

A. Steinwigger, L. Gruber and M. Greimel (2001): **Whole milk or milk replacer for veal calves - influence on fattening and slaughter performance, meat quality and profitability** (in German). Die Bodenkultur 52, (1), 233-245.

### **Summary**

In a feeding trial with 120 male calves the effect of ration (whole milk (VM) or milk replacer (MA)), slaughter weight (110 or 140 kg LW) and breed (Simmental (SI), Brown Swiss (BS) or Holstein Friesian (HF)) on the fattening and slaughter performance as well as meat quality and economics of veal calves was studied.

Daily gains did not differ significantly between the feeding groups but tended to be lower when the calves were fattened with whole milk up to 140 kg LW. With higher slaughter weights the daily gains increased in both feeding groups (1005 and 1084 g, respectively). Despite lower feed intake the daily gain of SI was higher than that of BS and HF (1108, 1010 and 1016 g, respectively) and the feed conversion of SI was better than that of BS and HF (1.38 and 1.56 kg DM/kg gain, respectively). The dressing percentage increased when the calves were fed with MA and decreased with a higher slaughter weight. SI calves tended to have higher dressing percentages than BS and HF (59.1, 57.9 and 58.4 %, respectively). The portion of valuable carcass cuts was significantly higher with SI. The organoleptically evaluated meat quality was better for the calves slaughtered with 110 kg LW. Drip loss tended to increase when the calves were fattened with MA and also increased with higher slaughter weights. Although the dietary iron supply differed between VM and MA, the meat colour was not affected by the feeding regime and slaughter weight. However, the meat colour of SI was darkest.

With regard to the profitability it can be concluded that the marginal income for veal calves fattened with whole milk is positive for BS and HF calves only when the milk price is very low (e.g. levy for over quota production) or a high price for meat can be achieved. The purchase of SI is too expensive so that despite a good fattening and slaughter performance the production of SI veal calves was not profitable. Low slaughter weight (110 kg) had an economic advantage over the high slaughter weight (140 kg). This trend will increase as meat prices are expected to decrease and premiums on slaughter calves will rise according to AGENDA 2000.

**Keywords:** Veal calves, whole milk, slaughter weight, breed, profitability

### **Zitat (Deutsch):**

A. Steinwigger, L. Gruber und M. Greimel (2001): Vollmilch oder Milchaustauschfutter in der Kälbermast- Einfluss auf Mast- und Schlachtleistung, Fleischqualität und Wirtschaftlichkeit. Die Bodenkultur 52, (1), 233-245.