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The productive life of 32 rabbit does was measured for 7 mo. Half of them were allocated in individual cages and other half in a mixed housing system (collective cages during pregnancy and late lactation and individual cages from partum to 11 or 18 d post-partum). Productive performances were not affected by housing system, but half of rabbit does allocated in mixed housing group shown body injuries at weaning (28 d) and litter mortality was higher after grouping in collective cages related to individual cages (10 vs. 0.8%), and in collective cages was higher for younger kits (10 vs. 6.2%), especially when 11 d old litters were mixed with 18 d old litters (23 vs. 1.8%).

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING OF RABBIT DOES IN GROUP HOUSING SYSTEM

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The behaviour of 25 rabbit does in collective systems was evaluated and handling time compared with 25 rabbit does allocated in individual cages along three parturitions. The frequency of different behaviours of does (nest approach, feeding and aggression) within 30 min after regrouping at 18 d post-partum, the location of kits after 30 min and 24 h of regrouping and handling parameters (time for weaning and palpation and frequency of cage cleaning) were evaluated. The does from second and third parturition had higher frequencies of the behaviour of feeding, aggressive and escape that primiparous does. Dominant females had a higher frequency of feeding, aggressive and escape behaviours ($P < 0.05$). After 24 h most of kits were located outside of nest (16%) or into others nest (64%). The time for does palpation was greater in collective pens (64%) but individual cages demanded more cleanings (113%).

PHYSIOLOGICAL RESPONSE TO ACUTE STRESS IN RABBITS FED WITH ENRICHED DIETS WITH N-3 POLYUNSATURATED FATTY ACIDS

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A total of 700 kits were randomly distributed in flat-deck group cages avoiding litter effect. They were fed 2 isofibrous, isoenergetic and isoproteic diets formulated with 2 different sources of fat: mixed fat (control group, C, n=350) and a supplement of salmon oil rich in polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFAs) n-3 (PUFA group, P, n=350). After a fattening period of 34 d, growth was lower in P kits but they tended to a better conversion ratio and feed efficiency. Before slaughter, 60 rabbits (30 C and 30 P) were randomly selected to simulate acute stress of transport, using 15 animals from each group by means an acute heat stress trial performed in an isolated thermal chamber (40°C for 3 h). Hot carcass weight was lower in P kits, but biometric parameters and carcass yield was similar between groups. Heat stress increased the haematocrit of P rabbits. Following the same pattern, liver colour of the stressed kits had a higher value for brightness, saturation and hue than unstressed kits. In heat stressed animals, muscle pH was lower at slaughter but after 24 h post-mortem, it was similar between stressed and unstressed kits. Regarding muscle and carcass colour, there was no significant effect of diet or stress, but there was an effect with time *post-mortem*.

EFFECT OF ACTUAL CLIMATE CHANGE IN ENVIRONMENTAL TEMPERATURE ON GROWTH AND REPRODUCTIVE TRAITS OF TWO LINES OF RABBITS IN EGYPT

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The growth traits (individual body weight at weaning (PS) and at slaughter (PS)) and litter size traits (total born (NT), number weaned (ND), number marketed (NS)) were studied in two lines of rabbit (Alexandria (ALEX) and V) in the winter and summer in Egypt in 2 consecutive years. V Line is a maternal line and ALEX Alexandria line is formed as a synthetic paternal line. Our purpose was to obtain indications about the genetic variation between the 2 lines that formed the experiment in their adapting to production conditions of rabbit in Egypt. Total of 262 does (140 in winter and 122 in