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Review Article

Effect of Grape Pomace Inclusion on the Production and Quality of Sheep Meat

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Abstract

Sheep farming is a prominent activity in Brazil and it provides the lower profit margins to the rural producer in extensive systems. Innovations in animal nutrition have shown alternative sources to improve the quality of food products. Grape pomace (GP) is a byproduct from winemaking used as feed for ruminants, with few studies on the quality of sheep meat. Thus, this study aimed to discuss the main characteristics of grape pomace, its relationship with the production, fatty acid profile and oxidative stability of sheep meat. The destination of GP as an agro-industrial residue is a concern in the winemaking industries, leading to the search for alternatives with low cost and high potential for use in animal feed. The GP is offered in various forms to animals, but the knowledge about its composition is required to explore its nutritional potential with no intoxication risks. Concerning the carcass characteristics, the productive performance of the animals can be favored with the use of GP in diet. The fatty acid profile of sheep meat plays a key role and in this context is modified in several ways. The GP can act on ruminal biohydrogenation, altering the fatty acid profile of meat. In addition, the GP supplementation may increase the oxidative stability of meat due to the presence of phenolic compounds.

Key words: Ruminal biohydrogenation, sheep farming, agro-industrial residue, grape pomace, performance, meat quality

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Data Availability: All relevant data are within the paper and its supporting information files.

INTRODUCTION

Sheep farming are a prominent activity in Brazil, with approximately 15 million animals distributed throughout the country, mainly in the south, northeast and central-west regions^{1,2}. However, extensive sheep farming offers relatively small profit margins to the producer, thus there is a need to remodel the management and feeding costs^{3,4}.

Innovations in the area of animal production and meat quality have sought technological alternatives using surplus resources, in addition to reducing costs and adding value to products⁵. In this context, the searches for alternative foods is necessary to be used in a ruminant diet, once herd nutrition expenses account for about 50-70% of the production costs⁶.

As observed in the livestock activity, the southern region of Brazil have shown a significant and marked increase in winemaking activity in recent years, increasing the by-product generation due to grape processing⁷. Due to the presence of bioactive compounds, presents in byproducts of the wine industry used in animal diet, the oxidative stability and the quality of meat can increase⁸.

Studies on the use of grape pomace (GP) in ruminant feed have focused on metabolism, productive performance and milk quality^{9,11}. Guerra-Rivas *et al.*¹² and Jeronimo *et al.*¹³ provided information on the use of grape pomace in the diet of sheep with respect to the fatty acid profile and oxidative stability of meat. Therefore, this study was aimed to discuss the main characteristics of grape pomace, its relationship with the production, fatty acid profile and oxidative stability of sheep meat.

GRAPE POMACE IN SHEEP FEED

According to the Brazilian Wine Institute, the largest producing regions are located in the northeast and south Brazilian regions¹⁴. The main grape-growing areas established in the south region produce red and white grapes¹⁵. The amount of grape production in south region of Brazil is shown in Table 1.

The concern of the industry and the ethical and environmental issues have led to more demanding production

chains about the generation and marketing of agro-industrial waste¹⁶. The Brazilian winemaking has searched for the proper destination of residues, once about 12-15% of the initial raw material of grape production is by-products¹⁷. Although the wineries generate biodegradable waste, they require a minimum time for degradation of the residual biomass, constituting a source of pollutants^{18,20}.

Ruminant farming characterized by feeding on natural pastures in the world and traditionally carried out by an extensive production system. However, high production rates is affected by food deficits. Thus, the use of food alternatives for breeders to address the nutritional deficiency of herds, such as hay, silage and agro-industrial residues have been recommended¹⁰.

The great demand for food substitution in animal nutrition, which contain nutrients that is converted into noble products such as; meat, intensified the use of plant raw materials²¹. New food sources in sheep diet has been studied with the use of poultry litter, residues of various fruits and legumes and residues from the production of olive oil and grape^{12,22-25}.

The GP was supplied to animals after drying, in the form of meal or extract. In addition, due to its high moisture content and for maintaining its nutritional quality, GP was ensiled and stored for longer periods²⁶. The GP is composed of stalks, pulp (bark and seed) and lees containing pre-dominantly total carbohydrates, water (60-70%) and proteins²⁷, besides pigments, alcohols, volatile acids, tannins, phenolic compounds, pectins and fibers^{28,29}. The seeds also have about 15-20% of polyunsaturated fatty acids rich in omega-3 and³⁰ omega-6.

As shown in Table 2, several factors including the production and management of the grape vines, cultivars used, proportion of grapes and maturation in the harvest period there related to great variability in the proximate composition of GP³¹.

Due to its high levels of fibrous carbohydrates, GP can be included in the bulk fraction of the ruminant and monogastric diet as a food substitute or food supplement³². In contrast, the amount offered to the animals should be evaluated, especially due to the high levels of lignified fiber and copper (Cu), which

Table 1: Amount of grape production in south region of Brazil (millions kg)

Type	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017*
White	68,8	60,6	58,5	78,8	78,6	66,3	58,8	79,1	28,3	40
Rosé	15,1	10,5	13,1	15,3	14,9	10,8	9,9	16,2	4,4	10
Red	466,4	391	409,2	532,8	527,1	460,2	471,3	537,2	235,3	550
Total	550,3	462,1	480,8	626,9	620,6	537,3	540,1	632,5	268	600

Source: BWI¹⁴ and MAPA¹⁵, *Estimated data

Table 2: Chemical composition of grape pomace

References	DM (%)	CP (DM %)	EE (DM %)	MM (DM %)	CF (DM %)
Basalan <i>et al.</i> ³⁶	29-31	7-8	1.5-8	4.5-5	37-43
Santos ³⁷	33	27	11	6.5	50
Yu and Ahmedna ³⁸	50-60	11	13-19	-	20-25
Dall Asta ³⁹	19-28	14-11.8	6.7-7.9	6-11.5	56-59
Oliveira <i>et al.</i> ⁴⁰	49	5	7.5	2.5-4	5-15
Sousa <i>et al.</i> ⁴¹	30	8.5	8	4.5	46

DM: Dry matter, CP: Crude protein, EE: Ether extract, MM: Mineral matter, CF: Crude fiber

can negatively affect the digestibility of nutrients³³, reaching toxic levels³⁴. Generally, the cupric treatments for pest control of grape wines related to high Cu levels in GP³⁵.

Sheep, unlike other species are most susceptible to copper toxicity, requiring special care in animal nutrition^{42,43}. Small ruminants require a daily dose of 5-10 mg kg⁻¹ copper in dry matter (DM), not tolerating diets containing more than 15 mg kg⁻¹ copper⁴⁴⁻⁴⁷.

PRODUCTIVE PERFORMANCE

The animal performance including the voluntary consumption and food digestibility influenced by factors related to both the individual and food. New food sources, such as; agro industrial residues, required studies on the composition and digestibility for proper use in animal nutrition⁴⁸.

The productive performance of ruminants assessed by weight gain and feed conversion. In a complementary way, *in vitro* and *in vivo* digestion methods provided accurate, simple and complete information about the quality of food supplied to ruminants^{49,50}.

Researcher was reported the effective results about the chemical composition, *in vivo* digestibility and ruminal degradation of GP concerning the percentage of inclusion of GP in the diet of sheep³⁴. In agreement, Bahrami *et al.*⁵¹ studied the addition of 0-20% of grape residue in the diet of small ruminants and found greater *in vivo* dry matter digestibility, protein and neutral detergent fiber in the groups fed 5-10%, which were more adequate levels for the fattening and finishing of lambs.

Food supplementation is necessary for production animals, especially in the search for greater weight gain, slaughter precocity and carcass quality⁵². These characteristics directly related to the final product are also an important tool for evaluating animal performance. A single study reported the use of grape residue in ruminant feed and its effect on the carcass characteristics, with no significant differences in the finishing score, fat thickness, marbling and carcass yield of lambs, when compared to the groups that did not feed GP⁵³.

QUALITY OF SHEEP MEAT

Global meat consumption has undergone several changes over the last few years. In the 1990's, there were price-related trends while other parameters including appearance, safety and health benefits have stood out more recently^{54,55}.

Meat are a great source of high-quality protein, rich in minerals and vitamins and its fat is an excellent source of essential fatty acids for the human diet^{56,57}. Although different factors can affect the meat quality, such as; genetics and breeding, meat can exhibited high quality and degree of excellence⁵⁸.

FATTY ACIDS PROFILE

Fatty acids are a class of macronutrients with great biological activity in cells and tissues and can be classified by the number of carbon atoms and the number of double bonds in their structure^{58,59}. The main saturated fatty acids founded in sheep meat are myristic, palmitic and stearic acids, the monounsaturated fatty acids are palmitoleic and oleic acids and the polyunsaturated fatty acids include the linoleic, linolenic and arachidonic acids^{60,61}.

Ruminants have efficient absorption of saturated fatty acids due to the great capacity of bile salts and the micellar system of lysophospholipids that solubilize fatty acids⁶². However, the lipid biohydrogenation of dietary lipids determined by the effect of polyunsaturated fatty acids alters the muscle composition in ruminants⁶³. Through the biohydrogenation, the microbial enzymes promote isomerization and hydrolysis of unsaturated fatty acids, allowing the formation of trans fatty acids⁶⁴.

Diets rich in bioactive compounds have demonstrated an ability to manipulate ruminal biohydrogenation through modifications in the ruminal microbiota⁶⁵. Specifically, flavonoids, phenolic acids and tannins⁶⁶ found in grape by-products may inhibit the activity of micro-organisms that are involved in the biohydrogenation of polyunsaturated fatty acids, allowing their accumulation and release to muscles and fats⁶⁷.

The inclusion of grape residue in ruminant feed can significantly increase the poly and mono-unsaturated fatty acids, such as vaccenic acid⁶⁸, linolenic acid⁶⁹ and conjugated linoleic acid in milk⁷⁰. However, Maciel⁵³ studied the fatty acid profile of meat from ruminants fed GP and found a significant increase in linolenic acid in the meat of GP-terminated lambs.

Oxidation reactions: Fatty acids are related to several meat quality parameters, including color, texture and the appearance of meat fat⁷¹. One of the traditional ways to modify the fatty acids composition in meat is the use of vegetable oils in the diet^{72,73}. Linseed, sunflower and flax oils are abundant sources of unsaturated fatty acid from the omega-3 and 6 families^{74,75}. However, unsaturated fatty acids are susceptible to rapid oxidation due to the presence of two or more double bonds in their structure, making it an important regulator of the shelf life of meat^{76,77}.

The oxidative process can shorten the shelf life of fats and fresh meat, negatively affecting its consumption due to the formation of off-flavors and discoloration⁷⁸. In addition, the protein oxidation has negative effects on the nutritional value and sensory attributes of meat, such as texture⁷⁹.

The oxidation rate is determined by storage conditions such as temperature, the presence of oxygen and light and by the levels of unsaturated fatty acids and metal ions of meat⁸⁰. Oxidation reactions through the presence of antioxidant compounds in tissues are prevented or delayed⁸¹, once these compounds counterbalance the oxidation reactions, preventing the reactive oxygen species generation and decomposition of various peroxides⁸².

Several plant materials used in the ruminant diet are generous sources of phenolic compounds, which can be considered as natural antioxidants to preserve and improve the quality of meat^{83,84}. These compounds, besides having a recognized antioxidant action, confer health benefits in humans, modulating the inflammatory response and circulatory disorders^{85,86}. The residues from winemaking and grape-juice industries are rich sources of phenolic compounds, particularly mono, oligo and polymeric anthocyanins^{87,88}. Grape seeds and bark have higher antioxidant compounds levels, including flavonoids, stilbenes, phenolic acids as well as a wide variety of tannins^{89,90}.

The evaluation of ruminant meat, regarding the use of grape residue in diet has demonstrated positive effects against the lipid oxidation. Guerra-Rivas *et al.*¹² reported similar lipid oxidation in the meat of lambs fed GP when compared to the treatments that received vitamin E supplementation, while Jeronimo *et al.*¹³ demonstrated that supplementation of lambs with GP protected meat against lipid oxidation while maintaining the sensory properties.

CONCLUSION

The inclusion of grape pomace in sheep feed improved the production system, by reducing the costs to the producer and avoiding the disposal of byproducts with negative effects on the environment. The grape pomace has important functional characteristics, which brings benefits to the productive performance and meat production when used in animal feed. However, its composition are variable, thus it is necessary to predict its nutritional profile for an adequate supply in sheep nutrition. Grape pomace modulated the fatty acids deposition and enhanced the oxidative stability of meat.

SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT

This study demonstrates that there are adequate levels of the use of grape pomace silage in sheep feed. Levels more suited to the needs of animals, can prevent poisoning and benefit the meat of these animals. This study may help new research in these fields, leading to more effective work in the search of economic benefits to the productive sector.

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