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**Rearing of local does as profitable as rearing Osmanabadi does:**

**An assessment of kid weights in smallholder flocks in seven villages of Maharashtra**

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Under the Osmanabadi field unit of the All India Coordinated Research Project on goat improvement of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, performance of 814 does and their progeny, belonging to village smallholders in seven villages from Phaltan, Kalamb, Karmala and Jamkhed talukas in Satara, Osmanabad, Solapur and Ahmednagar districts respectively in Maharashtra, is recorded since 2009. Performance of most of the village goats is recorded irrespective of their breed. A previous study we carried out on the milk yield of village goats indicated that in the seven villages under the project, non-Osmanabadi and non-true-to-type Osmanabadi does were as good or slightly better milk producers than Osmanabadi does.

Kid weight is an important trait as the market price depends on weight. Kids are sold at the age of 4 to 6 months. This paper compares the 3-month and 6-month weights of kids of true-to-type Osmanabadi (TTT) does with those of non-true-to-type Osmanabadi (NTT) and non-Osmanabadi (NO) does in project villages. Does that kidded from March 2009 to September 2011 were classified into three breed types as above based on their colour and physical appearance. The weights of their kids at 3 months (85-95 days) and 6 months (175-185 days) age were compared to assess their potential to earn a good income for goat keepers. Kids were weighed with an electronic balance in the mornings. TTT does were completely black with backward and downward oriented horns (does with white spots on ears also included) conforming to accepted Osmanabadi breed characteristics, NTT does conformed partially to recognized breed characters and NO were local goats. There were 580 and 138 records of kid weights at 3 and 6 months respectively. The number of records of kids at 3 and 6-months age was 195 and 57 for TTT, 246 and 53 for NTT and 139 and 28 for NO breed type does. The records were from Phaltan (259 and 47), Kalamb (111 and 43), Karmala (174 and 41) and Jamkhed (36 and 7) talukas. Records were analyzed statistically using the ASReml programme and fitting the fixed effects taluka, year and season of birth, type of birth, sex, dam’s parity and dam’s breed type and the age of the kid on the day of weighing as a covariable in the model of analysis.

The least squares means of 3-month and 6-month weights respectively were 10.4±0.3 kg and 15.6±0.8 kg for kids of TTT, 10.1±0.2 kg and 15.5±0.8 kg for kids of NTT and 10.2±0.3 kg and 15.9±1.0 kg for kids of NO does. There was no significant difference in the weights of the kids of dams of different phenotypes. This indicates that rearing of goats not conforming to Osmanabadi breed characteristics is likely to be as profitable as rearing Osmanabadi does. Less emphasis on colour, physical appearance and breed purity would also be in the interest of maintaining and increasing genetic diversity.