Performance and range use of organic broilers with access to different vegetation in outdoor areas

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Background and aim

Outdoor range areas are an important part of the organic broiler production, so how can these areas be made attractive for the broilers? The aim of the study was to investigate the influence of vegetation in outdoor range areas on performance, crop and gizzard content and range use of organic broilers.

Material and method

The experiment was performed on an organic farm in the summers of 2015 and 2016 with two different outdoor ranges (56°10’N 9°54’E). Three thousand two hundred slowly growing broilers were allocated to four mobile broiler houses.

Live weight gain

At hatching, 100 birds out the 3200 were weighed. Eighty broilers per house were weighed when the experiment ended at 84 and 70 days of age in 2015 and 2016, respectively.

The different live weight gains were significant (P=0.04) in 2015 but not 2016.

Crop and gizzard content

In 2015, crop and gizzard compositions were investigated in 84 days old broilers. From each broiler house, two male and two female broilers were killed in the morning and in the afternoon, respectively.

The crop mainly contained feed and the gizzard mainly grass and stones.

Grants

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