

**EFFECTS OF CRUDE PROTEIN LEVELS IN BASAL DIET OF PARA GRASS
(*BRACHIARIA MUTICA*) ON REPRODUCTIVE PERFORMANCE OF CROSSBRED
RABBITS (NEW ZEALAND X LOCAL) IN THE MEKONG DELTA OF VIETNAM**

Nguyen Thi Kim Dong¹ and Nguyen Van Thu²

¹Faculty of Applied Biology, Tay Do University, Vietnam;

²College of Agriculture, Can Tho University, Vietnam

Corresponding author: Nguyen Thi Kim Dong; Email: ntkdong@ctu.edu.vn

ABSTRACT

Twenty five rabbit does were arranged in a completely randomized design with 5 treatments and 5 replications to evaluate the reproductive performance of crossbred rabbits fed 5 levels of crude protein (CP) including 30, 32, 34, 36 and 38g CP/doe/day corresponding to the CP30, CP32, CP34, CP36 and CP38 treatments. The crude protein supplementation in diets was come from water spinach leaves and concentrate with Para grass (*Brachiaria mutica*) as a basal diet.

The results showed that litter size at birth, weight of litter at birth, number of rabbit at weaning, weight of rabbit at weaning in litter1 enhanced with increasing of CP in the diets, the higher values were found for the treatments of 36 and 38g CP/doe/day ($P>0.05$). The growth rate of pregnant doe and milk production (g/doe/day) of experimental rabbits increased with increasing of CP levels in the diets and the values were higher for the treatments of 36 and 38g CP/doe/day ($P<0.05$). In litter 2, the results showed that litter size at birth, weight of litter at birth, number of rabbit at weaning, weight of rabbit at weaning improved with increasing of CP levels in the diets ($P<0.05$). The milk production (g/doe/day) increased with increasing of CP levels in the diets ($P<0.05$), the higher values for the treatments of 36 and 38g CP/doe/day. It was concluded that the higher reproductive performance in two litters were found in the 36 and 38g CP/doe/day diets.

Keywords: *crossbred rabbit, crude protein, Para grass, reproductive performance, water spinach*