88. Cut-and-carry feeding of indigenous grass in Indonesian sheep production: effect of amount of grass offered and wilting on intake and yield of compost

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On small holdings in West Java, indigenous grass, cut-and-carried from road sides, is the main food for sheep and flocks (ca five head) are permanently housed on slats over composting pits. Before offering at 50 to 60 g dry matter (DM) per kg live weight (M) daily, grass may be wilted for up to 24 h in baskets or hessian sacks. During this period the grass heats up. This could reduce palatability and intake. Changes in grass intake may also alter the quantities of compost produced from excreta and refusals. In a 2 x 2 factorial trial, with nine replicates, indigenous grasses, dominated by *Axonopus compressus*, were offered at 30 or 60 g DM per kg M per day either freshly cut (F) (175 g DM per kg M) or 24-h basket-wilted (W) (164 g DM per kg M). The 48-month-old Javanese thin-dairy ewes were individually penned for 48 days and offered the grass, together with water and salt licks. Over three 10-day periods, faeces, urine and food refusals were collected from three rams per diet and composted for 50 days. During the 24-h wilting period grass reheated from 25°C to 32°C. Raising grass offer rate significantly reduced intake, but wilting which had no influence at the lower offer rate, significantly reduced intake at the higher offer rate (offer rate 30: 22.3 (F), 21.6 (W); offer rate 60: 30.1 (F), 27.8 (W) (s.e. 0.087) g DM per kg M per day). Doubling the offer rate approximately doubled the compost yields (offer rate 30: 0.308 (F), 0.388 (W); offer rate 60: 0.704 (F), 0.662 (W) (kg DM per ram per day)). It is concluded that 24 h wilting as in the present experiment reduces grass intake, but does not affect compost output. Increasing the amount of grass offered from 30 to 60 g DM per kg per day increases intake and almost doubles compost output.