

EFFECTS OF DIFFERENT PROTEIN LEVEL IN DIET ON MILK YIELD AND OFFSPRING IN MINKS

Algirdas Januškevičius¹, Jurgis Kulpys¹, Jūratė Kučinskienė², Evaldas Šlyžius³, Jakov Šengaut⁴

¹*Department of Animal Nutrition, Lithuanian Veterinary Academy, Tilžės g. 18, LT-47181 Kaunas, Lithuania; tel. +370 37 363408*

²*Department of Food Safety and Animal Hygiene, Lithuanian Veterinary Academy, Tilžės g. 18, LT-47181 Kaunas, Lithuania*

³*Department of Animal Breeding and Genetics, Lithuanian Veterinary Academy, Tilžės g. 18, LT-47181 Kaunas, Lithuania*

⁴*Jakovo Veterinarijos Centras, Gerosios Vilties g. 1, LT-03147 Vilnius, Lithuania*

Summary. The effect of three diets with low, medium and high protein levels on milk yield and offspring in minks was studied experimentally. Twelve mink dams nursing litters of six kits in each were assigned to three dietary treatments: low protein, medium protein and high protein supplemented with fat and minerals (Groups 1-3) and fed *ad libitum* for 4 week after parturition.

During the experiment the live weight of minks decreased on 13.9%, 6.7% and 2.9% in Groups 1-3, respectively. Significantly higher amount of milk (320 g/day) was produced in minks fed high protein diet (Group 3) compared to 270 g/day of milk in Group 2 and 166 g/day of milk in Group 1 ($P < 0.05$).

Our results showed, that the lowest intensity of growth (116.9 g/day) was registered in offspring where dams were fed with low protein diet (Group 1). In Groups 2 and 3 the intensity of growth was on 42.8% and 46.1% higher ($P < 0.05$). During 4 week period male baby minks gained 9.8 g/day, which was on 78.2% higher compared to female baby minks ($P < 0.05$). Our study showed, that protein level in diet have significant influence on milk yield and growth of offspring in minks.

Keywords: protein level, milk production, growth, offspring, mink.