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*Corresponding author: Dupe Olufunke Ogunbosoye, Department of Animal Production, Fisheries and Aquaculture, Kwara State University, Malete, Nigeria
E-mails: dupe.ogunbosoye@kwasu.edu.ng, olufunflory@gmail.com

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Pedro González-Redondo, University of Seville, Spain

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ANIMAL HUSBANDRY & VETERINARY SCIENCE | RESEARCH ARTICLE

Blood profiles of West African dwarf (WAD) growing bucks fed varying levels of shea nut cake based rations in Nigeria

Dupe Olufunke Ogunbosoye^{1*}, Abayomi Akinfemi² and David Aderemi Ajayi³

Abstract: Shea nut cake (SNC) is one of the agro-industrial by-products that could be used as ruminants feed. A total of 12 West African dwarf young bucks were used in a completely randomized design for an 84-day study to evaluate the blood profiles of goats fed diets of 0 % (T1), 10% (T2) and 20% (T3)SNC. The results revealed that there were slight significant differences in few of the blood parameters measured among the treatments. The haemoglobin, packed cell volume (PCV) and red blood cell ranged from 8.33–9.88 g/dl, 20.95–22.05% and $6.51-7.06 \times 10^6/l$ respectively. The concentrations of mean corpuscular volume (21.83–22.17 fl), mean corpuscular haemoglobin (7.58–8.50pg) and mean corpuscular haemoglobin concentration (33.00–34.73%) varied significantly ($p < 0.05$), white blood cell varied from 8.46 to 12.75 μ l and lymphocytes (%) ranged from 51.27 to 53.78. For serum biochemistry, values obtained for aspartate aminotransferase and total protein were similar. Cholesterol, alanine amino transferase and albumin varied significantly among the treatment

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dr Dupe O. Ogunbosoye: I had researched into the solving feed problems that have become perennial issue to ruminant production in Nigeria and tropical countries in general. Alternative feed resources utilization has been discovered to be one of the ways to ameliorate feed scarcity often encountered during lean period. Most of my publications in this area have been published in most of the peer review journals.

Dr Abayomi Akinfemi: My field of research interest is ruminant nutrition and main research focus is treatment of agricultural wastes and by-products to value-added-ruminant feed. Agricultural wastes and by-products such as maize cobs, Sorghum straw and Sorghum threshed tops constitute environmental problems in Nigeria. My research work has been published in various journals.

Dr David A. Ajayi Exploration of alternative feed resources as a means of sustainable conservation of indigenous animal species with strong biases for small ruminants is the focus of my research activities with publications in peer reviewed journals and conference proceedings.

PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

The inclusion of shea nut cake (SNC) in the diets of ruminants could be one of the strategies to ameliorate the dry season feeding problem in Nigeria. SNC is an agro-industrial by-product obtained after shea butter extraction. It is a colossal waste and constituting health problem to community where the industry is located because of its abundance. The results of the blood profile of the experimental animals indicated its safe consumption up to the 20% inclusion level.

groups. Since the parameters measured were within the normal range for goats' blood profile, hence, SNC does not have any deleterious effect on the health of the animals. It was concluded that SNC could be incorporated into the diet of goats up to 20% without posing health hazard on the animals.

Subjects: Agriculture & Environmental Sciences; Plant & Animal Ecology; Food Additives & Ingredients

Keywords: blood; haematology; serum; shea nut cake; West African dwarf (WAD) goats

1. Introduction

Goats play an important socio-economic role in the rural areas where most of the peasant farmers live (Anaeto, Tayo, Chioma, Ajao, & Peters, 2009) and form an integral part of the cultural life and system of Nigeria's peasantry (Ajala, 2004). The role played by ruminants in improving the low animal protein intake by Nigerian and other developing countries cannot be over emphasized. Notwithstanding the importance of goats, its production is still hindered as a result of shortage of feed both in quantity and quality at some seasons of the year. Quality forage, which could have alleviated the problem of feed scarcity, declines during rainy season and convectional feedstuff such as grains and oil seeds which are available during this period are very expensive to be used as feed for ruminants.

The challenges of availability and affordability of feeds have therefore push scientists to find alternative sources of feeds that are sustainable and are not consumed by human beings. Shea nut cake (SNC), which is an oilseed by-product, has been identified as one of such alternatives. Increasing world demand for shea butter as a cocoa butter substitute, as well as for cosmetics (Hall, Aebischer, Tomlinson, Osei-Amaning, & Hindle, 1996; Hatskevich, Jenicek, & Antwi Darkwah, 2011) has increased the production of SNC as the by-product in sub-Saharan Africa. In Nigeria, the livestock feed industry is heavily dependent on, among others, oilseed resources such as groundnut cake, soybean cake, cotton seed cake and palm kernel meal (RMRDC, 2003).

Shea butter tree, *Vitellaria paradoxa* is one of the key agro forestry species in Africa. It covers a 500–700-km wide and 5000-km long stretch of African savanna from Senegal to Ethiopia and Uganda (Umali & Nikiema, 2002). In Nigeria, the major area of occurrence is the Guinea and Sudan savanna zones (Keay, 1989). On the global scale, the species has made remarkable contributions in the food and cosmetic industries because of its seed fat extract known as shea butter (Boffa, Yameogo, Nikiema, & Taonda, 1996). Locally, shea butter tree is invaluable in traditional medicine, provision of fuel wood and in the production of soap, candle and pomade (Awoleye, 1995). Its dietary importance at the local level is derived from the fat extract which is used for cooking as well as the fruit pulp which is consumed by humans and livestock (ICRAF, 2000). The protein-rich caterpillars of *Cirina butyrospermi* associated with the species are commonly found as a good delicacy among the Yoruba and Nupe (Ande, 2004) as well as the Tiv ethnic groups in Nigeria (Ugese, Ojo, & Bello, 2005). Although the seed fat extract of shea seed has helped to bring the crop to global limelight, not much seems to be known of the seed cake, a by-product of fat extraction being utilized by ruminants in Nigeria. The upsurge in the use of oilseeds and grains such as soybean, maize and wheat for biofuel is already taking its toll on global food security (Spore, 2008). It has therefore become imperative to explore other alternatives for the feed industry to alleviate the current poor food supply situation. Exploring the nutritional content of SNC in Nigeria, the world's leading producer of shea nuts (Umali & Nikiema, 2002; Umobong, 2006) and its utilization by ruminant animals will be a step in the right direction.

Nutritional studies should not be only focusing on the performance and intake by the said animals, as the effect of such feed on blood constituents of livestock is also very germane. Jackson and Cockcroft (2002) stated that clinical examination is necessary to identify the clinical

abnormalities that are present and the risk factors that determine the occurrence of the disease in the individual or population. He went further to say that without a proficient clinical examination and an accurate diagnosis it is unlikely that the control, prognosis and welfare of animals will be optimized. Aderinboye, Onwuka, Aina, and Oduguwa (2009) further affirmed that blood examination is a good way of assessing the health status of animals as it plays a vital role in the physiological, nutritional and pathological status of animals. According to Animashaun, Omoikhoje, and Bamgbose (2006) and Ojebiyi et al. (2007), the use of haematological studies is very important in considering the health status of animals used in various feed trials. Olorode and Longe (1999) have reiterated that nutrition interferes with the metabolites and other constituents found in the blood. Haematology and serum biochemistry facilitates diagnosis of a disease condition enhances prognosis and assessment of efficacy of therapy and toxicity of drugs and substances (Fajemisin & Adeleye, 2005). However, Benjamin (1981) also mentioned that laboratory study and tests on blood profile were important tools to detect any deviation from normal animal or human body.

However, the sourcing for safe, readily and locally available feed ingredients to enhance food production prompted this research which aimed at assessing the impact of SNC diets on the blood profiles of West African dwarf goats.

2. Materials and methods

2.1. Site of the study

The experiment was conducted at the goat unit of Teaching and Research Farm of the College of Agriculture, Kwara State University, Malete, Nigeria.

2.2. Experimental design and diets

Twelve (12) growing West African dwarf male goats weighing between 7 and 11 kg, obtained from a local market were allotted into three treatments in a completely randomized design with four animals per treatment. The diets were compounded to include SNC at 0% (T1), 10% (T2), and 20% (T3) (Table 1). Other ingredients in the diets were corn bran, cassava peel, cowpea husk and wheat bran. SNC was obtained from a local shea butter processing factory in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Kwara State, Nigeria. The SNC was sun dried for 4 days, ground into smaller particles before mixing with other feedstuffs.

2.3. Management of animals

The goats were treated against ecto- and endo-parasite with Ivomec injection, anthelmintic drug (Albendazole) and oxytetracycline (broad spectrum antibiotics). The animals were weighed and allotted to different diets. Water was given *ad libitum* daily. The diets were offered to the animals daily at 8.00 and 16.00 hrs. During the 84-day experimental period, quantities of feeds offered and that refused were measured daily to compute feed intake while weight changes of the goats were recorded weekly.

Table 1. Composition of experimental diets

Ingredients (%)	Diets		
	T1 (Control, 0% SNC)	T2 (10% SNC)	T3 (20% SNC)
Shea nut cake (SNC)	0	10.0	20.0
Cassava peels	25	22.5	20.0
Corn bran	25	22.5	20.0
Cowpea husk	25	22.5	20.0
Wheat bran	25	22.5	20.0
Total	100	100	100

2.4. Haematological and serum analysis

Blood samples were collected from each goat by the jugular venipuncture at the end of the feeding trial. The animals were bled in the morning prior to feeding and average of 5 ml blood was collected from each goat. The blood samples were transferred immediately into sterile sampled bottles containing ethylene diamine-tetra-acetic acid which was used for the haematological analysis and another 5 ml into the non-heparinised bottle for serum analysis. Haematological analysis of packed cell volume (PCV), haemoglobin (Hb), red blood cell (RBC), the mean corpuscular volume (MCV), mean corpuscular haemoglobin concentration (MCHC), total white blood cell (WBC) and the differential counts were measured as described by Jain (1986) and various serum biochemistry such as total protein (TP), albumin serum cholesterol, aspartate aminotransferase (AST), alanine amino transferase (ALT) were determined using methods of Jain (1986).

2.5. Statistical analysis

Data obtained were subjected to analysis of variance to determine the significant of treatment effects following the methods described by SAS (2010). Significant differences between means were compared using the Duncan New Multiple Range test of the same package at 5% level of probability.

3. Results and discussion

Table 2 gives the chemical composition of the experimental diets prepared from different levels of SNC inclusion. Crude protein (CP) concentration of the formulated diets decreased as the SNC level increased. However, these values were within the range of CP concentration that could be sufficient for microbial activities in the rumen because it is higher than the minimum level of 7–8% dry matter (DM) required for optimum rumen function and feed intake in ruminant livestock (Van Soest, 1994). According to Paterson, Cohran, and Klopfenstein (1996), feedstuffs with a CP content lower than 70 mg g⁻¹ DM require a supplementation of nitrogen to improve their ingestion and digestion by the ruminants. It is an indication that the formulated diets could be a good supplement to poor forage.

The haematological indices (Table 3) of goats fed experiment diets. In the present study, there were slight significant differences ($p < 0.05$) on the blood profile of the animals after the introduction of the experimental diets. The Hb content ranged from 8.30 (T2 and T3) to 9.88 g/dl (T1) among the treatment groups. This is within the normal ranges of 8.0–15.0 g/dl reported for normal blood functions by Blood, Studdert, & Gay (2007) and Daramola, Adeloye, Fatoba, and Soladoye (2005). The Hb values showed that the experimental diets were adequate for the nutritional requirements, and the test diets did not pose any danger to the animals. The aim of estimating the Hb content is to assess the oxygen carrying capacity of

Table 2. Chemical composition of the experimental diets (%)

Parameters	T1 (0%)	T2 (10%)	T3 (20%)	SEM
DM	92.42 ^b	93.03 ^a	92.90 ^{ab}	0.14
CP	11.37 ^a	9.84 ^b	9.18 ^b	0.33
EE	2.03 ^b	2.79 ^a	2.19 ^b	0.09
CF	17.20 ^b	16.84 ^b	19.54 ^a	0.20
ASH	9.63 ^b	11.24 ^{ab}	12.11 ^a	0.54
NDF	30.69 ^b	48.51 ^a	48.51 ^a	0.33
ADF	21.56 ^c	41.17 ^a	32.35 ^b	0.34
ADL	12.35 ^a	8.96 ^b	9.73 ^b	0.47

a,b,c = means within the same row with different superscripts are significantly different ($P < 0.05$).

SEM = Standard error of mean, DM = Dry matter, CP = Crude protein, EE = Ether extract, CF = Crude fibre, NDF = Neutral detergent fibre, ADF = Acid detergent fibre, ADL = Acid detergent lignin.

Table 3. Haematological parameters of experimental animals fed graded level of SNC

Parameters	T1 (0%)	T2 (10%)	T3 (20%)	SEM
Haemoglobin (g/dl)	8.33	8.33	9.88	1.41
PVC (%)	20.59	22.05	21.97	0.53
RBC ($\times 10^6/\mu\text{l}$)	6.51 ^b	7.06 ^a	6.82 ^b	0.73
WBC ($\times 10^9/\text{l}$)	8.46 ^b	12.75 ^a	9.29 ^b	1.56
MCV (fl)	21.83	22.17	22.12	0.77
MCH (pg)	7.58	8.23	8.50	0.39
MCHC (%)	33.00 ^b	34.73 ^a	33.90 ^b	1.93
Lymphocytes (%)	51.27	51.85	53.78	1.27

Note: a,b,c = means within the same row with different superscripts are significantly different ($p < 0.05$), SEM: standard error of mean; PVC: packed cell volume; RBC: red blood cell; MCV: mean corpuscular volume (fl); MCH: mean corpuscular haemoglobin, MCHC: mean corpuscular haemoglobin concentration.

the goat circulatory system. Having a low oxygen carrying capacity indicates that such animal can easily succumb to stress factors that may lead to respiratory problems, while those with high level of Hb content can be regarded as having high level of oxygen capacity and therefore, likely to withstand respiratory stress (Oni et al., 2012). PCV concentrations were not significantly different ($p > 0.05$) among the treatment groups. The PCV is the measure of the ratio of the volume occupied by the RBCs to the volume of the whole blood in a sample of capillary or arterial blood. The PCV ranged between 20.50% and 22.05%. These were however, within the value reported elsewhere (Daramola et al., 2005; Swati & Varsha, 2014). The results of the analysis showed that PCV values were within the normal range for goat (Jain, 1993). The low PCV values in the study could be as a result of the breed and locations at which the animals were sourced from Jackson and Cockroft (2002) and Opara, Udevi, and Okoli (2010). RBC counts ranged from 6.82–7.06 $\times 10^6/\mu\text{l}$. This is within the normal range of 5–10 $\times 10^6/\mu\text{l}$ (Blood et al., 2007; Daramola et al., 2005). Since it is the RBCs that carry the respiratory pigments (Hb), a decrease in the quantity of the circulating RBC implies a decrease in the quantity of Hb and thus decreases in the oxygen carrying capacity of the animal. RBC among treatment effects was not significantly ($p > 0.05$) difference between diets T1 (6.51 $\times 10^6/\mu\text{l}$) and T3 (6.82 $\times 10^6/\mu\text{l}$) but diet T2 (7.06 $\times 10^6/\mu\text{l}$) was significantly ($p < 0.05$) higher than diets T1 and T3. The highest RBC (numerically but not significant statistically) recorded in diet T2 corresponded with the high values of PCV concentration observed in diets T2 and T3, suggesting their superiority in terms of their capability of supporting high oxygen carrying capacity of the blood and absence of anaemia-related diseases which might be due to iron deficiency. The values of RBC were comparable to the reported range of 7.38–13.62 $\times 10^{12}/\text{l}$ for West African goat by Aina and Akinsoyinu (1996). It also falls within the range reported by Aruwayo et al. (2011). The WBC plays a prominent role in disease resistance especially with respect to the generation of antibodies. WBC was significantly ($p < 0.05$) highest in diet T2 (12.75 $\times 10^6/\mu\text{l}$) and lowest in diet T1 and T3 (8.46–9.29 $\times 10^6/\mu\text{l}$ respectively). The WBC counts were higher than the value (5 $\times 10^6/\text{dl}$ to 11 $\times 10^6/\text{dl}$) reported by Scott, Ketheesan, and Summers (2006) for sheep but within the level reported for WAD goats (Daramola et al., 2005). This implies that goats on the diets remained clinically healthy as indicated by researchers (Konlan, Karikari, & Ansah, 2012) and that the animals will be able to fight against any foreign body in the circulatory system. The foreign bodies are likely to be pathogens that have built up due to compositional changes that occurred during the slow drying process which would have allowed build-up of microorganisms which may be pathogenic in nature.

The MCV and MCH values obtained in this study did not vary significantly ($p > 0.05$) among the animals fed experimental diets. The values ranged between 21.83 and 22.18 fl and 7.58–8.50 pg,

respectively. The MCV are indications of macrocytic (regenerative) anaemia emanating from increased destruction and subsequent enhanced erythropoiesis in the liver, spleen and kidneys (Jain, 1986). The mean corpuscular volume (MCV) and the higher MCH values recorded in the present study compared well with the values reported elsewhere (Mitruka & Rawnsley, 1977). The MCHC of animals fed T2 and T3 diets were not significantly ($p > 0.05$) different from the value of control group. The concentrations obtained across the treatments for MCHC were within the 30.0–34.4% reported (Mitruka & Rawnsley, 1977) for clinically healthy animal. The MCHC values have been reported to be the most accurate and absolute values that indicate anaemic condition in animals (Ogbuewu, Uchegbu, Okoli, & Iloeje, 2010; Thompson, 2006). Lymphocytes use the blood to travel round the body but can wander freely in other types of tissues using the lymphatic channels. The lymphocytes also known to play key roles in the immune defence system as a function of the immune status. An increase in lymphocytes number is in response to viral, parasitic and bacterial infection of the animal's body (Coles, 1980). The concentrations of lymphocytes were not significantly different but the concentration in the group of animals fed SNC at 20% was the highest. However, the values reported in this study were at variance with the values reported elsewhere (Tambuwal, Agale, & Bangana, 2002) but fell between the values (49–53%) reported by Belewu and Ojo-Alokomaro (2007) for normal blood profile of WAD goats.

Table 4 shows the serum biochemical parameters of WAD goats fed experimental diets. Serum parameters have been reported to be important in the proper maintenance of the osmotic pressure between the circulating fluid and the fluid in the tissue space so that the exchange of materials between the blood and cell could be facilitated (Isidahomen, Njidda, & Olatunji, 2012). Ikhimioya and Imasuen (2007) also found that serum proteins are important in osmotic regulation, immunity and transport of several substances in the body. Harper et al. (1971) also reported that serum biochemical analysis is used to evaluate the level of heart attack, liver damage and to estimate protein quality and amino acid requirements in animals. The concentrations for serum transaminases (ALT and AST) in the blood are reliable tests for liver damage. Therefore, the values obtained for AST, which is an indication of normal functioning of the liver, were not significantly ($p > 0.05$) different among the groups of animals fed the experimental diets. The concentrations of ALT varied significantly ranging from 9.90 to 12.95 u/l with T2 having the highest concentration. Nonetheless, the values were within the range of the normal animal blood indices (Olafadehan, 2011). This shows that the diets supported the health status of the animals. The value obtained for TPs of all the treatments were not significantly ($p > 0.05$) different from each other. There was no significant difference in the value of cholesterol among the animals under treatments. The cholesterol levels were normal, indicating that the meat from the experimental animals was safe, and would not lead to cholesterol elevation in consumers. Esonu et al. (2001) and Igwebuikwe, Anugwa, Raji, Ehiobu, and Ikurior (2008) reported that cholesterol in the serum is associated with the quantity and quality of protein supplied in the diet. It is therefore indicated that the protein provided by the SNC combined was enough and of good quality to meet the nutritional needs of the animals. The albumin range of 26.33–32.54 g/l was similar to 29.30–32.70 g/l reported by Babayemi, Bamikole, and Odunguwa (2003) and Oloche, Ayoade, and Oluremi (2015). Albumin which is a

Table 4. Blood serum chemistry of West African dwarf goats fed various levels of SNC diets

Parameters	T1 (0%)	T2 (10%)	T3 (20%)	SEM
AST u/l	55.17	59.95	60.38	1.45
ALT u/l	9.90 ^b	12.95 ^a	11.95 ^a	0.34
TP g/dl	59.93	59.95	60.38	1.45
Cholesterol (mg/dl)	0.69 ^b	1.72 ^a	0.60 ^b	0.04
Albumin g/dl	26.33 ^b	30.47 ^{ab}	32.54 ^a	0.19

Note: a,b,c = means with different superscripts on the same row are significantly different ($p < 0.05$), SEM: standard error of mean; AST: aspartate aminotransferase; ALT: alanine amino transferase; TP: total protein.

very good indicator of health was observed to be normal in this present study. In the current study, the experimental goats did not show clinical signs of ill health or of any toxicity, such as head pressing, generalized depression, grinding teeth, foaming at the mouth and twitching and jerking (Odenyo, Osuji, Karanfil, & Adinew, 1997).

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, addition of the SNC up to 20% will not pose any health problem to the animals since the parameters measured in the blood of the animals under the study conditions, were within normal blood range for a healthy animal. This therefore suggests SNC to be a good feedstuff for ruminant animals to mitigate dry season feed shortage due to its abundant and availability all the year round.

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Author details

Dupe Olufunke Ogunbosoye¹

E-mail: dupe.ogunbosoye@kwasu.edu.ng

ORCID ID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-9349-1536>

Abayomi Akinfemi²

E-mail: akinfemiabayomi@gmail.com

David Aderemi Ajayi³

E-mail: rhemijayi@gmail.com

Pedro González-Redondo Reviewing Editor

¹ Department of Animal Production, Fisheries and Aquaculture, Kwara State University, Malete, Nigeria.

² Department of Agricultural Technology, Yaba College of Technology, Yaba Lagos, Nigeria.

³ Department of Animal Genetic Resources, National Centre for Genetic Resources and Biotechnology, Moor Plantation, Ibadan, Nigeria.

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