HIGH EFFICIENCY RATIONS AS MILK SUBSTITUTE FOR GROWING RABBITS

By

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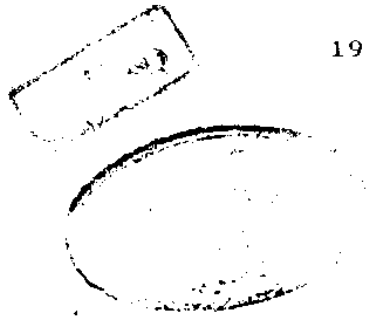

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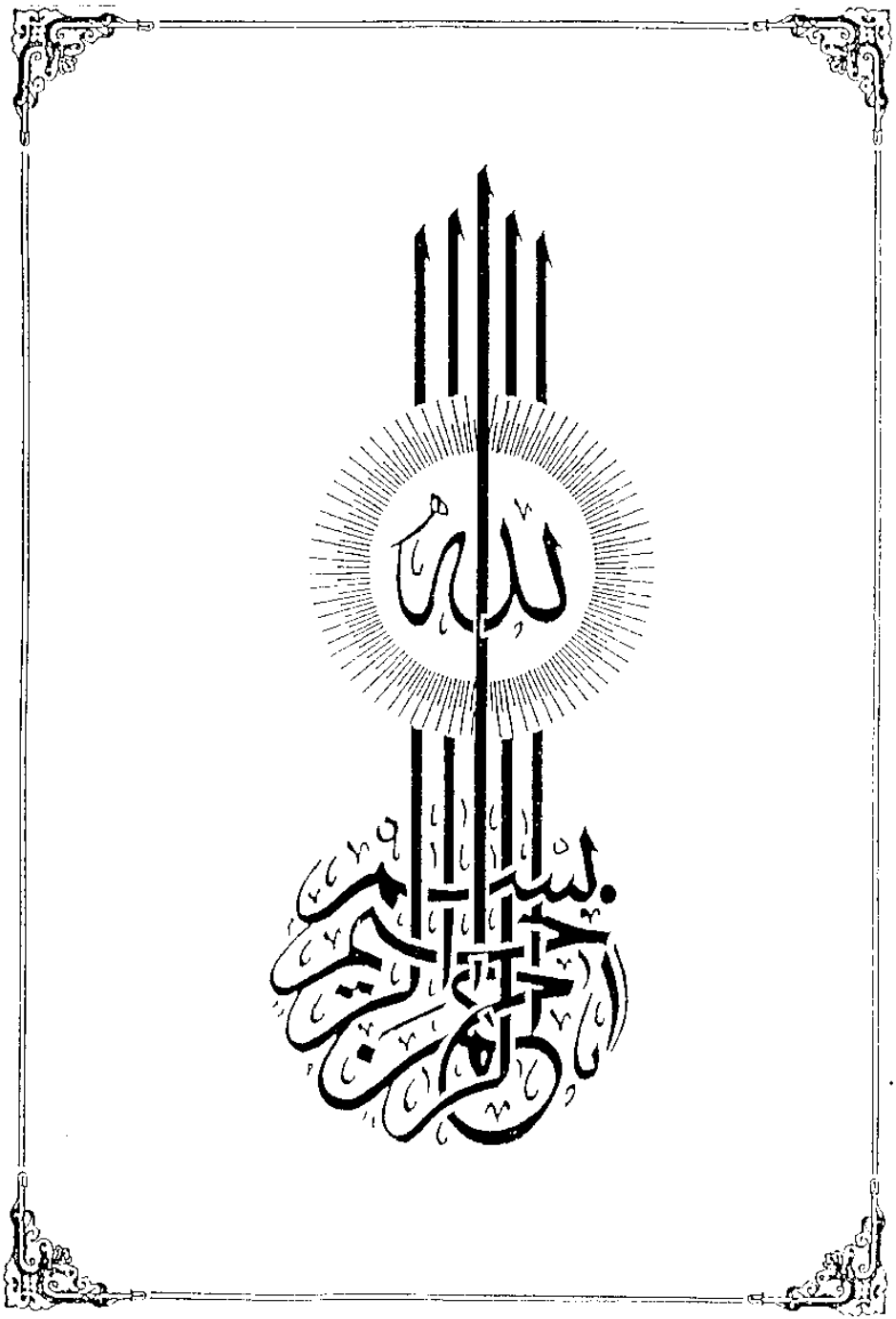

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ABSTRACT

Intensive production rabbit farms failed to give expected results due to various reasons. The most effective factor was nutritionally nature caused by early weaning.

In order to over come high casualties during this critical period, a milk replacer was given to off-springs for 15 days after weaning and before being fed their normal diet. The milk replacer was formulated to match the does milk and was practiced in three forms namely: liquid, jelly and pellets.

The results were highly significant between the control and the three forms of milk replacer in reducing the mortality rate of weaned offsprings down to almost nil. However, some differences were obtained in growth, weight gain and feed conversion rate showing that the form of pellets was the best form of milk replacer.

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INTRODUCTION

Recently intensive rabbit production for meat has been widely practiced in Egypt. The promising results, however were not as expected due to various reasons.

Nutritional problems came first with a most serious case of the high mortality rate during the procedure of early weaning. In general, breast fed off-springs for 25-28 days are completely isolated from the mother doe and given a full starting ration up to marketing weight (12 weeks). The sudden change seemed rather severe thus causing heavy casualties.

This work was designed, therefore to modify the common weaning procedure by using a milk replacer to be fed for 10-15 days to off-springs after separation from their mother-does. It was hoped that this transitory period should help in reducing the high mortality rate during weaning. Forms with which the milk replacer were introduced were also studied. These namely were: liquid, jelly and pelleted. The costs were taken into consideration, however no recommendations were given leaving the selected method to each farm conditions.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A. Reproductive Systems:

1. Normal mating:

Ovulation in the rabbit does not normally occur spontaneously, but usually happens 9-11 hr. after mating (Barry, 1939). It may be as early as 8 hr. (Hill, et al., 1935) and as late as 13½ hr. after mating (Walton & Hammond, 1929).

In a series of experiments (Fee & Parkes, 1929, 1930; Deanesly, et al., 1930; Hill & Parkes, 1931) it was shown that mating caused the release of the luteinizing hormone (LH) from the adenohypophysis, thus inducing ovulation.

Ovulation in the rabbit is normally induced by mating, and after about 10 hours (Barry, 1939; Harper, 1960).

Hammond, (1925), reported that only 15% of females showed oestrous in October compared with 80% in April to July. Smelser et al (1934), found that number of experiments designed to determine the effect of the light: dark ratio indicated that there were no significant effects on the number of matings, ovulations or pseudopregnancies in does subjected to 30 days of intense light or to darkness. When New Zealand