

THE EFFECT OF AGE AND REARING SYSTEM ON THE PROPORTION OF CERTAIN MEAT CATEGORIES IN PROCESSED BROILER CARCASSES

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SUMMARY: Given the established European Union regulations on the extensive i.e. traditional broiler rearing system as well as poultry breeding specificities in Serbia, an experimental study was conducted to examine slaughter characteristics of broilers as dependent on the fattening period and rearing system employed. Fattening included extensive fattening in a poultry house and free-range rearing. In view of the importance of the fattening period in non-industrial poultry production, fattening lasted 49, 56 and 63 days. At the end of each of the above fattening periods, the randomly selected broilers were slaughtered for quantitative and qualitative traits of the processed carcasses. This study presents results on the proportion of certain (1st, 2nd and 3rd) meat categories in processed broiler carcasses. In terms of the effect of the rearing systems analyzed and the gender of the examined broilers, the differences in the proportion of the first-category meat were small and statistically non-significant ($P > 0,05$). Somewhat larger but equally non-significant differences were exhibited in terms of the fattening period, the highest and the lowest proportion of the first-category meat being produced by broilers aged 49 and 56 days, respectively ($P > 0,05$). Similar results were reported on the proportion of the second- and third-category meat for the examined broilers.

Key words: broilers, age, rearing system, meat categories.

INTRODUCTION

Poultry breeding systems have captured the attention of scientists and producers in

Originalan naučni rad/*Original scientific paper*

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