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Rendezvény helye, ideje: Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester, UK, 2017.09.20-23
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  Effects of different dry matter and fibre containing diets on the feed intake of herbivore tortoises
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Effects of different dry matter and fibre containing diets on the feed intake of herbivore tortoises

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Introduction: Herbivore tortoises such as Hermann's tortoises (*Testudo hermanni)* consume fibrous feeds in the nature. Contrary to that, in captivity – according to a pervious data collection in an exotic pet praxis – they get generally feeds low in fibre (e.g.: lettuce) which lead to fast growth rate. The aim of our study was to investigate the dry matter (DM) intake of tortoises in connection to the crude fibre (CF) and DM contents of the diets.The effect of CF on the quality of faeces was also the part of the question. On the other hand we also wanted to know whether it is possible to prepare homemade high fibrous diets by using hay and vegetables grown for human consumption.

Animals, materials and methods: The same 10 male tortoises (body weight [BW]:683.7±89.8 g) were used for each tests. They were housed individually in 790x570x420 transparent plastic boxes with basking place and ad libitum water access. Three diets (A, B and C) were prepared by using the same components (chopped lettuce, carrot and meadow hay) in different proportions (Table 1). All three diets were tested for 3x4 days, with 2 weeks of acclimatisation. Fresh feeds were offered on daily basis at the same time in the morning and leftovers were removed 24 hours later. All three diets were fed ad libitum. DM and nutrient content of feeds and leftovers were measured. The BW of animals was checked on weekly basis. Data were modelled with general linear mixed model with random intercept corresponding to each individual and a fixed three-level explanatory factor representing fibre levels. Based on the model, Tukey's post hoc multiple comparison test and confidence intervals were applied to explore simultaneous significance of the differences between mean consumption levels in the fibre categories. The Waltham faeces scoring system was used for faeces quality control.

Results: The DM intake of the tortoises was significantly lower in case of diet C. Because of the increased hay level the DM content differed highly which had a great impact on the feed consumption. According to the faeces scoring system grade 3 and occasionally 3.5 was observed during diet A, while it was 2 and 2.5 during the other two diets. The quality of the faeces improved with diet B and C compared to diet A where it was less solid. This high CF content did not cause any health problems

Table 1.Composition of diets and DM intake of tortoises

Diets	DM, %	CF, %	Ingredients on DM bases, %	DM intake (g) related to 100 g BW		P values
				avg±sd	range	
A	6.6	16.5	43.0% lettuce, 36.6% carrot, 10.3% hay	1.14±0.19	0.67-1.51	P_{A-B}=0.801 P_{A-C}<0.001
B	9.5	22.1	23.5 % lettuce, 19.7 % carrot, 48.7 % hay	1.13±0.20	0.62-1.41	P_{B-C} <0.010
C	18.9	27.4	3.2 % lettuce, 2.6 % carrot, 88.9 % hay	0.82±0.18	0.41-1.16	

avg±sd =average±standard deviation

Discussion and conclusions: The lower consumption of diet C was both due to its higher DM and CF content, but the two effects cannot be separated. As the hay content was high in diet B and especially in diet C, the faeces was very similar to that of the tortoises in the wild. Diet C can be recommended to decrease the feed consumption, avoid fast growth rate and increase the fibre content of the feed.

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