

THE EFFECT OF GENOTYPE, SEX AND REARING SYSTEM ON GROWTH OF TURKEYS

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The trial was conducted to compare the growth of a large type commercial turkey (BUT big 6) and a typical bronze turkey representing the type of bird used in the mid 1960's under extensive conditions in Hungary. Both genotypes were tested under intensive and very extensive conditions on pasture.

Both genotypes, sexes separate were reared in confinement till 6 weeks of age, fed standard turkey diets. After 6 weeks of rearing 10 birds from each genotype and sex were transferred to free range pasture of good quality and rearing till 24 weeks of age. The "control" birds were reared further in confinement, fed with standard turkey feeds. Birds on pasture were fed daily in the rearing house only once a day. Total feed consumed during the 18 weeks on pasture was 2,5 kg of turkey grower pelleted feed, and 10,3 kg of tailing wheat. From both genotypes 1 male and 2 females turkeys were lost during the whole experimental period.

The depression in growth of the turkeys intensive rearing and feeding to extensive pasture management in relative terms was 41,3 % for BUT males, 19,4 % for BUT females, 8,7 % in the case of bronze males and only 4,7 % for bronze females. The effect of rearing, genotype and sex were highly significant, genotype x rearing environment, and sex x environment interactions were also highly significant. Female turkeys responded with much less depression in growth as males if reared in extensive pasture conditions.

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