data collection and Instrumentation:

At the end of the field work, all animals underwent jugular venipuncture using a disposable sterile 10-ml syringe and 20-gauge x 1.5-ml needle to extract two sets of blood samples. Each animal's 10ml blood sample was divided into two equal parts, with one part (3ml) being collected into properly labeled plastic tubes containing ethylene diamine tetra-acetic acid (EDTA) anticoagulant for haematological analysis. This analysis was conducted to determine Packed Cell Volume (PCV), Haemoglobin (HB), White Blood Cell (WBC), Red Blood Cell (RBC), Platelet (PLT), Neutrophil (N), Lymphocytes (L), Eosinophils (E), Monocyte (M), Basophils (B) in accordance with the methods described by Joshi et al., (2002).

The remaining 7ml of blood sample was collected into labeled plastic tubes without anticoagulant and used to analyze the serum biochemical profiles. The serum metabolites Aspartate aminotransferase (AST), Alanine aminotransferase (ALT), Alkaline phosphatase (ALP), Total protein (TP), Albumin (ALB), Globulin (GLO), Gamma-glutamyl Transpeptidase (GGT), Total cholesterol (TC), Triglycerides (TG), High density Lipoprotein (HDL), and Low density Lipoprotein (LDL) were determined by spectrophotometry following centrifugation. The values for all these parameters were analyzed using the routine laboratory procedures as described by Ogunsemi et al., (2002).

2.7 Method of Data Analysis:

The entirety of the acquired data was subjected to a thorough statistical analysis of variance (ANOVA) with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). In cases where the means differed, they were separated through the utilization of the Duncan multiple range test of the aforementioned package.

III. RESULTS

3.1 Treatment effect on the Haematological indices of WAD goats fed some Tropical browses under Intensive and Semi-intensive system

The effects of treatment on hematological parameters of WAD goats fed some tropical leaves in intensive and semi-intensive systems are shown in Table 1. It is noted that Pack cell volume, hemoglobin, platelets, neutrophils, lymphocytes and monocytes were significantly (P<0.05), which is affected by the treatment. The result showed that T₂ had the highest Pack cell volume and average hemoglobin content of 28.17% and 9.37 g/dL, respectively, followed by T₄ with an average Pack cell volume of 27.33% and 9.08 g/dL. while Bucks T₁ recorded the highest average of 238.33 x 10³/ul and 58.83% for platelets and lymphocytes. No significant (P>0.05) difference was observed between red blood cells, white blood cells and eosinophils.

TABLE 1
TREATMENT EFFECT ON THE HAEMATOLOGICAL INDICES OF WAD GOATS FED SOME TROPICAL BROWSES
UNDER INTENSIVE AND SEMI-INTENSIVE SYSTEM

Blood parameters	Normal range	T1	T2	T3	T4	SEM
PCV (%)	21 – 35	21.50 ^b	28.17 ^a	24.17 ^{ab}	27.33 ^a	1.43
HB (g/dl)	7 – 15	7.17 ^b	9.37 ^a	7.98 ^{ab}	9.08 ^{ab}	0.65
RBC(x10 ⁶ /ul)	3.5 - 13.5	3.27	4.32	3.78	3.27	0.53
WBC(x10 ⁶ /ul)	6.8 - 20.1	4.85	4.83	5.33	6.1	0.53
PLT (x10 ³ /ul)	150 – 230	238.33 ^a	178.17 ^b	218.67 ^a	212.67 ^a	8.24
N (%)	17 – 52	36.50 ^b	43.33 ^a	36.83 ^b	35.67 ^b	1.62
L (%)	47 – 82	58.83 ^a	51.33 ^b	56.83 ^{ab}	56.33 ^{ab}	1.86
E (%)	1 – 7	1.33	1.5	1.83	2.5	0.54
M	0 – 10	3.33 ^b	3.83 ^{ab}	4.00 ^{ab}	5.50 ^a	0.63
B	0	0	0	0	0	0

^{abc}Means in the same row with different superscript differ significantly ($P < 0.05$). Sources (Normal range): Tambuwal et al., 2002. Where PCV= Packed cell volume, HB=Haemoglobin, RBC= Red blood cell, WBC=White blood cell, PLT= Platelet, N= Neutrophil, L=Lymphocytes, E=Eosinophil, M=Monocytes

3.2 System effect on the Haematological parameter of WAD goats fed some Tropical browses under Intensive and Semi-intensive system

As recorded in Table 2, this was the result of systemic effects on hematological parameters in WAD goats fed tropical intensive and semi-intensive systems. In addition to packed cell volume, hemoglobin and platelets, which were significantly affected by the system (Pandgt; 0.05), other hematological parameters such as red blood cells, white blood cells, (N) neutrophils, (L) lymphocytes, (E) eosinophils. and (M) There were no significant differences in the systemic effects of monocytes (Pandlt; 0.05). Packed cell volume and hemoglobin recorded high average values of 28.08% and 9.33 g/dl in the intensive system, while low average values of 22.50% and 7.48 g/dl were recorded in the semi-intensive system. While in the semi-intensive system, the high average value of platelets was 225.25 (x103/ul), while in the intensive system, the low average value was 198.67 (x103/ul).

TABLE 2
SYSTEM EFFECT ON THE HAEMATOLOGICAL PARAMETER OF WAD GOATS FED SOME TROPICAL BROWSES
UNDER INTENSIVE AND SEMI-INTENSIVE SYSTEM

Variables	Intensive	Semi-intensive	SEM
PCV (%)	28.08 ^a	22.50 ^b	1.01
HB (g/dl)	9.33 ^a	7.48 ^b	0.46
RBC (x10 ⁶ /ul)	4.33	3.45	0.38
WBC(x10 ⁶ /ul)	5.16	5.4	0.38
PLT(x10 ³ /ul)	198.67 ^b	225.25 ^a	5.83
N (%)	36.17	40	1.14
L (%)	57.17	54.5	1.32
E (%)	2.08	1.5	0.38
M (%)	4.33	4	0.44
B	0	0	0

^{abc} Means in the same row with different superscript differ significantly ($P < 0.05$). Where PCV= Packed cell volume, HB=Haemoglobin, RBC= Red blood cell, WBC=White blood cell, PLT= Platelet, N= Neutrophil, L=Lymphocytes, E=Eosinophils, M=Monocytes

3.3 Treatment effect on the biochemical indices of WAD goats fed some Tropical browses under Intensive and Semi-intensive system.

The result of treatment of serum biochemical indicators of West African pygmy goats fed with tropical browsing in intensive and semi-intensive systems is shown in Table 3. The result revealed that aspartate aminotransferase (AST), alanine aminotransferase (ALT), alkaline phosphatase were significantly affected by the treatment ($P < 0.05$) (ALP), total protein (TP), albumin, globulin and gamma-glutamyl transpeptidase (GGT). Aspartate aminotransferase (AST) and alanine aminotransferase (ALT) are statistically significant ($P < 0.05$) even with lower mean values T1 (18.17 u/l), T2 (20.83 u/l), T3 (21.50 u/l), T4 (21.50 u/l) and T1 (4.45 u/l), T2 (5.89 u/l), T3 (5.77 u/l) and T4 (6.67 u/l). The average total protein content was found high in all treatments with respective values of 64.50 g/l, 71.00 g/l, 70.33 g/l and 72.67 g/l. Alkaline phosphatase recorded the highest mean with T3 (18.00 u/L) followed by T4 (17.33 u/L) and T1 (15.50 u/L) but the lowest in dollars with T2 (14.00 exercise). There were no significant differences ($P > 0.05$) in (TC) total cholesterol, (TG) triglycerides, (HDL) high density lipoprotein and (LDL) low density lipoprotein as shown in the table below.

TABLE 3
TREATMENT EFFECT ON THE BIOCHEMICAL INDICES OF WAD GOATS FED SOME TROPICAL BROWSES UNDER INTENSIVE AND SEMI-INTENSIVE SYSTEM

Blood parameters	Normal range	T ₁	T ₂	T ₃	T ₄	SEM
AST (u/l)	58-90	18.17 ^b	20.83 ^a	21.50 ^a	21.50 ^a	0.87
ALT (u/l)	30-Oct	4.45 ^b	5.89 ^{ab}	5.77 ^{ab}	6.67 ^a	0.65
ALP (u/l)	Dec-34	15.50 ^{ab}	14.00 ^b	18.00 ^a	17.33 ^a	1.04
TP (g/l)	30-65	64.50 ^b	71.00 ^a	70.33 ^a	72.67 ^a	1.45
Albumin (g/l)	20-42	41.33 ^c	45.17 ^b	42.50 ^c	47.83 ^a	0.79
Globulin (g/dl)		23.17 ^b	25.83 ^{ab}	27.83 ^a	24.83 ^{ab}	0.98
TC (m/mol)	1 – 5	2.8	3.34	2.8	3.1	0.49
TG (m/mol)	0.2-0.8	1.45	1.46	1.34	1.49	0.49
HDL (m/mol)	1.0-3.2	1.77	1.67	1.69	1.74	0.49
LDL (m/mol)	1.0-3.2	1.75	2.39	1.72	2.05	0.49
GGT		14.97 ^c	19.93 ^a	15.02 ^c	17.38 ^b	0.5

^{abc} means in the same row with different superscript differ significantly ($P < 0.05$). Source (Normal range): RAR, 2009. Where AST= Aspartate aminotransferase, ALT= Alanine aminotranferase, ALP= Alkaline phosphatase, TP= Total protein, TC= Total cholesterol, TG= Triglycerides, HDL= High density lipoprotein, LDL= Low density lipoprotein, GGT= Gamma-glutamyl Transpeptidase

3.4 System effect on the Biochemical indices of WAD goats fed some tropical browses under intensive and semi-intensive system.

As shown in Table 4, system effect on the biochemical and haematological indices of WAD goats fed some tropical browse plants under intensive and semi-intensive systems the various parameters that recorded significant differences ($P < 0.05$) include AST, ALT, TP and Globulin. The listed parameters all recorded high mean values of 25.25u/l, 7.16u/l, 72.00g/l and 27.00g/dl respectively under semi-intensive system, while their low mean values were revealed under intensive system. Other parameters not significantly ($P > 0.05$) affected by system are ALP, Albumin, GGT, TC, TG, HDL and LDL.

TABLE 4
SYSTEM EFFECT ON THE BIOCHEMICAL INDICES OF WAD GOATS FED SOME TROPICAL BROWSES UNDER INTENSIVE AND SEMI-INTENSIVE SYSTEM

Variables	Intensive	Semi-intensive	SEM
AST (u/l)	15.75 ^b	25.25 ^a	0.61
ALT (u/l)	4.21 ^b	7.16 ^a	0.46
ALP (u/l)	15.42	17	0.73
TP (g/l)	67.25 ^b	72.00 ^a	1.03
Albumin (g/l)	43.42	45	0.56
Globulin (g/dl)	23.83 ^b	27.00 ^a	0.69
GGT	16.25	17.43	0.41
TC (m/mol)	2.97	3.05	0.35
TG (m/mol)	1.33	1.54	0.34
HDL (m/mol)	1.72	1.72	0.34
LDL (m/mol)	1.9	2.06	0.34

^{ab} means in the same row with different superscript differ significantly ($P < 0.05$). Where AST= Aspartate aminotransferase, ALT= Alanine aminotransferase, ALP= Alkaline phosphatase, TP= Total protein, TC= Total cholesterol, TG= Triglycerides, HDL= High density lipoprotein, LDL= Low density lipoprotein, GGT= Gamma-glutamyl Transpeptidase

IV. DISCUSSION

Packed cell volume (PCV) was used to measure toxicity and differences in composition were observed between breeds. As Ahamefule et al. (2005), PCV values were found to vary between 21-35%, which is within the 22-38% range considered physiological in goats by Krammer (2000). This finding suggests that the treatment diets were nutritious and non-toxic, contributing to adequate blood flow, as reported by Peter-Damian et al. (2016). Hemoglobin (Hb) values recorded in this study ranged from 7 to 15 g/dL, which is consistent with the findings of Daramola et al. (2005), but higher than the reported values of 5 to 6 g/dL... Belewu and Ogunsola (2010) in goats fed *Jatropha curcas* kernel cakes treated with mushrooms. The relatively high Hb concentration observed in the goats indicates that the nutritional treatment given in the study can promote the development of blood with a high oxygen carrying capacity. The study also showed that neutrophil and lymphocyte values corresponded to 47-82% and 17-52% respectively, as reported by Daramola et al. previously reported. (2005) and Tambuwal et al. (2002). These results indicate a skilled immune system in West African pygmy goats with sufficient numbers of immune cells to promote favorable health, as Daramola et al. (2005). These results further emphasize the ethnoveterinary properties of seed plants as emphasized by Fahey (2005). Ultimately, the study provides valuable information about the role of dietary therapy in promoting goat health and welfare, with implications for broader animal nutrition and welfare research. Since all WAD goats used in this experiment recorded hematological values that were similar to those of Daramola et al. (2005) and Tambuwal et al. (2002). This shows that WAD goats can do well in all management systems accepted by Imasuen (2014).

V. CONCLUSION

Assessment of liver function and damage is critical in the "diagnosis and treatment of liver disease". Aspartate aminotransferase (AST), alkaline phosphatase (ALP), and alanine aminotransferase (ALT) are important biomarkers commonly used to assess liver function. According to Yildirim et al (2011), these enzymes and blood activity may indicate liver damage. An increase in their levels above normal can also be related to muscle damage. These enzymes and normal values suggest that the processed diets did not damage the integrity of the liver and the animal as stated in the study by Aikpitanyi and Egweh (2020). In this study, serum protein was found in the range of 30-65 g/dL, which corresponds to serum protein values reported by Merck (2011) in clinically healthy dwarf goats. The serum albumin values observed in this study were similar to those of WAD goats by Yusuf et al. (2012) but higher than Okoruwani et al. reported intervals. (2014) and Opara et al. (2010) respectively. This finding suggests that the dietary protein content was sufficient to support the growth of the animal, as Olafadehan et al. (2020). Based on the AST and ALP values reported by Merck (2011), this study recorded reduced values in different management systems, indicating that WAD goats can perform well in all management systems used. Imasuen (2014) agreed with this. Based on the results, hairy leaf (*Vernonia amygdalina*) supplementation is recommended for intensively treated WAD goats because their hematological and biochemical serum showed a more stable maximum production. Therefore, further research should be conducted and directed to determine the standard threshold of blood parameters (hematological and

serum biochemical indices) and the level of added sorghum plant supplementation for goats reared under different systemic exposures.

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Performance and Haematological Parameters of Growing Rabbits Fed with Noodle Waste as a Partial Replacement for Maize

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Received:- 12 November 2023/ Revised:- 19 November 2023/ Accepted:- 25 November 2023/ Published: 30-11-2023

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Abstract— The aim of this study was to evaluate the effect of noodle waste on the performance as well as haematological parameters of growing rabbits. Twenty four growing rabbits of the dutch breed were used for this experiment. The rabbits were allotted four dietary treatments T1, T2, T3 and T4 containing 0%, 10%, 20% and 30% noodle waste respectively. The experiment lasted for a period of 8 weeks and the data obtained were statistically analysed. The result showed that the average weight gain and feed conversion ratio (FCR) of the rabbits were significantly affected ($P<0.05$) by the experimental diet. The average feed intake ranged from 0.29kg/animal in treatment 1 to 0.36kg/animal in treatment 4 while the average live weight ranged from 1.29kg/animal in treatment 1 to 1.32kg/animal in treatment 4. The result also showed significant difference ($P<0.05$) in the Packed Cell Volume, White Blood Cells, Red Blood Cells, Haemoglobin, Neutrophils, Eosinophils, Lymphocytes and Monocytes. This study also showed that platelets values obtained from the result of this experiment showed no significant difference ($P<0.05$) across the various treatment groups. Noodle Waste can be incorporated up to 30% in the feed without having any deleterious effect but beneficial effect on performance and haematological parameters of the rabbits.

Keywords— Performance; Haematology; Noodle Waste.

I. INTRODUCTION

It has been established that in many developing countries of the world, the reason for the decrease in consumption of animal proteins is the insufficient consumption of traditional livestock - cattle, sheep, goats, pigs and chickens. (1) approximately 854 million people, representing 12.6% of the world's population, are severely malnourished. To solve this, (2) argued that non-traditional meat sources suitable for smallholders need to be explored.

Rabbits have high reproductive potential and a unique ability to act as a flexible financial reserve. In particular, rabbit breeding in Nigeria offers the greatest potential to increase the quality and quantity of protein intake due to the short generation interval (4). Maize (*Zea mays*) is the main source of energy for feeding livestock in Nigeria, but it is also needed by humans and processing industries (5) The demand for maize in Nigeria has increased and this has led to a great hike in price of livestock feed; therefore, concrete efforts are needed to find alternative, inexpensive sources of nutritional ingredients with little or no competition with human consumption (5). In recent years, agro-industrial waste products have become popular feed components in poultry diets in Nigeria (6), (7). Examples of such products are kitchen waste, canning industry waste, potato pulp waste, citrus fruit waste, bakery waste, kola nut flour, cocoa bean flour, pigeon pea flour, Bambara groundnut flour, cashew flour, etc.

Since its introduction in the Nigerian kitchen, instant noodles have become popular, well accepted and found in the kitchen of almost every Nigerian home (8). This caused a big boom of the industry and a corresponding amount of waste in the industry. Instant noodles have several advantages over other non-conventional noodles. Instant noodles are intended for human consumption, therefore they are hygienically packaged and this eliminates the fear of contamination. Instant noodle waste has no known anti-nutritional factors (9) and also has more metabolizable energy than maize (10). The density composition of noodle waste (NW) has been reported to be comparable to that of maize (10). Noodle waste is a suitable source of energy, it

does not directly compete with humans as food source, it does not need further processing before being incorporated into the diet and its price is stable and favorable compared to maize.

In most developing countries, such as Nigeria, animal protein consumption has fallen below (11) the recommended 35g per animal per day. The apparent reason for the anomaly is the sharp rise in the prices of meat and other animal products such as milk and eggs, which have become unaffordable for the common man. This culminated in various malnutrition diseases such as kwashiorkor, beriberi, marasmus and many others in babies and children, not only in rural areas but also in big cities (12). For this, it is urgently necessary to promote the production of small and highly productive livestock, such as rabbits, whose turnover is fast. Very low production costs. However, the high cost of energy and protein foods such as maize and soybeans and the intense competition between humans and livestock for these foods is a concern. Therefore, replacing maize with agricultural by-products in poultry rations significantly reduces production costs (13). With increasing demand for maize and maize products (14), this has encouraged research into the use of alternative and cheaper feed resources, especially agro-industrial by-products and waste, to replace maize in livestock feed, reduce feed costs and thus reduce total cost of production (15). It can be argued that feed costs can be minimized by using cheaper, non-traditional feed ingredients such as noodle waste. The aim of this study is therefore to determine the performance characteristics and hematological parameters of rabbits fed different quantities of instant noodle waste flour as a partial substitute for maize.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 Experimental site and duration

The experiment was conducted at the Rabbits Unit of the University of Port Harcourt Teaching and Research Farm, Choba, Rivers State, Nigeria. The campus is situated at Choba, off east-west road, Port Harcourt and is at latitude 4.89437°N, longitude 6.91053°E and 16m altitude, having an average temperature of 28°Celsius (82.40°F). The experiment lasted for a period of eight (8) weeks.

2.2 Experimental design

Twenty four (24) Dutch rabbits were used for the experiment in a completely randomized design (CRD). The rabbits were assigned to four (4) dietary treatments and each treatment group was replicated three times with a total number of two (2) rabbits per replicate. The four (4) treatments were designated as T1, T2, T3 and T4.

2.3 Experimental Animals and Management

A concentrate diet was formulated to meet the nutrient requirement of the rabbit. Twenty four (24) grower rabbits used for the experiment were purchased from Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Teaching and Research Farm in Abia State.

The rabbits were allowed to acclimatize to the new environment for a period of one week, and thereafter, the live weight differences between treatment groups were obtained. Individual rabbits were given feed and fresh water ad-libitum. Noodle waste was used to substitute maize at graded levels. Measured quantity of each ingredient in the different diets was taken and properly mixed together. The diets formulated were isonitrogenous and isocaloric. The control (T1) had maize but no noodle waste, while T2, T3 and T4 had 10%, 20% and 30% of noodles waste as replacement for maize in T2, T3 and T4 respectively.

2.4 Data Collection:

2.4.1 Performance Parameters:

The animals' initial weight was measured and recorded, thereafter, they were weighed at weekly intervals using a Camry sensitive electronic scale to determine their weekly weight gain. The rabbits were weighed at the end of the experiment, and the average weight gain was calculated by subtracting the initial weight from the final weight. The daily feed intake was calculated by subtracting the leftover feed from the initially offered feed. The feed conversion ratio was determined by dividing the average daily feed intake per rabbit by the average daily weight increase per rabbit over the study period.

2.4.2 Haematological Parameters:

At the end of the experiment, blood samples were collected from two rabbits per treatment using (3ml) disposable syringe and were transferred directly into dry sample bottles containing Ethylene Diamine Tetracetic Acid (EDTA) anticoagulant for haematological parameters which included; Packed Cell Volume (PCV), Haemoglobin (HB), Red Blood Cell (RBC), White Blood Cell (WBC), Platelets, Eosinophils, Neutrophils, Monocytes and Lymphocytes values.

2.5 Statistical Analysis

Data generated were subjected to analysis of variance (ANOVA) using SAS (2000) Statistical Software. Significant ($p < 0.05$) differences were separated using Duncan New Multiple Range Test.

III. RESULTS

The effect of the dietary treatments on the performance parameters of Rabbits is presented in Table 3. The result obtained showed that the average weight gain and feed conversion ratio (FCR) of the rabbits were significantly ($P < 0.05$) affected by the experimental diet. T2 and T4 had the best ($p < 0.05$) Average Weight Gain and Feed Conversion Ratio of 0.39/animal and 1.9 respectively. The result obtained also showed no significant difference ($P > 0.05$) in the average feed intake and average live weight. The average feed intake ranged from 0.29kg/animal in T1 to 0.36kg/animal in T4 while the average live weight ranged from 1.29kg/animal in T1 to 1.32kg/animal in T4.

From the result of the haematological analysis in presented in Table 4, the packed cell volume (PCV), white blood cells, red blood cells, Haemoglobin, Neutrophils, Eosinophils, lymphocytes and monocytes were all significantly ($P < 0.05$) influenced by the experimental diet. The packed cell volume, haemoglobin, red blood cells and monocytes were highest ($p < 0.05$) in T2, having values of 39.00, 13.00, 5.90 and 8.00 respectively. The white blood cells and Lymphocytes were highest ($p < 0.05$) in T4, having values of 9.00 and 56.33 respectively. Neutrophils were observed to be significantly ($P < 0.05$) higher in T3 (45.33%), T2 (40.00%) and T4 (38.33%) over the control treatment. Eosinophils obtained were significantly ($P < 0.05$) highest in T1 (4.6%) and lowest in T4 (2.33%). Platelets values obtained from the result of the experiment showed no significant difference ($P > 0.05$) across the various treatment groups.

TABLE 1
COMPOSITION OF THE DIETARY TREATMENTS

Ingredients	T1 (0% NW)	T2 (10% NW)	T3 (20% NW)	T4 (30% NW)
Yellow maize	48.00	42.09	36.09	30.09
Indomie waste	0.00	6.00	12.00	18.00
Wheat bran	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75
PKC	12.42	12.42	12.42	12.42
Soybean Meal	12.0	12.0	12.0	12.0
GNC	8.48	8.48	8.48	8.48
Bone meal	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5
Salt	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13
Methionine	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25
Lysine	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25
Vit/min premix	3.13	3.13	3.13	3.13
TOTAL	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

TABLE 2
PROXIMATE COMPOSITION OF THE EXPERIMENTAL DIETS

Feed Ingredients (%)	T1 (0% NW)	T2 (10% NW)	T3 (20% NW)	T4 (30% NW)	SEM
Crude protein	14.90 ^d	11.84 ^c	22.34 ^b	25.41 ^a	0.01
Dry matter	83.53 ^d	88.53 ^a	87.40 ^c	88.21 ^b	0.02
Crude fat	4.63 ^a	1.83 ^c	3.93 ^b	3.93 ^b	0.02
Ash	8.23 ^a	5.33 ^b	5.13 ^c	4.63 ^d	0.02
Crude fibre	7.10 ^a	2.14 ^c	7.00 ^a	4.65 ^b	0.02
NFE	48.68 ^d	67.41 ^a	54.02 ^b	49.61 ^c	0.07

TABLE 3
EFFECT OF NOODLE WASTE ON PERFORMANCE OF RABBITS

Performance parameters	T1 (0% NW)	T2 (10% NW)	T3 (20% NW)	T4 (30% NW)
Average feed Intake (Kg)	0.29 ± 0.04	0.34 ± 0.05	0.35 ± 0.06	0.36 ± 0.05
Average Weight gain (kg)	0.13 ^b ± 0.05	0.39 ^a ± 0.09	0.31 ^{ab} ± 0.09	0.22 ^{ab} ± 0.08
Average Live weight (kg)	1.29 ± 0.45	1.63 ± 0.34	1.30 ± 0.28	1.32 ± 0.31
Feed Conversion Ratio	3.21 ^b ± 0.07	2.42 ^{ab} ± 0.17	2.33 ^{ab} ± 0.16	1.9 ^a ± 0.12

means in a row with no superscript are not significantly different (P>0.05).

TABLE 4
EFFECT OF NOODLE WASTE ON HAEMATOLOGICAL PARAMETERS OF RABBITS

Haematological parameters	T1 (0% NW)	T2 (10% NW)	T3 (20% NW)	T4 (30% NW)
PCV (L/L)	29.00 ^{ab} ± 1.53	39.00 ^a ± 0.58	30.00 ^{ab} ± 2.65	28.67 ^{ab} ± 4.2
Haemoglobin (g/dL)	9.50 ^{ab} ± 0.76	13.00 ^a ± 0.17	10.07 ^{ab} ± 0.47	9.67 ^{ab} ± 0.88
Red blood cells (10 ⁶ /μL)	4.37 ^{ab} ± 0.18	5.90 ^a ± 0.12	4.37 ^{ab} ± 0.27	4.20 ^{ab} ± 0.21
White blood cells (10 ³ /μl)	6.87 ^b ± 0.88	7.03 ^{ab} ± 0.15	7.15 ^{ab} ± 0.12	9.00 ^a ± 0.67
Platelets (10 ³ /μl)	182.33 ± 4.33	179.67 ± 11.20	195.00 ± 7.69	203 ± 11.02
Neutrophils (10 ³ /μl)	35.00 ^b ± 2.89	40.00 ^{ab} ± 1.16	45.33 ^a ± 0.88	38.33 ^{ab} ± 0.88
Lymphocytes (10 ³ /μl)	51.33 ^{ab} ± 2.19	47.00 ^b ± 2.52	46.05 ^b ± 3.06	56.33 ^a ± 2.33
Eosinophils (10 ³ /μl)	4.6 ^a ± 0.88	3.60 ^{ab} ± 0.38	2.33 ^b ± 0.33	2.33 ^b ± 0.33
Monocytes (10 ³ /μl)	7.33 ^a ± 1.45	8.00 ^{ab} ± 0.10	6.67 ^{ab} ± 1.67	3.37 ^b ± 0.67

^{abc}, means on the same rows having different superscript differ significantly (P<0.05)

IV. DISCUSSION

The effect of dietary treatment on the performance parameters of broilers showed a significant difference in the average weight gain and feed conversion ratio (FCR) of rabbits. This result is consistent with the findings of (16), who reported a significant difference in performance parameters of albino rats fed noodle waste as part of their diet. This result is also consistent with (17) who noted a significant difference in the performance parameters of chickens fed the NW diet. The significant increase in average weight of rabbits in the treatment groups indicates a direct relationship between weight and dietary NW levels, which is consistent with the findings of (9). However, this result is in contrast to the findings of (18), which reported no significant difference in the feed conversion ratio of birds fed graded levels of instant noodle waste. The superior performance of rabbits fed diets containing 10, 20 and 30% noodle waste compared to the control diet may be due to the low crude fiber content and nutritional factors, as well as the palatability of the food, which increases feed intake and therefore body weight gain in animals (19). Also, the obtained result showed no significant difference in terms of average feed consumption and average live weight. This result is consistent with the findings of (18) who reported no significant difference between average feed consumption, average live weight and other performance parameters in birds given graded levels of noodle waste in their diet. However, the highest mean feed intake was observed in T4, while the lowest value was obtained in the control treatment. The higher feed intake observed in T4 is consistent with the findings of (19) and (9) who reported increased feed intake with increased noodle waste in animal diets. The result also showed that the feed utilization of rabbits was better in T4 as indicated by the calculated feed conversion ratio. The addition of noodle waste flour to the diet of rabbits had a significant effect on hemoglobin, red blood cell count, white blood cells, neutrophils, lymphocytes, eosinophils and monocytes in rabbits. This result is consistent with the findings of (20), who found a significant difference in the blood profile of birds fed graded levels of noodle waste in their diets.

(16) also reported a significant influence in hemoglobin and packed cell volume values in albino rats fed a noodle-based diet. The high hemoglobin values obtained in T2 show that the oxygen capacity of the rabbit blood with hemoglobin was relatively the best. It has also been found that an animal with reduced hemoglobin in its blood indicates poor nutrition, including iron, amino acid and vitamin deficiencies (21). The white blood cell count of this study showed a significant increase during treatment. The increase in white blood cell count as the amount of noodle meal in the diet increased is consistent with the findings of (20), who reported a significant increase in total white blood cell count in birds fed graded levels of noodle waste. White blood cells and their varying numbers play an important role in protecting the body against disease-causing bacteria, viruses and fungi, a lack of white blood cells can increase susceptibility to infection. A decrease in white blood cells reflects a decrease in the production of white blood cells to protect the body against infections (18). Packed cell volume is the volume of red blood cells per liter of blood. Its measurement gives the percentage of red blood cells in whole blood (19). The high PCV values recorded in T2 are significant due to the role of red blood cells and hemoglobin in the transfer of respiratory gases (16). This report is in contrast with the findings of (18), who reported no significant differences in hemoglobin, erythrocytes, white blood cells, and other hematological parameters in birds fed noodle waste classified as poultry diet. This study revealed that blood platelet values were not significantly influenced by the dietary treatment which is in agreement with (18).

V. CONCLUSION AND APPLICATIONS

The study revealed that:

1. The inclusion of 10-30% of Noodle waste in the diets of the rabbits did not have any deleterious effect on the haematological status of the rabbits but was rather beneficial to the overall performance of the rabbits.
2. The findings therefore suggest that noodle waste could partially replace maize to enhance their performance and haematological parameters.

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