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Male Baladi

Female Baladi

Female Baladi

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SUMMARY – A description of the local population of rabbits is presented. Items that have been dealt with are: (i) a general description; (ii) climate and main features of its farming; and (iii) performance.

Key words: Baladi, description, performance.

RESUME – *"Les lapins Baladi (Liban)". Cet article présente une description de cette population locale de lapins. Les éléments suivants ont fait l'objet d'études : (i) une description générale ; (ii) le climat et les principales caractéristiques d'élevage ; et (iii) les performances.*

Mots-clés : *Baladi, description, performances.*

1. Breed name

Breed name synonyms: Baladi.

2. General description

2.1. Population data

2.1.1. Population size and census data: 1500 animals

(i) Total number of females being used in purebreeding: ~20.
(ii) Total number of females being used in crossbreeding: ~232.
(iii) Percent of females being used pure: ~8%.
(iv) Total number of males used for breeding: ~50.
(v) Number of males used in AI-service: none.

Source of data: Survey conducted by Chalah and Hajj (1996), Faculty of Agricultural Sciences, Lebanese University, Lebanon.

2.1.2. Herd sizes (Table 1)

Table 1. Herd sizes in small-scale and commercial farms†

	Small-scale	Commercial (traditional)
Mean		
Adult animals	6	35
Young animals	30	180
Range		
Adult animals	3-10	20-60
Young animals	20-50	150-220

†There are no Governmental farms.

2.1.3. Origin of the breed

Rabbit rearing never figures in Lebanese governmental policies. No studies have been published concerning this sector. The actual population is the result of crosses between the original rabbit and other breeds coming from France, Holland and England (Papillon, Flemish Giant, Burgundy Fawn), introduced into the country by importation of a limited number of breeders.

2.1.4. Situation with regard to danger of extinction

Endangered, since the total number of breeding rabbits is less than 500.

2.2. Use of the breed in a descending order of product importance

This local rabbit is small in size and used mainly for meat production.

2.3. Colour

Heterogeneous population resulting in different colours of soft fur.

2.4. General type

2.4.1. Body parts (Table 2)

Table 2. Body measurement (cm) at 8 months of age

Trait	Mean	Range
Body length	30.4	24-38
Chest circumference	32.4	26-39
Loin width	3.8	2.7-4.6
Thigh circumference	14.0	11-19

2.4.2. Eyes: pink, black or brown

2.4.3. Ears: erect

2.4.4. Feet and legs: medium in length (leg length: 7.25 ± 1.02 cm)

2.4.5. Tail: straight

2.5. Basic temperament (for males and females): docile

2.6. Nest quality: pooled and sometimes scattered

It is sensitive to mucoid enteropathy. It is relatively well adapted to hot climates.

3. Pattern

3.1. Climate

3.1.1. Elevation and topography: from the coast up to 700 m altitude

3.1.2. Favourable climate

Temperatures between 10-15°C in winter up to 25-35°C in summer; relative humidity from 73% up to 85%.

3.2. Main features of farming

3.2.1. Socio-management system

Animals are raised in cages or on the floor (backyard). The adopted rhythm of reproduction is the extensive one.

3.2.2. Mating method: natural hand-mating

3.2.3. Nutrition

(i) *Concentrates:* pelleted or mixed grain (maize, barley, alfalfa…).
(ii) *Water:* available free all year-round.

3.2.4. Housing

(i) *Cages:* wired cages and indoor rabbitries; wood and cement cages also.
(ii) *Photoperiod:* variable periods.

3.3. Common diseases and parasites

Coccidiosis, feet and ear mites, diarrhoea, mastitis…

4. Performance

4.1. Reproduction (Tables 3 and 4)

Table 3. Information of sexual maturity

Trait	Mean	Range
Age of buck at first service (months)	6.5	6-7
Age of doe at first mating (months)	5.5	5-6
Age of doe at first kindling (months)	6	5-7
Weight of buck at first service (g)	2836	2327-3470
Weight of doe at first mating (g)	2933	2250-3360

Table 4. Fertility and fecundity traits

Trait	Mean	Range
Number of teats	8	6-10
Kindling interval (days)	65	45-100
Litter size at birth	6.06	1-12
Litter size at 21 days	3.2	0-8
Litter size at weaning	2.98	0-6
Individual weight at birth (g)	52.6	25-77.5
Individual weight at 21days (g)	334	160-547
Individual weight at weaning (g)	479	230-870

4.2. Lifetime production per doe (Table 5)

Table 5. Lifetime production per doe

Trait	Mean	Range
Number of litters per year	5	3-6
Doe longevity (years)	2.5	2-3

4.3. Post-weaning body weight, gain and food utilisation (Tables 6 and 7)

Table 6. Post-weaning growth traits of body weights and gains (g)

Trait	Mean	Range
Weight at weaning	479	230-870
Weight at 8 weeks	1236	640-1810
Weight at 12 weeks	1980	1000-2856
Weight at 16 weeks	2585	1590-3610
Daily gain 4-8 weeks	29	12-44
Daily gain 8-12 weeks	26	5-50
Daily gain 12-16 weeks	22	3-46

Table 7. Post weaning food utilisation per young

Trait	Mean	Range
Daily feed intake (g)		
5-6 weeks	68	31-20
6-7 weeks	79	35-133
7-8 weeks	88	41-25
8-9 weeks	91	51-139
9-10 weeks	101	45-159
Feed conversion (g intake per g gain)		
30-60 days	3	1.4-7
30-90 days	3.1	1.7-9

4.4. Carcass traits and meat composition (Table 8)

Table 8. Carcass traits and meat composition at 100 days of age

Trait	Mean	Range
Slaughter weight (g)	2031	1748-2540
Hot carcass weight (g)	1307	1186-1638
Carcass length (cm)	36.4	34-39
Carcass thoracic circumference (cm)	19.7	19-20.5
Fur weight (g)	244	206-320
Head weight (g)	128.4	118-142
TTCP (g)	22.8	20-28
Thigh weight (g)	161	134-180
Meat/bone	7.59	6.5-8.28
Perirenal fat (g)	14.4	6-32
Moisture (%)	65.2	64.5-66.3
Protein (%)	21.2	20.9-21.8
Ether extract (%)	9.8	8.9-11.6
Ash (%)	3.8	2.7-4.9

References

The set of references that follows concerns papers dealing with Baladi rabbits in Lebanon, not necessarily cited in the previous text.

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