

Predispositions of Pomeranian sheep for meat use

Summary

Pomeranian sheep are the most important breed in north-western Poland. They are adapted to coastal climate conditions, resistant, and undemanding in terms of diet. The large, well-developed trunk and well-muscled rump are indicative of their high meat content. Lambs have a high growth rate: at 56 days of age males reach an average body weight of 19.04 kg and females 18.26 kg. Their slaughter value is also high. The meat of Pomeranian lambs slaughtered at the age of 50-100 days is of high quality. It contains 22.32-23.76% dry matter, 18.62-19.80% protein and 1.48-1.82% intramuscular fat. The protein of the meat is a rich source of amino acids, particularly lysine and leucine (essential), as well as glutamic acid and aspartic acid (non-essential). The intramuscular fat contains predominantly unsaturated fatty acids (UFA), with a high proportion of polyunsaturated (PUFA) and hypocholesterolaemic (DFA) acids. These traits testify to the substantial health benefits of this meat. Pomeranian sheep also have good reproductive potential, but it is not fully exploited. In 2016, their average reproductive performance was 102.9%. This is due to their low prolificacy of 118.5% and low rate of lamb rearing – 91.2%. In some flocks, however, these indicators were significantly higher: over 150 and 95%, respectively. In summary, Pomeranian sheep can be successfully used for meat production, both in pure breeding and in cross-breeding with rams of meat breeds.

KEY WORDS: Pomeranian sheep, meat performance traits, reproduction indicators