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Spontaneous Selective Consumption of Forage Plants of the Caatinga by Goats

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Abstract

The Brazilian Northeast corresponds to 18 % of the country, with 75 % of this, classified as semi-arid and arid. Of the total area of the region, 19 % is suitable for agriculture, depends on rainfall, only 30 % have potential soil and water for irrigation and 78 % of the area has the ability to silvipastoral exploration. The Caatinga is one of the most important biomes in Brazil, with its importance in endemic plants of forage value. The present study aimed to observe the consumption of forage plants for native goats directly in Caatinga, being recorded species consumed, frequency of consumption, location to record coordinates, temperature at the time of consumption, altitude, and finally, most frequently consumed species into two distinct areas, 60 km distant from each other. The plants most commonly consumed in the region 01 -São José da Tapera were: Angicos (*Colubrina anadenanthera* (Vell.) Brenan), Catingueira (*Caesalpinia pyramidalis* Tui), Mororó (*Cheilanthe bauhinia*), Dainty grass (*Gymnopogon mollis*) and in the region 02 - Santana do Ipanema were: Jurema Preta (*Mimosa tenuiflora* (Willd.) Poir), synonymous *Mimosa hostilis* (Mart.) Benth.), Malva Branca (*American waltheria* L.), Marmeleiro (*Croton sonderianus* Mull. Arg), Jua-zeiro (*Zizyphus joazeiro* Mart) and the Velame (*Croton heliotropiifolius* Kunt). The data collected made it possible to bring in the study area, a real sampling of consumed plants, taking into account the selectivity and the availability of plants for consumption by goats in the sampled regions. With this method the availability of fodder, the preference of animals, and the knowledge of pasture conditions were evident, making possible the researcher intervene in his essays and the producer in the management of his flock. This method can be adjusted to pasture production analysis and availability in the area by the method of direct observation of native species, occurring spontaneously and grazing on voluntary intake by goats. This work served as the initial analysis for development of other studies in animal nutrition, as a new method of observing animal consumption.

Keywords: Animal nutrition, native plants, semi-arid