

USE OF EARLY AGE KARAKUL YOUNG EWES FOR REPRODUCTION

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Abstract

The aim of the present research was to examine the possibilities of using Karakul young ewes at an early age (8-9 months) for reproduction and to elucidate its impact on body development, own productivity and the quality of the descendants. Research has shown that from Karakul young ewes, mated at the early age of 8-9 months, high birth rates were obtained, at the level of 74-78% of the flock of young ewes admitted to mating, as well as increased fertility, at level of 77.9-80.4% of the herd population at the beginning of calving. In order to obtain lambs with normal body development, from which the furskins corresponding to the surface quality standard would be obtained, the body mass of the Karakul young ewes admitted for mating at an early age must be not less than 30 kg or 65% of the body mass of adult ewes. Under normal conditions of feeding and care, early gestation does not cause a negative impact on subsequent body development up to 3.0 years of age. Some losses in ewes body mass during the calving period are fully restored by the following fall at the beginning of the normal mating season. Gestation and calving of young ewes at an early age (13-15 months) did not negatively influence reproductive functions in subsequent calvings. Significant differences by reproductive indices (fertility, prolificacy) in the second and third calving between ewes from the SL-1 sublots, which calved at an early age (13-15 months), and those from the SL-2 sublots, which calved at the usual age (25-27 months), were not found. The ewes from Batch I, reared during summer grazing, had a tendency to be more prolific, compared to their contemporaries from batches II and III, which were reared all year round in stables, respectively by 6.6 and 4.7 % ($P < 0.05$ and $P < 0.1$). Early gestation and calving of young ewes at 13-15 months of age did not negatively influence the quality of the offspring and the production of hides in subsequent calvings. Significant differences in lamb body weight at birth and second and third lambing furskin qualities between ewes from SL-1 sublots, which calved at an early age, and those from SL-2 sublots, which calved at a normal age, were not found.

Key words: *Karakul young ewes, early mating, body development*