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Université Laval — Faculté des sciences de l'agriculture et de l'alimentation

CEPOQ — Centre d'expertise en production ovine du Québec

We first tried the *Udderly EZ milker* to evaluate the milk production of Dorset ewes in a research project aimed to compare different photoperiodic protocols used to control ewe reproduction. We were interested to know if the light regimen affected ewe milk production during the pre-weaning period. This project was done in collaboration with the CEPOQ (Quebec Sheep Research and Expertise Center; *http://www.cepoq.com*), a Quebec provincial research institution in Canada.

Over the last few years, we have tried different techniques to measure milk production of non-dairy sheep breeds. Machine milking, even though effective, is a stressful procedure for ewes that are not used being milked. Some ewes retain their milk due to the stressful environment created by the noise of the portable machine compressor used. We also tried the "weight-suckle-weight" method but our experimental observations led us to investigate another technique to obtain a more precise measure of milk production.

The utilization of the *Udderly EZ milker* is a non stressful approach that is particularly well adapted for ewes that are not used to milking machine. It is completely noiseless, lightweight and non invasive. Moreover, our observations suggest that the *EZ milker* technique is much more precise then the "weight-suckle-weight" method. For our experimental purpose's, we purchased 4 *Udderly EZ milker*'s to facilitate milking 2 ewes at the same time! It was quite rapid and worked very well.

All members of the research team and staff are excited thinking about all the possibilities and opportunities that the *EZ milker* will provide us in the future for working on milk production of non-dairy sheep.

The sheep researchers thank you Buck!

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