



Re-Livestock
RESILIENT FARMING SYSTEMS

23rd EGF Symposium 2025

Multi-species swards · 15-17 September 2025, Reading, UK

Re-Livestock Abstracts

PERFORMANCE OF VEAL CALVES OF DIFFERENT GENOTYPES RAISED ON CONTRASTED MULTI-SPECIES GRASSLANDS2

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Performance of veal calves of different genotypes raised on contrasted multi-species grasslands

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Abstract

Pasture-based veal production may offer an option of raising male calves from dairy herds that is ethically justifiable and combines potential benefits in terms of resource efficiency and ecosystem services when compared to conventional indoor systems. This study evaluated the performance of 72 veal calves from three genotypes: Brown Swiss, Limousin × Brown Swiss, and Swiss Fleckvieh, raised across four environments: a control group housed indoors and three grazing systems—intensive grasslands, permanent grasslands, and alpine grasslands. Significant differences were observed in performance metrics based on production system and genotype. Carcass weights differed significantly among farms, with the indoor housed calves yielding the heaviest carcasses with 102 ± 9.4 kg compared to the grazing animals with values of 92 ± 9.4 kg for the intensive, 85 ± 13.2 kg for permanent and 92 ± 10.3 kg for alpine grassland. Average daily weight gain (ADG) also varied notably by location, with indoor calves achieving the highest ADG and calves at permanent grasslands the lowest ADG values. Genotype effects on meat quality were significant, with Swiss Fleckvieh calves exhibiting darker and more tender meat. These findings underscore the influence of production systems and genotype on growth and meat quality traits in veal production.

Keywords: dairy beef calves, meat quality, organic, pasture-based, resource efficiency



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