

Effects of the Dam BCS at Calving on Camel Calf Performances During the First 2 Weeks of Age

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ABSTRACT

This work was undertaken to investigate the influence of the dam body condition score (BCS) at calving on camel calf performances during the first 2 weeks of age. Data of nineteen camels (*Camelus dromedarius*) and their calves were used. According to their BCS, dams were classified into two groups; group 1 was noted with 2 (n = 13) and group 2 with 4.5 (n = 6). At birth, calf has a low rectal temperature (RT = 36.2°C). This parameter was not affected by the dam BCS and reached approximately 38°C at the first 24 hours in Group 2 and at 48 hours in group 1. The BCS of camel had a significant (P<0.01) effect on the birth weight (BW) of calves; group 1 had lower BW (25.75 ± 0.97 kg) compared to that in group 2 (35.28 ± 1.19 kg). Similarly, total proteins concentration was significantly higher in the second group at birth (46.53 ± 0.66 g/L) compared to first group (43.48 ± 0.82). This significance maintained during the first 2 weeks of age (61.43 ± 2.15 *vs* 51.69 ± 1.57, respectively). The average daily body gain during the first two postnatal weeks in group 1 was lower (P<0.05) than that in group 2 (564.28 ± 80.52 g *vs* 514.53 ± 81.03 g, respectively). In conclusion, camel dams with good BCS provide more potential for calves to survive and grow up during the first 2 weeks of age.

Key words: camel, body condition score, birth weight, rectal temperature.