



Effect of weight at weaning on the growth of Tabapuã calves during wet season under grazing

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The objective of the study was to evaluate the effect of live weight (LW) at weaning on the growth of pure Tabapuã calves under grazing during wet season. The experiment was conducted from October 28, 2021 to March 15, 2022, totaling 140 days. Calves were maintained in *Urochloa brizantha* cv. BRS Paiaguás pastures, receiving protein-energy supplementation of 0.4% of LW (12.0% of crude protein and 67.3% of TDN). The experimental design was completely randomized with three treatments and 14 replicates, totaling 42 calves. The experiment was carried out at the ABCZ experimental farm Orestes Prata Tibery Júnior, Uberaba, MG, Brazil, (lat. 19° 47' 68" S; long. 47° 58' 50" W, 788 m asl.). The local climate is semi-humid tropical climate, with mean air temperature of 24.1 °C, annual rainfall of 1.430 mm and relative humidity of 67%. The soil is classified as Dystrophic Red Latosol, Sandy Frank and smooth relief. The experimental area of pasture consisted of 20.3 ha of BRS Paiaguás, divided in 8 paddocks of 2.53 ha. Pastures were grazed at rotational stocking system and the forage allowance was maintained at 6% of the LW with variable stocking rate (SR). Forty-one Tabapuã calves registered at birth as pure of origin (PO), were evaluated as testers, with average age of 12 months and were separated in three weaning weight treatments: 1. Light – mean LW 196 kg; 2. Intermediate – mean LW 235 kg; and 3. Heavy – mean LW 268 kg. Forage samples presented 16.9% of crude protein and 62.3% of TDN, 61.7% of NDF (neutral detergent fiber) and 29% of ADF (acid detergent fiber). Mean SR was 5.7 AU/ha and mean forage mass was 3.723 kg/ha. The average daily live weight gain (ADG) was not affected by the treatment effect ($P < 0.05$). Mean ADG was 0.780 ± 0.104 , 0.776 ± 0.104 and 0.781 ± 0.104 kg/head/day for Light, Intermediate and Heavy, respectively. The mean LW gain per area (GA) was 608 kg LW/ha, corresponding to 20.3 @/ha. Although there was no difference in LW gain, the differences in LW remained until the end of the growing period, being 380 ± 43 , 427 ± 43 and 462 ± 43 kg for Light, Intermediate and Heavy treatments, respectively. These differences emphasize weaning weight is an important factor for early finishing of Tabapuã beef cattle, reducing time and costs of the livestock cycle.

Keywords: forage, grazing, performance, zebu.

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