

# THE INFLUENCE OF AGE AT FIRST CALVING ON THE EVOLUTION OF MILK PRODUCTION OVER THREE YEARS IN LAPTE PALAS SHEEP BREED

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## Abstract

Sheep farming is an old tradition of the Romanians, and interest in sheep's milk and its derivatives has increased in recent decades. In 2010, ICDCOC Palas, Constanța, homologated the Lapte Palas breed, created over 35 years by crossing the East Frisian and Awassi breeds with the Merino Palas breed. The advantages of creating the Lapte Palas sheep breed are lower acquisition costs, very good adaptability to the geo-climatic conditions specific to our country and to traditional exploitation conditions, as well as a greater capacity to capitalize on food resources compared to imported breeds.

This study follows the evolution of the milk quantity in 52 Lapte Palas sheep, over 3 years, exploited in a traditional way, with the establishment of the correlation between milk production and age at first calving. In group 1 (n= 26 sheep that calved before the age of 2 years) there were no significant differences ( $p>0.05$ ,  $p=0.107486$ ) between milk production in the first 3 lactations, while in group 2 (n=26 sheep that calved between 2 and 3 years of age) there were significant differences between the 3 lactations ( $p<0.05$ ,  $p=0.042287$ ).

**Key words:** milk production, age of sheep at first calving