

**PRE-SLAUGHTER FEED WITHDRAWAL AND ITS INFLUENCE ON ENTEROCOCCI  
POPULATION OF BROILERS CECUM**

*(JEJUM PRÉ-ABATE E SUA INFLUÊNCIA NAS POPULAÇÕES DE ENTEROCOCOS NO CECO  
DE FRANGOS DE CORTE)*

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Pre-slaughter fasting, a common practice in the poultry industry, aims to reduce the amount of food content in the gastrointestinal tract and thereby decrease the probability of rupture of highly contaminated parts such as the cecum during carcass processing at the slaughterhouse. The objective of this experiment was to test this practice efficiency in populations of enterococci present in the cecum of broilers. We used 20 Cobb broilers, slaughtered at 42 days of age. The feed was withdrawn 12 hours before slaughter. Samples of cecal contents were collected from 10 birds per treatment, fasting and nonfasting (control), before slaughter and placed in 0.1% peptone water. Serial dilutions were made from this solution. The number of CFU/mL (colony forming units/mL of cecal content) was counted on plates with m-Enterococcus agar (Difco) (APHA, 2001). For statistical analysis, data were transformed to  $y = \log(x)$ . The amount of enterococci in the cecum was  $6.00 \pm 0.17$  CFU/mL for the birds that were not subjected to fasting and  $5.95 \pm 0.17$  CFU/mL for the ones that had undergone a 12-hour fasting; the results showed no significant difference between treatments ( $P > 0.05$ ). Thus, it can be concluded that pre-slaughter fasting neither decrease the contents in the gastrointestinal tract nor influence the amount of Enterococci in the cecum, which was used here as an indicator of the presence other Gram-positive microorganisms possibly pathogens and, therefore, of importance for public health.

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