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No influence of coarseness of grain and level of rumen by-pass starch of pelleted concentrates on performance, carcass quality, and rumen wall characteristics of rose veal calves
Vestergaard, M., Eriksen, M. and Jarltoft, T.C., Aarhus University, Department of Animal Health and Bioscience, Foulum, DK-8830 Tjele, Denmark; mogens.vestergaard@agric.dk

In order to improve rumen environment and reduce the high incidence (16%) of liver abscesses in rose veal calf production, two strategies were tested to improve the traditional (N) pelleted concentrates based on finely ground ingredients. In the R-concentrate, the cereal ingredients (barley and wheat) were the same as in N-concentrate but were coarsely ground resulting in a mean particle size of 1.5 compared with 0.6 mm in N before pelleting. In the S-concentrate, half the barley and wheat was replaced by finely ground sorghum and corn, which increased the theoretical by-pass starch to 68 g/kg compared with 25 g/kg in N and R. All three concentrates had the same total starch (345 g/kg), NDF (170 g/kg) and crude protein (15%) content and a pellet size of 4 mm. A total of 57 Holstein bull calves (n=10/treatment) were offered one of the three concentrates ad libitum from weaning (2 months) to slaughter (<10 months). Intake was individually registered using Incensec feeders. Barley straw was available ad libitum. Daily gain (1430 g/d), feed utilization (4.2 kg concentrate/kg gain), LW at slaughter (386 kg), carcass weight (194 kg), and EUROP conformation (3.9) were not affected by type of concentrate (P>0.05). Rumen papillae length and shape evaluated in antrum and ventral rumen sac at slaughter was not affected by concentrate (P>0.05). Rumen wall condition showed degrees of clumping, hyperemia and necrotic areas in all treatment groups, but with no general differences between type of concentrate (P>0.05). Only for hyperemia in the ventral sac, S was slightly better than N (P<0.05). The results show that it was possible to obtain the same high level of production performance with all three types of concentrates but that neither more coarse ingredients nor more by-pass starch in a pelleted concentrate could improve rumen wall condition.