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## Trends in the development of sheepbreeding and approach for introduction of machine milking of sheep in R. Bulgaria

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### SUMMARY

- The Republic of Bulgaria is a  
- country with a favorable geographical  
- location and climate conditions for the  
- development of sheep breeding.  
- Historically, these circumstances have  
- contributed for its establishment as a  
- traditional and major livestock sub-sector  
- and also as an important factor for the  
- Bulgarian economy. In contrast to the  
- favourable preconditions, the sheep  
- breeding has been entering in deepening  
- crises after 1989. The trend analysis  
- shows dramatic decrease both in sheep  
- population and the total number of sheep  
- farms. For the period from 1990 to 2015  
- the sheep population has been decreased  
- from 8.130 million to 1.332 million and the  
- total number of sheep farms – from 242.1  
- thousand (in 2000) to 37.3 thousand (in

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19,12 %.

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(Tyankov et al.,

2015). Generally, the subsector could be characterized with a lack of adequate state politics, suitable business environment and shortage of investments for development. In order to facilitate the investment process during introduction of machine milking in small and medium sheep farms with expanding capacity it has been applied the modular approach.

A comparative study was carried out on a farm with the initial capacity of 40 ewes, a final designed capacity of 160 ewes and 5 years term for expanding the farm and introduction of machine milking. The results show that in comparison with the traditional approach, the modular approach allows the realization of savings of depreciation allowances amounting to BGN 7.432 and the necessary investments for the introduction of machine milking could be reduced by 19.12%.

**Key words:** sheep breeding, trends in sheep breeding, milking, machine milking, modular approach

## INTRODUCTION

The geographic location and the natural and climate conditions of Bulgaria are favorable prerequisites for sheep breeding development. Historically, these circumstances have contributed for its establishment as a traditional and major livestock sub-sector and also as an important factor for the development of Bulgarian economy and a source of raw materials for food, leather and textile industries.

The diversity of nature and climate conditions in the different regions of the country has contributed to the creation of a significant number of breeds and indigenous types adapted to specific local conditions. According to some authors, Bulgaria occupies one of the top places in the world by the number of its aboriginal sheep breeds (Tyankov et al., 2000;

2000; Dochevski, 2002; Zhelev et al., 2009).

Dochevski, 2002; Zhelev et al., 2009).

- Contrary to these favorable conditions, in recent decades, sheep breeding has been in a state of more deepening crisis, which has led to a reduction in number of animals to an extent that threatens its economic significance.

**The aim** of the present research is to outline the trends in the sheep breeding development in the Republic of Bulgaria and to evaluate the modular approach for the introduction of machine milking.

**Trends in the sheep breeding development in the Republic of Bulgaria**

As a traditional sub-sector of animal husbandry, historically the sheep breeding in Bulgaria maintains a relatively high number of population.

According to data from the National Statistical Institute (NSI, 1995) for the period 1890 ÷ 1990, the number of sheep varies between 7 and 11 million, regardless of the particular economic conjuncture and the dominant economic and political system (Figure 1).

(NSI, 1995)  
1890÷1990 . 7 11 .,  
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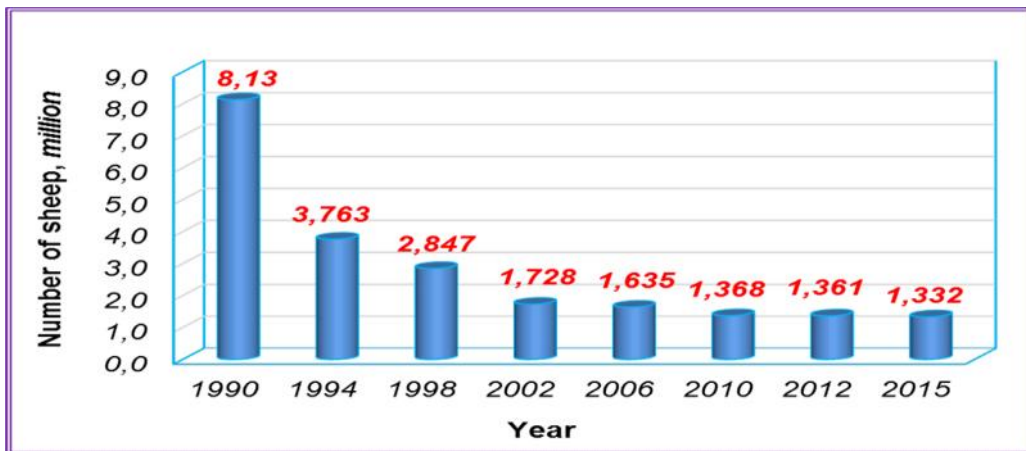


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1890÷1990 .  
**Fig. 1. Amendment of sheep population in the Republic of Bulgaria for the period from 1890 to 1990**

1899 . | But after the change in the system in 1989 and the subsequent transition

8,130 (1990) to 1,332 (2015) (Tiankov et al., 2000; Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry (MAFF), 1999 ÷ 2016).

from a centrally planned to a market economy, the sub-sector entered a period of deepening crisis, leading to a drastic reduction in the number of animals and a threat to the eradication of entire breeds. The number of sheep decreased more than 6 times: from 8.130 million (in 1990) to 1.332 million (in 2015) (Figure 2) (Tiankov et al., 2000; Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry (MAFF), 1999 ÷ 2016).



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Fig. 2. Amendment of sheep population in the Republic of Bulgaria for the period from 1990 to 2015

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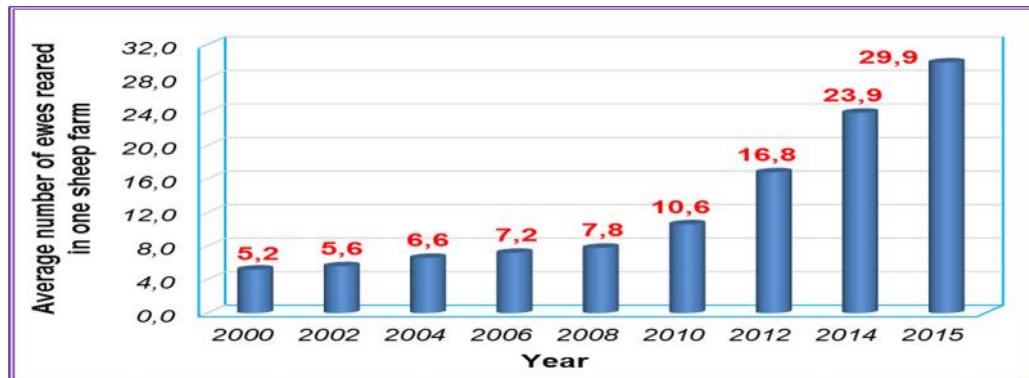
Along with the drastic reduction in the livestock, there is also a very negative structure of the sheep farms, suggesting the application of traditional extensive breeding technology, with predominantly manual labor. In 2015, up to 9 ewes were bred in 60.2% of the farms, while the average number of ewes in the country on one farm was 29.9 (MAFF, 2016). This is one of the prerequisites for the low technological level of the sub-branch.

The analysis of the change in the average number of sheep breeding in a sheep farm for the period 2000 ÷ 2015 (Figure 3) shows a tendency for an

(MAFF, 2001÷2016).

5,75 : 5,2 29,9 .

accelerated increase in the capacity of the sheep farms (MAFF, 2001 ÷ 2016). The average number of ewes on a farm has increased 5.75 times: from 5.2 to 29.9 animals.



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2000÷2015 .

**Fig. 3. Average number of ewes reared in a statistical sheep farm in the Republic of Bulgaria for the period from 2000 to 2015**

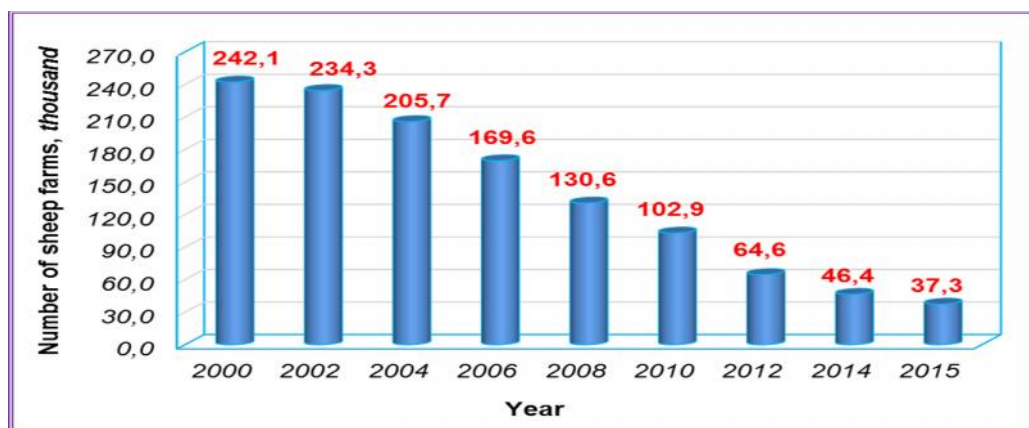
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The essence of this seemingly positive trend becomes clear when analyzing tendencies in the number of sheep farms in the country (Figure 4). For the period 2004 ÷ 2015 the total number of farms decreased by 6.49 times: from 242.1 to 37.3 thousand.



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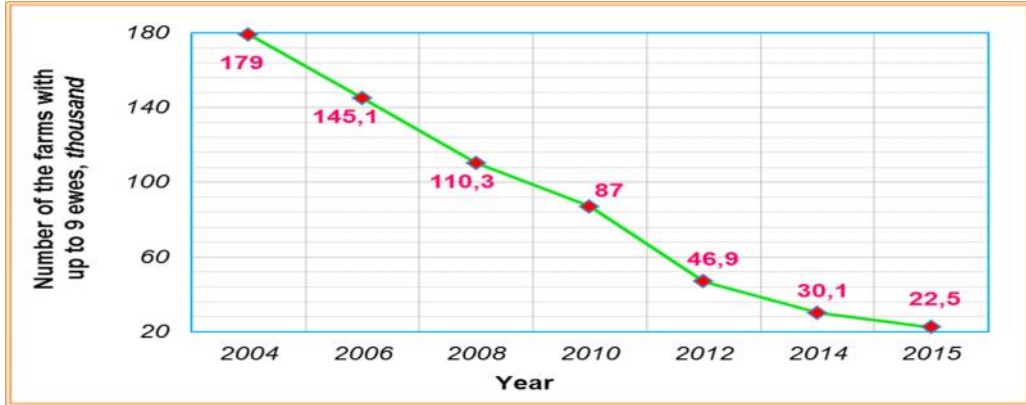
2000÷2015 .

**Fig. 4. Number of ewe farms in the Republic of Bulgaria for the period from 2000 to 2015**

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The most drastic decrease is seen in farms keeping up to 9 ewes (Figure 5). The number of these farms decreased by 7.96 times: from 179 thousand to 22.5 thousand.



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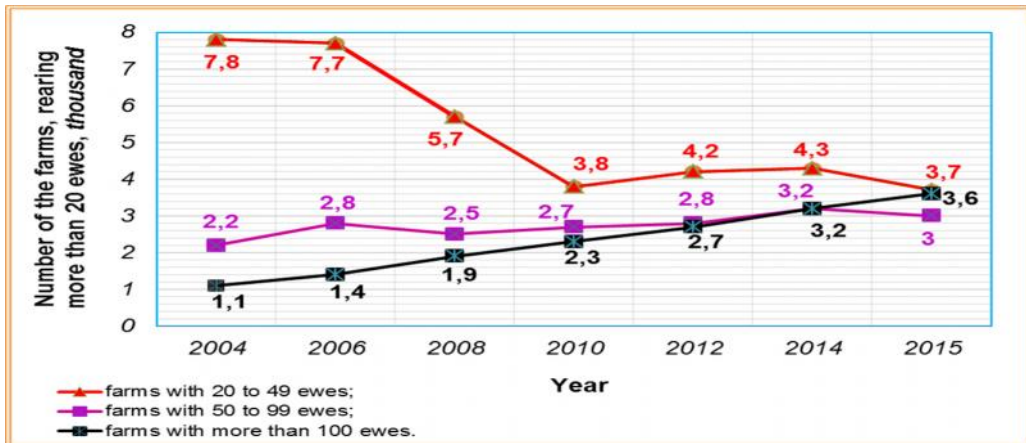
2004÷2015 .

Fig. 5. Number of ewe farms with up to 9 ewes for the period from 2004 to 2015

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The decline in farms ranging from 20 to 49 ewes is less pronounced – 2.11 times (from 7.8 to 3.7 thousand farms) (Figure 6).



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2004÷2015 .

Fig. 6. Amendment of the number of ewe farms with more than 20 ewes for the period from 2004 to 2015

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Relative persistence is maintained for farms with 50 to 99 ewes - the number varies between 2 200 and 3 000. This can also be seen as an indicator of the relative market stability of this group of farms.

There is a trend for steady increase only in farms with over 100 ewes – for the analyzed period from 2004 to 2015, the number of these farms has increased 3.27 times: from 1100 to 3600.

In summary of the statistical results presented for the number of ewes in sheep farms for the period 2000 ÷ 2015, it can be argued that the trend for increase in the average number of ewes is of a relative nature and is due to the accelerated eradication of small farms keeping up to 50 ewes.

Since 2004 there has been a steady trend for an increase in the number of farms with over 100 animals, but it cannot compensate the accelerated eradication of small farms keeping up to 50 animals. This is the reason for the cumulative reduction in both the total number of livestock and the total number of sheep farms.

When examining the state and trends in sheep breeding, the state of the Bulgarian village should also be taken into account - the natural environment for the development of sheep breeding. The disturbing tendencies of depopulation, the increase of the average age of population, accompanied by the rapid decrease of the rural population in working age continue in the Bulgarian village.

The negative trends in sheep breeding in the Republic of Bulgaria abruptly contrasted with the positive prerequisites for its successful development:

- Favorable geographic location and climate conditions;
- the availability of rich and

- unpolluted soil resources;
- rich forage base, grasslands, grazing lands and pastures;
- rich traditions and experience in sheep breeding, production and processing of sheep production;
- Sheep farming as a valuable source of raw materials for the processing industry;
- sheep breeding as a factor for the revival of the Bulgarian village, its traditions, crafts and rural tourism.

The overcoming of the negative trends in sheep breeding, its taking out from the deep crisis in which it is located and the use of the country's potential for its development is possible on the basis of an adequate state policy, creating an appropriate business climate and directing investment capital to build modern sheep farms using effective technologies for intensive production of sheep production.

**Modular approach to introduction of machine milking in sheep breeding**

The problem of bringing the Bulgarian sheep breed out of the state of severe crisis presupposes a complex approach in its solution. Below is an approach to overcome one of the problematic aspects – the manual milking.

Milking is a major technological process in dairy sheep breeding. By expert assessment, this process at present is done manually in more than 95% of sheep farms in Bulgaria. The sheep milking equipment on the market is priced at a price level that prevents its massive introduction into practice.

Hand milking is one of the most laborious and unattractive technological processes in traditional sheep farming technologies. Its long-term practice leads to permanent occupational diseases of the milkers. The modern solution to the

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problem is the introduction of machine milking. This decision was dictated both by the need to ease the work of the milkers and the high demands of the market on the quality of milk and dairy products.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

In order to support the process of introducing machine milking, the Institute of Soil Science, Agrotechnologies and Plant Protection "N. Pushkarov "(Sofia) has developed a concept for facilitating the investment process in small and average-sized sheep farms with increasing capacity under the extended reproduction scheme.

The traditional approach (TA) for the introduction of machine milking presupposes compliance with the parameters of the technical equipment with the final project capacity of the farm. Such an approach is related to the provision of significant initial investment for milking equipment, generally unmanageable for small and average-sized sheep farms – both for newly-established and existing farms subject to reconstruction and modernization.

A rational option for facilitating the investment process in this category of sheep farms is the application of the modular approach (MA) to the introduction of machine milking. Such an approach would allow a gradual increase in the capacity of the milking installation, along with the increase in the capacity of the sheep farm, until its final design capacity is reached.

To evaluate the effect of the application of this approach, the influence of T and MA on some elements of production costs was investigated.

The comparative method and approach proposed by Sabkov et al.

Sabkov et al. (2014).

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(2014) are used in the study.

The study was conducted for a basic sheep farm under the following initial conditions:

- a base farm with an initial capacity of 40 ewes;
- the final project capacity of the farm - 160 ewes;
- multiplication index (multiplicity of repetition) of the milking module, n = 4;
- deadline for reaching the project capacity of the farm - 5 years.

Sheep of the breed "Synthetic Bulgarian Milk Population" are raised in the base sheep farm. The main parameters of the sheep farm are presented in Table 1 (Ivanova, 2013).

1.

**Table 1. Main parameters of the initial sheep farm**

	Parameter	Measure	Value
1.	Initial farm capacity (number of ewes)	Number	40
2.	Final farm capacity (number of ewes)	Number	160
3.	Average milk production per 120-days lactation period	l	110
4.	Prolificacy	%	140
5.	Live weight of ewes	kg	65,00
6.	Average selling price of milk	BGN/l	1,4

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The sheep farm has a growing capacity (under the expanded reproduction scheme) till the final project capacity of 160 ewes is reached. The expansion process is combined with a shift from manual to machine milking. Until the final capacity at the sheep farm is reached, a low percentage of technological waste is considered, which is not taken into account in the survey.

Table 2 shows the turnover of the flock until the final project capacity is reached, and in Table 3 – the stages of

3 – the sheep farm expansion, the technological scheme of implementation and the necessary capacity of the milking equipment.

## 2.

**Table 2. Flock turnover until reaching the final farm capacity**

Year	Number of ewes in the beginning of year	Lambs	Yearlings	Number of ewe lambs at the end of year	Number of ewes at the end of year
I	40	56	-	28	40
II	40	56	28	28	68
III	68	95	28	47	96
IV	96	134	44	20	140
V	140	196	20	30	160 <sup>)</sup>

<sup>)</sup> - the designed farm capacity was reached.

## 3.

**Table 3. The stages of farm expanding and the capacity of milking installation in case of MA**

Stages	Year	Number of milked ewes in the beginning of year	Capacity of milking installation
I	I	40	4- / 4-places
	II	40	
II	III	68	8- / 8-places
III	IV	96	8- / 8-places
IV	V	140	12- / 12-places
V	VI	160 <sup>)</sup>	16- / 16-places

<sup>)</sup> the designed farm capacity was reached at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> year.

- The study was carried out with the option to provide the necessary investments for the purchase of the milking equipment through bank loan. In the case of MA, the loan is in separate stages, the number of which is a function of the multiplication index (the number of iteration of the module). The term of loan for each module is determined by the time until the need to implement the next module arises. The term of loan for the

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last module is 5 years.

The technology scheme for introduction is built on a 4-places milking module.

The loan is a one-time act in TA, dictated by the requirement to purchase the necessary milking equipment at the start of the expansion process. For the comparability of the two approaches, it was agreed that the term of the TA loan corresponds to the total term of loan for the MA – 120 months.

The study assessed the following elements of expense involved in the cost price of milk:

- relative depreciation allowance (DA) for milking equipment (DA per liter of milk yield);
- cost of servicing the loan for the purchase of milking equipment.

The relative DA is determined in accordance with the applicable regulatory framework by applying the straight-line depreciation method (IAS 16).

In the calculation of interest due on loans, an exemplary "interest calculator" of a particular bank (2015) was used. The calculations were made with a notional interest rate of 6.5%. The bank's fee for examining the loan application and other bank charges is not included.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

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Table 4 presents the results obtained for the relative DA size for the application of TA and MA for the introduction of machine milking.

4.

**Table 4. Relative DA in case of TA and in case of MA for introduction of machine milking**

Year	Number of ewes in the begging of year	Relative DA:		
		BGN/ In case of TA, BGN/	,BGN/ In case of MA, BGN/	% MA relative to TA, %
I	40	0,63	0,17	26,98
II	40	0,63	0,17	26,98
III	68	0,37	0,19	51,35
IV	96	0,26	0,14	53,85
V	140	0,18	0,13	72,22
VI	160	0,16	0,16	100,00

The analysis of data and the trend show that compared to TA, the relative DA for MA were significantly lower in I and II years. Then this difference gradually decreases and in the last year of implementation the relative DA are aligned. The specific ratios over the years are:

- in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> years – 3.71 times;
- in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year – 1.95 times;
- in the IV<sup>th</sup> year – 1.86 times;
- in the V<sup>th</sup> year – 1.38 times;
- in the VI<sup>th</sup> year the relative DA for both approaches are equal.

In addition, the results of Table 4 give a reason for the summary that, for the period of introduction of machine milking, the investments in the MA are more evenly distributed, which determines the relatively constant value of the relative DA.

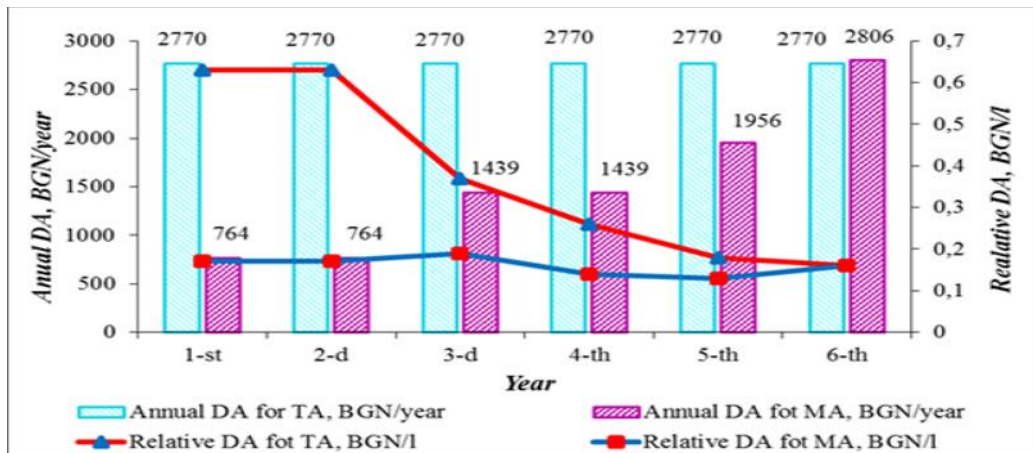
Figure 7 presents annual DA and relative DA.

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Figure 7 presents annual DA and relative DA.



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**Fig. 7. Amendment of the annual and relative depreciation allowances during the introduction of machine milking**

It can be seen from the figure that for TA, the annual DA are a constant value for the implementation period until the final project capacity of the farm is reached, and for the MA, the annual DA are a variable, increasing value. In the second case the results are determined by the capacity of the milking equipment, increasing in parallel with the increase in the capacity of the farm.

The trend in relative DA is the opposite: values are gradually decreasing for TA, and for MA the relative DA is a relatively constant value. Upon reaching the farm's design capacity, the relative DA in both approaches are balanced.

The graphics analysis also shows that in comparison with TA, there are the following trends for MA:

- significantly lower total DA values (both in absolute value and in relative value per unit of production);

- a relatively constant value of the relative DA in the cost price of milk for the entire period of introduction of machine milking;

- significantly lower relative DA in the initial stages of introduction of

machine milking.

Lower relative DA values for MA are explained by a more effective 'commitment' between equipment capacity and flock size compared to TA. Upon reaching the project capacity of the farm, the efficiency of the load on the equipment, in both approaches, is balanced and consequently the relative DAs also are balanced.

For the conditions of the present study, the calculations indicate that the application of the MA contributes to the savings of DA in the amount of BGN 7 432. This saving is due to more efficient loading of the equipment in the process of introducing machine milking.

Table 5 presents the financial flows in financing the introduction of machine milking by bank loan.

5.

**Table 5. Scheme of the financial flows during the introduction of machine milking**

Stage of the investment	Initial value of the investment, BGN	Term of repayment of the loan, months	Interest payable for the term of loan, BGN	Monthly installment, BGN/monthly	Final value of the investment, BGN
<i>/ Amount of the investment in case of A</i>					
I	13850	120	5021,85	157,26	18871,85
<i>/ Amount of the investment in case of MA</i>					
I	3820	24	264,01	170,17	4084,01
II	3286	24	227,08	146,38	3513,08
III	2585	12	91,92	223,08	2676,92
V	4250	60	739,31	83,16	4989,31
<b>Total:</b>	<b>13 941</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>1 322,32</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>15 263,32</b>

Data analysis shows that the total interest payable at MA is less than that of TA with 3.80 times and the total amount of the investment in MA is 19.12% less.

These significant differences are explained by the fact that the application of MA allows for a staged "rescheduling" of the loan process, according to the stages of expansion of the farm until its final project capacity is reached.

### CONCLUSIONS

In contrast to the favorable natural climatic conditions, the rich traditions, the great variety of aboriginal breeds and its significance for the country's economy, sheep breeding in the Republic of Bulgaria is in a state of deepening crisis. For the period 1990 ÷ 2015, the number of animals decreased by 6.1 times – from 8.130 million (1990) to 1.332 million (2015); there is a threat to the eradication of entire breeds.

The sustained trend of increasing the number of sheep farms rearing more than 100 ewes and inseminated yearlings cannot compensate the accelerated eradication of small farms. This is the reason for the cumulative reduction in both the total number of livestock and the total number of sheep farms.

Negative trends in sheep breeding contradict the country's potential for successful development: natural and climate conditions; rich and unpolluted soil resources and feed base; rich traditions in the production and processing of sheep production.

The application of the modular approach to the introduction of machine milking in sheep farms with increasing capacity contributes to reducing investment costs and depreciation. For the conditions of a basic sheep farm with an initial capacity of 40 ewes, a final project capacity of 160 ewes and a period for expanding the sheep farm and the introduction of machine milking – 5 years, savings of depreciation allowance of BGN 7 432 can be realized, and the necessary investments for the introduction of

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## Evaluation of adaptive capacity of male and female kids of BWD breed on the basis of realization speed of behavioural reactions in the early neonatal period

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### SUMMARY

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The behaviour of 29 male and 28 female kids of Bulgarian White Dairy (BWD) goat was study in the first hour after their birth. The development of their behaviour was evaluated on the basis of the following indicators: time to the first attempt to rise, time to the first rising, total time standing on their feet, time to the first attempt for sucking, time to the first successful sucking and total time for sucking, observed within the first hour after birth. It is statistically proven that the time to the first successful attempt for rising of BWD is influenced by the gender of the new-born – female kids rise at their feet earlier than male ones almost 7 minutes earlier.

Gender of BWD kids does not have a statistically proven influence over the

- following indicators: time to first attempt for sucking, time to first successful attempt for sucking and total time spent in sucking.

**Key words:** kids, BWD, behaviour, sucking

## INTRODUCTION

The development in the kid behaviour, within the first hours after its birth, provides information for its adaptive capacity and the necessity to optimize and adapt the breeding technologies in order to speed the formation of the relationship between goat-mother and kid, the protection of new-borns and the increase in reproductive efficiency. The new-born kids have a high degree of independence and are able to rise to their feet and start sucking soon after their birth.

It was found that the normal sucking and assimilation of colostrum is a vital factor crucial for health (Khan et al., 2006) and the normal growth during the neonatal development, and it is also more important than birth weight (Chen et al., 1999).

The time necessary for the new-born to rise and find the udder is of utmost importance in order to start sucking on time. Neonatal death is the highest during the first three days, which presumes, that the events occurring within that period are of crucial significance for the survival (Nowak et al., 2000).

The behavioural model of the kid is oriented towards the establishment of a connection with the mother and start sucking in the sensitive period after birth (Ramirez et al., 1998).

The manifestation of behaviour of newborn after birth is influenced by factors arising from the kid itself (breed, line, sex etc.), prenatal influences (feeding, number of new-borns), factors arising from the mother (the size of placenta, body condition and age of the

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(Dwyer, 2003).

mother) and the course of the birth process (Dwyer, 2003).

The aim of present study is to assess the adaptive capacity of male and female kids of BWD breed on the basis of speed of realization of behavioural reactions during the first hour after birth.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study was conducted in the goat farm of the Experimental Base at Research Institute on Mountain Stockbreeding and Agriculture in the town of Troyan. The behavior of 29 male and 28 female kids was followed of Bulgarian White Dairy goat (BWD) breed within the first hour after their birth. Kidding was in February and March.

During the winter period animals were kept in a barn and fed with a ration containing 1.6 kg hay, 0.6 kg silage and 0.6 kg concentrated fodder per head. There was a free access to water and salt. In spring months (May - November), goats were grazing.

Chronometers were used, in the course of observation of the animals, to give an account of the time of all variables.

Kids were observed by two researchers and the observation lasted for one hour after birth.

The following behavioural reactions were registered within the first hour after birth:

Time to the first attempt to rise – duration of the period from birth (pushing out) to the first attempt of the kid to rise;

Time to the first rising – duration of the period from birth to the first successful attempt for rising (the kid remains standing on its 4 limbs at least for 5 seconds).

Total time standing – the time during which the kid remains standing on its feet within the first hour of the postnatal life;

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 7min ( 24,04±1,68 min 31,15±2,80  
 min).  
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 (Katsarov et  
 al., 1979; Tsonev, 2014).  
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 (Stoycheva et al. 2016).  
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Time to the first attempt for sucking – time from birth to the first attempt for sucking;

Time to the first successful sucking – time from birth to beginning of sucking.

Total time for sucking - time spent in sucking in the course of the first hour after birth.

Data are presented as mean value ( $\bar{x}$ ) and error of the mean ( $S\bar{x}$ ). Results from all tasks were processed with statistical tools package program Windows (Microsoft Excel, 2003), and the reliability was calculated by ANOVA method through single-factor analysis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

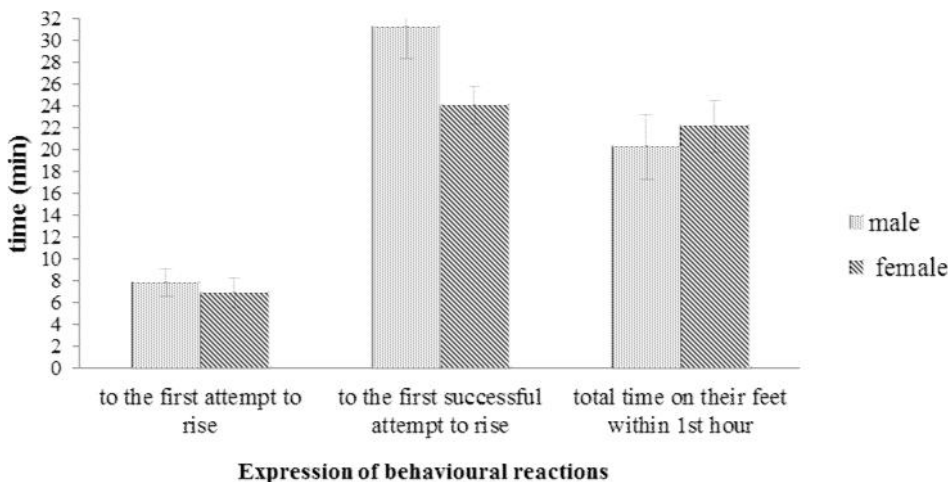
The female kids made their first attempt to rise on 6.89±1.34 min, which was a little earlier than 7.83±1.27 min (Figure 1). It is statistically proven that the time to the first successful attempt of the new-born to rise is influenced by the gender – female kids rose earlier on their feet than male ones with almost 7 min (on 24.04±1.68 min and 31.15±2.80 min). The weight of male kids is heavier than for female kids under the influence of the gender, as the difference is more significant for twins (Katsarov et al., 1979; Tsonev, 2014). The shorter time for rising of female kids probably is connected with the lower weight and shorter duration of birth, as well as with the quality of maternal care, manifesting in longer period for their care in the first hour after birth (Stoycheva et al., 2016).

The shorter period to the first successful rising in our experiment could not be viewed as a prerequisite for increase of rumination as it does not lead to earlier sucking.

Female kids stood for a longer

min) (22,12±2,33 min),  
 (20,21±2,92 min)  
 96% 86%

period on their feet in the first hour after birth (22.12±2.33 min), but the difference in comparison with male ones (20.21±2.92 min) was not proven (Figure 1). All male and female kids have made an attempt to rise as 86% of the male and 96% of the female actually rose and stood successfully during the controlled period.



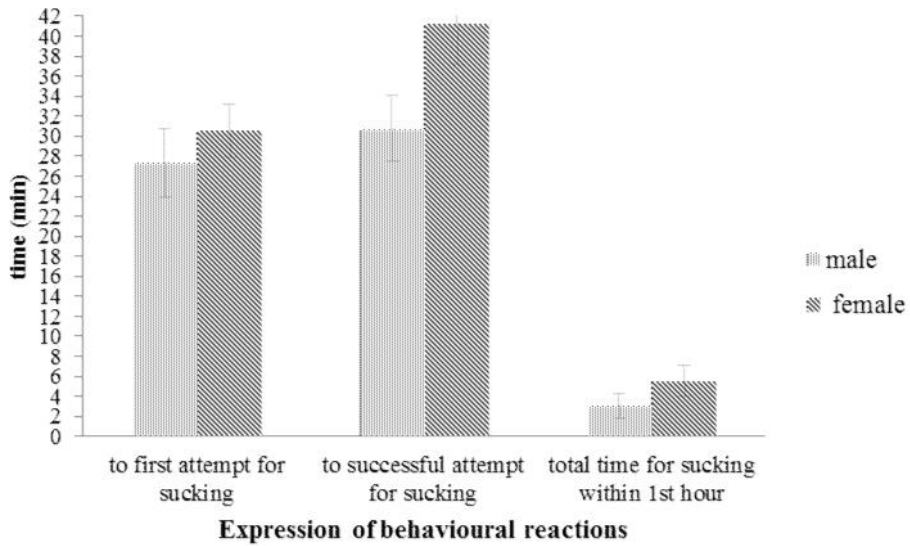
. 1.

**Fig. 1. Influence of gender of kid over time for rising and total time spent on their feet within the first hour after birth**

27,31±3,42 min  
 30,75±3,28 min,  
 30,53±2,60 min  
 41,20±4,04 min ( 2).  
 45 %  
 14% (4 .)  
 68%  
 36%

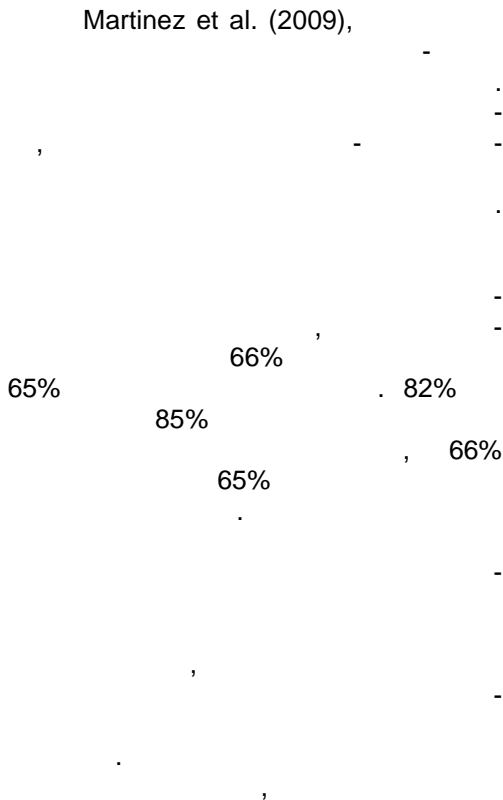
Male kids made their first attempt to suck on 27.31±3.42 min and they sucked successfully on 30.75±3.28 min, which was earlier in comparison with female ones respectively on 30.53±2.60 min and 41.20±4.04 min (Figure 2). In spite of the earlier sucking of male kids, female kids sucked two minutes more.

45% of the male kids made an attempt to suck, and only 14% (4 kids) sucked within the first hour. 68% of the female kids made and attempt and 36% of them sucked successfully within the controlled period.



. 2.

**Fig. 2. Impact of gender over time to the start of sucking within the first hour after birth of kid**



Martinez et al. (2009),

Martinez et al. (2009) noticed that female kids start sucking later, which coincides with our results. Unlike our study, however, female kids spend less time in sucking in comparison with male kids as differences are not proven.

Authors do not found significant differences with respect to total number of kids that sucked successfully within the first hour after birth, which represents respectively 66% for male and 65% for female kids. 82% of male and 85% of female kids made an attempt for sucking, and 66% of the male kids and 65% of the female kids sucked successfully.

There is not enough information for the existence of genetically determined differences in the stage of physiological maturity at the moment of birth, which determines the differences in the physical activity of new-borns of different sex and type of birth. The amount of energetic reserves of kids, having different weight at the moment of birth, would not have

effect either on their activity within the first minutes of the postnatal life, and respectively on time to the first successful attempt for rising of kids with lower weight.

## CONCLUSIONS

It is statistically proven that the time to the first successful attempt for rising of kids of BWD is influenced by the gender of the new-born – female kids rise at their feet almost 7 min earlier than male ones.

Gender of kids of BWD does not have a statistically proven influence over the following indicators: time to the first attempt for sucking, time to the first successful attempt for sucking and total time spent in sucking.

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## Variations of the color of coat in two autohtonous goat breeds in Southwest Bulgaria

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### SUMMARY

The present study shows a summary analysis of variations in the color of coat in two Bulgarian autohtonous goat breeds – Kalofer longhaired and Bulgarian screw-horned longhaired goat breeds, reared in Southwest Bulgaria. The specimens included in the investigation, form a representative sample of breeds – 120 typical animals (60 of each breed). For the purposes of the study were selected purebred animals, without common grandparents from 10 herds, representing the full diversity of color of the coat, typical for the populations of both breeds. On the base of this investigation conducted on the hair coverings of specimens from the populations of the Kalofer longhaired and Bulgarian screw-horned longhaired goat grown in Southwestern Bulgaria, the results show that 5 basic colorations of the coat can be differentiated – Black, Red-brown, Silver-gray, Paacock "barza", Black and tan. Two of them (black and red-brown) have been determined by the B-locus, defining the Eumelanic pigmentation, and three (silver-gray, "barza", black and tan) have been determined by Agouti-locus.

**Key words:** autohtonous goat breeds, color of coat

## INTRODUCTION

The color of the goat's coat is an important element of their exterior, and is often a defining sign. There is an extraordinary variety in the coloring of the coat in goat breeds in the world.

This problem has been of interest and in the past many authors have tried to systematize the different colors and look for the genetic condition in some of them (Asdell et al., 1928; Adalsteinsson et al., 1994; Berge, 1966; Eidregevic, 1941; Lauvergne, 1985, Lauvergne et al., 1987; Lush, 1926). In addition to a purely exterior feature, the color of the coat is important for thermoregulation in goats (Kant et al., 1985).

The hair coloration of goats is determined by two different melanin pigments – Eumelanin and Pheomelanin. Pigments are derivatives of the oxidation and polymerization of two amino acids - Tyrosine and Tryptophan. They are synthesized by the melanocytes in the hair bulb and distributed into the fiber. In the absence of melanin grains, there is no pigment in the fiber, and a white color appears. Melanin pigment Eumelanin causes black or brown coloration of the coat. Like brown, it can be dark (deep) brown or light brown.

With this type of pigmentation, the animal is always fully colored in one of the main colors – black or brown. As the dominant allele is B + in the "B" locus, and defines the black color. Several recessive alleles define the different nuances of brown (Adalsteinsson et al., 1994).

The melanin pigment Pheomelanin is responsible for the appearance of the cream, red and orange-brown color in the goat's coat. The nuances of this type of pigmentation are extremely variable, and unlike the Eumelanin type, they have individual variability. Some specimens

(Asdell et al., 1928; Adalsteinsson et al., 1994; Berge, 1966; Eidregevic, 1941; Lauvergne, 1985, Lauvergne et al., 1987; Lush, 1926).

(Kant et al. 1985).

– Eumelanin

Pheomelanin.

Eumelanin

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+ „ ”

(Adalsteinsson et al., 1994).

Pheomelanin

Eumelanin,

(Adalsteinsson et al., 1994).  
 Agouti-  
 Eumelanin Pheomelanin  
 (Adalsteinsson et al.,  
 1994).  
 ),  
 " (Balevska and Tjankov, 1971;  
 Kadiyski, 1958).  
 Solomonov et al. (1984)

- may have a darker red background, pale creamy areas.

- This hinders the exact identification of pheomelanine pigmentation. This type of pigmentation can range from very dark to very light. As in the extremely light tones, the coloration can be very pale cream to almost white. To dark extremes, it can go wrong with the brown tones of Eumelanin pigmentation.

- Generally, in pheomelanine pigmentation, the colors of the hair cover have a reddish tinge. This contrasts with the eumelanin pigmentation, where the red hues are less pronounced when the brown color of the hair is pronounced (Adalsteinsson et al., 1994).

- One of the most important locus controllers in goats is Agouti-locus, which controls the distribution of Eumelanin and Pheomelanin in the coat (Adalsteinsson et al., 1994). In order to determine the color of the goat's hair cover, the body distribution of the areas determined by the two types of melanin pigmentation should be considered. The classification of the basic colors of the coat depends on the specific pigmentation variants of the different parts of their body. The appearance of depigmentation zones on the goat's body (white spotted) could mask certain types of colorations.

- In local goat breeds in Bulgaria systemic classification of the colors of coat has not been performed until now. Most authors studied the local goats in Bulgaria to define the color of the coat as "different color variants" (Balevska and Tjankov, 1971; Kadiyski, 1958). Various flocks can be found both monochromatic and colorful goats with different nuances, but according to Solomonov et al. (1984) this variety can be reduced to three basic colors: black, brown and gray-white.

- It is only in recent years, with the start of a systemic breeding activity with

(Vuchkov et al., 2011; Vuchkov and Dimov, 2012).

the local breeds of Kalofer longhaired and Bulgarian screw-horned longhaired goat, a detailed determination of the shades of the coat (Vuchkov et al., 2011; Vuchkov and Dimov, 2012).

The lack of classification of the types of the color of coat in the local goat breeds – Kalofer longhaired and Bulgarian screw-horned longhaired goat necessitates to study and describe in detail the different variants of the coloring of their hair cover.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

For the needs of the survey, the existing population of the Bulgarian, longhaired goat, was monitored in the natural distribution area – settlements in the mountainous regions of Southwest Bulgaria (the slopes of Southern Pirin, Ograzhden, Malashevka Mountain). The population of the Kalofer long-haired goat grown in the area of Southwestern Bulgaria was also surveyed. There were 5 flocks of Bulgarian screw-horned goats in the Blagoevgrad region, located in the following villages – Kresna, Karnalovo village of Drenovo, Petrich, Hursovo municipality Sandanski, Ploshki village, Sandanski.

A total of 45 female and 15 male specimens (maturated) have been examined. Similarly, 45 females and 15 males were selected from 5 herds from Kalofer long-haired goats in the region of Bansko, Simitli, Vlahi, Kresna, Dolna Gradeshnitsa village, Kresna.

A detailed description of the type of coat pigmentation of each specimen of the study was noted, showing depigmentation (white spots) in the cases where it was expressed. The selected specimens from a representative sample of the two breeds embodying the full variety of coloration of their coat.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the study conducted in the populations of the two autochthonous goat breeds (Kalofer longhaired and Bulgarian screw-horned longhaired goat) grown in Southwest Bulgaria, several basic colors can be differentiated.

Black pigmented coat. The hair cover is even, deep black, with no lightening areas on the body. It is found in both autochthonous breeds (Figure 1).

Using the Adalsteinsson et al., (1994) Goat Classification, we have typically eumelanic pigmentation. In some specimens, red hues can be observed at the top of the hair, which is caused by the influence of environmental factors (sun, wind, moisture) that dry and damage the fiber to its end.

This should not be confused with other shades where brownish red areas are observed on a black background, as is the so-called black and tan color. With the age of wholly black specimens, gray fibers along the dorsal line are also observed, especially in the croup area.

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Adalsteinsson et al.  
(1994),  
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" (black and tan). "



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(1)

(2)

**Fig. 1. Black pigmented coat of Bulgarian screw-horned longhaired (1) and Kalofer longhaired (2) goats**

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 ” ”  
 ” ”  
 ( 2).  
 ” ”

As a variation of the pure black color in the two local breeds, called "cherno-mustavi" That it is known among the local people in region of South West Bulgaria. In this version, small white spots are observed in the form of "splashes" only in the area of the muzzle and ears. This specific pigmentation can also be observed in the "black and tan" color of coat.

Red-brown pigmented coat. The color of this type of pigmentation ranges from dark chocolate brown to very light-brown. Typical of this color is that the mucous membranes of the lips, nose and eyelids are deeply tanned brown. There is no black pigment (Figure 2). It occurs in both autochthonous breeds, and in some areas the local people calls goats with such "plavi". It is necessary to note that the kids are born brown-reddish and subsequently the hairs on the body can lighten.



(1) (2)  
**Fig. 2. Red-brown pigmented coat of Bulgarian screw-horned longhaired (1) and Kalofer longhaired (2) goats**

„brown” Adalsteinsson et al. (1994).

Dark and intense, the red-brown pigment remains on the fur on the head and lower limbs. The reddish-brown pigmentation of the hair cover in the two local breeds in our country corresponds to the eumelanin-type, pigmentation marked like "brown" by Adalsteinsson et al. (1994).

Agouti – „striped grey”  
 Adalsteinsson et al. (1994).  
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Silver-gray pigmented coat. The hair cover consists of uniformly distributed white and black fibers, giving a uniform silver gray hue to this type of color. May vary from light to dark depending on the ratio of white and black fibers in the coat. There is lightening around the eyes to the muzzle, the inner part of the ears and the back of the limbs (Figure 3). It occurs widely in both autochthonous breeds. It corresponds to a type of pigmentation determined by Agouti – locus, and denoted as "striped gray" by Adalsteinsson et al. (1994). In this type of color (silver-gray), reddish-brown areas should not be seen on the head, feet, or body. The presence of these is a sign of a combination of different types of stains caused by the "Agouti-locus" and different genetic interactions.



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(1)

(2)

**Fig. 3. Silver gray pigmentation of Bulgarian screw-horned longhaired (1) and Kalofer longhaired (2) goats**

Pigmentation “barza” type. Extremely specific color that the local population defines with the name "barza".

The combination of zonal bright coloration of the front half of the body, the back is dark – black, forming a "dark/black cloak" on the croup and the loin. Because of the long coat of the two





„black and tan”,  
Agouti- . Adalsteinsson et al. (1994)

: 1. Lightbelly –

. 2. Swiss markings –

. 3. Lateral stripes –

4. Red cheek –

„black and tan”.

Black and tan (Cherno-garest in Bulgarian) pigmented coat. A characteristic of hair pigmentation in goats in which the black background of the body has specific localized spots with a lighter brownish color. The specific locations of the light spots are on the face of the head, the inside of the ears, the lower parts of extremities, the abdomen and the tail. Light stains may vary in color from deep tall brown to off-white. The local people call this type of color with the common name "cherno-garest" goats (Figure 6).

This coloring is mainly found in the Bulgarian screw-horned longhaired goat. It is extremely rare in the population of the Kalofer long-haired goat, and is often seen as a sign of crossing with other breeds. Some authors, depending on the size and distribution of the light spots on the body, define this coloring as "black and tan," as determined by Agouti-locus. Adalsteinsson et al. (1994) consider this coloration as four distinct types: 1. Lightbelly – it is expressed in a light abdomen, a light lower part of the tail, a light back of the limbs, in the black pigmented front. 2. Swiss markings - it is expressed in a black belly, bright longitudinal strips through the eyes, a bright inner part of the ears, completely lightened lower limbs, a light lower part of the tail. 3. Lateral stripes - it is expressed in a light abdomen, a light lower limb, light longitudinal lines on the face, a bright inner part of the ears. 4. Red cheek - it is expressed in bright spots only on the cheeks of the head, the abdomen and the limbs are black. There are no typical clear expressed variants for the Bulgarian screw-horned longhaired goat. Different combinations of individual elements of the quoted colors are observed, which necessitates their unification in one type of "black and tan".



. 6.

**Fig. 6. Variation of black and tan (garesto in Bulgarian) coat pigmentation of Bulgarian screw-horned longhaired goats**

Agouti-

Intermediate forms of pigmentation of the coat. Genetic interactions under the influence of Agouti-locus determine an extremely varied pigmentation, combining different elements of the basic colors. There are, therefore, a number of forms of pigmentation of the coat of autochthonous goats, combining elements of the basic types of shades, and their determination is significantly hampered. This variety of intermediate forms are expressed of a considerable extent of the population of the Bulgarian screw-horned longhaired goat.

Depigmentation zones (white spotted) on the coat. In addition to the underlying pigments described in fully pigmented animals, the populations of the two autochthonous goat breeds also include specimens with areas of depigmentation on the hair covering, which are expressed in white spots on the body. They may vary in size - from small spots on the limbs or forehead to almost entirely depigmented specimens with small pigmented areas (usually on the head) (Figure 7). Pure white specimens with no pigment are the exception for both breeds. With almost totally depigmented specimens, it is difficult to determine the type of body coloration as the basic features of the

corresponding types of shades can be masked by the depigmented areas.



7.

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(1)

(2)

**Fig. 7. Areas of depigmentation (white spots) on the hair cover of Bulgarian screw-horned longhaired (1) and Kalofer longhaired (2) goats**

### CONCLUSIONS

Based on the research conducted on the hair coverings of specimens from the populations of the Kalofer longhaired and Bulgarian screw-horned longhaired goat grown in Southwestern Bulgaria, 5 basic colors can be differentiated - black, red-brown, silver-gray, "barza" type and Black and tan.

"Black and tan" are characteristic for the Bulgarian screw-horned longhaired goat and are considered unusual for the Kalofer long-haired goat.

In the cases of both autochthonous goat breeds there was a zone of depigmentation (white spottedness), expressed in varying degrees.

Totally white specimens in the two autochthonous breeds are an exception.

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