

Finnsheep and Romanov comparative performances obtained under the same management conditions in Spain

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Abstract. Twenty-five Finnsheep (F) ewes and five F rams imported from Finland, ten Romanov (R) females and six R males and their offspring — up to about 50 ewes from each breed — were kept together in Zaragoza (41° 43' LN; min. temp. —5°C, max. temp. 40°C) over seven years.

The animals were kept indoors and the reproduction system was three lambings in two years, with matings in February, June and October. Oestruses were synchronized — without using PMSG — so as to group lambings. As a whole, the adaptation of R was better than that of F owing to a higher incidence of pneumonic problems in this breed (36 % vs 81 % mortality between 7 and 150 days of age and 31 % vs 45 % mortality in adult ewes were caused by pneumonia). Fertility was lower in F than in R for one year old ewes (54 % vs 81 %) and for June matings (52 % vs 80 %), but it did not differ in the rest of the year (78 % vs 83 %). The average prolificacy was 1,93 vs 2,59 for F and R respectively. Total lamb mortality up to 150 days of age was high and similar in both breeds, 38 % vs 42 %, but more R than F lambs died at birth, (16 % vs 11 %), while after the first week the mortality percentage was higher (15 % vs 22 %) in F lambs. The weights of R were higher than those of F both in the growth period of lambs (20,5 ± 0,4 kg vs 18,8 ± 0,4 kg at 90 days), and in the adult stage, where the weight of 4-year-old females was 59,2 ± 0,9 vs 56,0 ± 1,1 kg.

Index words: Finnsheep, Romanov, adaptation, fertility, prolificacy, lamb mortality, weight
