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Artificial insemination in backyard goat farming: A new prospect for scientific Goat breeding in changing scenario of Kashmir

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Abstract

Artificial insemination is the deliberate introduction of sperm into a female's cervix or uterine cavity for the purpose of achieving a pregnancy through in vivo fertilization by means other than intercourse. A total of 140 goats of different genetic groups were inseminated artificially at Bandipora on experimental basis under field conditions using Fresh liquid and frozen semen. Overall kidding percentage of 25.66 was observed in the present study. Significantly, higher kidding percentage of 32.69 was observed using fresh semen in comparison to frozen semen (22%). A significantly ($p < 0.01$) higher sperm abnormalities were observed in frozen-thawed semen (11.18 ± 0.42 to $16.55 \pm 0.09\%$) than that of fresh semen (8.82 ± 0.24 to $9.71 \pm 0.52\%$). 20 number of kids were born in local non-descript goats out of 80. A total of six kids were born (one Jamnapari, one Barbari and four Beetal kids) out of 20 kagani goats. It is concluded that artificial insemination has potential for genetic improvement of goats reared in backyard system as quality bucks are sold at earlier ages by farmers for meat purposes.

Keywords: Artificial insemination, backyard goat farming, bucks, Barbari

Introduction

Kashmir valley holds a good potential for milch goats owing to increasing population with subsequent increase in demand for milk and milk products. As goats can be maintained on a small area of land and survive on a wide variety of grasses and feed, they play a pivotal role in current scenario where pastures are shrinking day by day. Goat rearing is age old practice in Jammu and Kashmir and plays a vital role in the socio-economic upliftment of the weaker sections of the society (Rather *et al.*, 2020) [13]. Generally, farmers in Kashmir valley keep goats in small numbers for milk production. Good quality bucks with good genetic merit are sold at early age for indiscriminate slaughter (Rather *et al.*, 2020) [13] forcing farmers to bred good quality goats with available low quality bucks. Also, good numbers of does remain without service due to non-availability of breeding bucks. For increasing milk yield and to reverse the trend of unavailability of good bucks, negative selection artificial insemination (AI) can be used as an alternative. Artificial insemination (AI) is a technique well adapted in dairy cattle and buffalos. The technique involves collection of semen from reproductive tract of male animals and transfer of same to the reproductive tract of female animals (Smith. 2009) [15]. AI helped India to achieve the highest milk production of the world. AI is increasingly being used by goat producers because it allows for both dissemination of valuable genetics and control of sexually transmitted diseases.

Materials and Methods

The experiment was undertaken at Bandipora. Fresh liquid semen was used in 40 Kagani does and frozen semen in 80 local non-descript and 20 Kagani goats. The station is located at 34°42' latitude N and 74°69' longitude E, with an elevation of 1811 meters and about 65 kilometers from Srinagar.

Semen collection

Fresh semen was collected using dummy. Artificial vagina (AV) having outer casing of plastic 15-20cm x 5-6cm and an inner liner made of latex was used. The artificial vagina was inflated through the tap to maintain optimum pressure and temperature of 42-45 °C for proper ejaculation.

To prevent sperms from cold shock, the collecting tube was warmed to 30 °C -37 °C before collections. The semen collected was diluted using egg yolk tris buffer. About 0.5 ml of diluted semen was deposited into the cervix using sterile syringe and pipette.

Synchronisation and detection of oestrus

For synchronization NCSynch-TAI protocol was used. Pgf2@0.5 ml was administered intramuscularly on day 1. On day 8, does were given GnRH 2 ml i.m. Seven days later, on day 15, second dose of pgf2 @ injection was given to induce luteolysis. After 72 hrs on day 18-19 does were artificially inseminated along with second dose of GnRH injection to induce LH surge and ovulation^[4]. Estrous detection in goats from the field was performed by history from the farmers and use of teasers.

AI in goats

The frozen semen of improved Goat breeds comprising of Jamunapari, Barbari, Sirohi and Beetel was procured from BAIF (Bharatiya Agro Industries Foundation) pune. Does in estrus were restrained in such a way that the rear quarters were elevated by lifting the hindlimbs at the time of A.I. A lubricated glass speculum was inserted into the vagina after sterilizing the vulvar region of the goat. A head torch was used to illuminate the cervix and the external os was located. The insemination gun was inserted through the vaginal speculum, fixed into the external os and then manoeuvred deeply into the cervix as far as possible followed by slow release of semen. The females were held in the same position for 2-3 min and the vulva was massaged gently. Goats where hormones were not used, insemination was done between 10 to 12 h after detection of standing heat, and a second AI was performed 12 h later.

Results and Discussion

The study was conducted to see the scope of Artificial Insemination in goats. Generally, small number of goats and that too females are reared by the farmers in Kashmir valley. Since, good quality bucks are sold at an early age for chevon and non-availability of bucks for breeding, artificial insemination shall play a pivotal role in the goat husbandry. Overall kidding percentage of 25.66% was observed in the present study (Table 1). Contradictory to present study, higher kidding rate was reported by Apu *et al.* (2012)^[19]. Significantly ($p<0.01$) higher kidding percentage of 32.69% was observed using fresh semen as compared to 22% kidding percentage observed for frozen semen. Present study is in consonance with the findings of Apu *et al.* (2012)^[19] who reported higher kidding percentage for liquid fresh semen (59.8%) as compared to frozen semen (43.9%). A significantly ($p<0.01$) higher sperm abnormalities were observed in frozen-thawed semen (11.18 ± 0.42 to $16.55\pm 0.09\%$) than that of fresh semen (8.82 ± 0.24 to $9.71\pm 0.52\%$). 20 number of kids were born in local non decript goats out of 80. A total of six kids were born, 4 kids from group 1 and 2 kids from group 2. One Jamnapari, one Barbari and 4 Beetel kids were born. Group 1 with natural estrous has shown 40% kidding rate while group 2 in which estrous synchronization protocol was followed only shows 20% kidding rate. The conception rate of AI varies with protocol used, breed and size of goat (Dhara *et al.*, 2023)^[5]. Different AI techniques *viz:* Vaginal (peri cervical) insemination, cervical (intra-cervical) insemination, laparoscopic intrauterine insemination and trans-cervical

intrauterine insemination have conception rate of 5-15% (Evens and Maxwell, 1987; Nuti, 2007)^[6, 9], 40-80% (Nuti, 2007)^[9], 60-80% (Shipley *et al.*, 2007; Parkinson, 2009)^[14, 10] and 71% (Sohnrey and Holtz, 2005)^[16], respectively in small ruminants. Arangasamy *et al.* (2018)^[1] reported overall pregnancy rate of ranging from 7 to 79% in AI using frozen-thawed goat semen.

Conclusion

AI is a first generation tool for assisted reproductive technology which has potential for genetic improvement of goats reared in backyard system as quality bucks are sold at earlier ages by farmers for meat. As the pregnancy rate varies with technique used and size and breed of goat, therefore, it is recommended that the insemination protocol should be standardized according to size and breed of goat in the valley before its mass application in field.

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