Comparative Study on Milk Compositions of Cattle, Sheep and Goats in Nigeria

Aduli Enoch Othniel MALAU-ADULI1\* AND Yakubu Rade ANLADE2

1. National Animal Production Research Institute, Ahmadu Bello University, PMB 1096 Zaria, Nigeria

2. Department of Animal Science, Ahmadu Bello University, PMB 1044 Zaria, Nigeria

\*Corresponding Author's Present address: Laboratory of Animal Breeding and Reproduction,

National Agricultural Research Centre for Western Region,

60 Yoshinaga, Kawai, Oda, Shimane 694-0013 JAPAN

E-mail: <u>aduli40@yahoo.co.uk</u>, <u>aduli@affrc.go.jp</u>

Tel: +81-90-6837-1953, +81-854-82-1285

Fax: +81-854-82-2280

# RUNNING TITLE: MILK COMPOSITION OF CATTLE, SHEEP AND GOATS

### Abstract

Variations in the milk composition of Nigerian cattle, sheep and goats as well as residual phenotypic correlations between the milk constituents were investigated. The study utilized Bunaji, Yankasa and Red Sokoto breeds of cattle, sheep and goats, respectively. Results indicated that sheep and goats differed significantly (P<0.05) from cattle in all constituents except protein percentage that averaged 5.43, 5.43 and 5.49%. Caprine milk contained the highest percentages of fat (5.80%), total solids (15.37%) and ash (0.77%), while bovine milk contained the least percentages of fat (0.68%) and lactose (1.84%). Overall, milk compositions of sheep and goats were very similar since they were not statistically different from each other (P>0.05). Residual phenotypic correlations between the milk constituents revealed highly significant (P<0.01) and positive relationships between total solids and solids -not-fat (0.97 and 0.98 in cattle and sheep, respectively). All other correlations were positive (ranging from 0.12 to 0.77), except between protein and total solids (-0.44) and protein and solids-not-fat (-0.64) in cattle. Multiple linear regression equations were fitted to predict the percentages of protein and fat. It was demonstrated that protein percentage could be predicted from total solids and solids -not-fat with the highest accuracy of 94, 86 and 82 % in cattle, sheep and goats, respectively. On the other hand, the accuracy of prediction of fat percentage was very low in all the species (R<sup>2</sup>=0.01, 0.03 and 0.37 in cattle, sheep and goats, respectively).

Keywords: Milk composition, Bunaji cattle, Yankasa sheep, Red Sokoto goats, correlations

### Introduction

The majority of milk consumed throughout the world is bovine milk, although in some countries, sheep and goats are commonly used. In Nigeria, the most common breeds of cattle, sheep and goats are Bunaji (White Fulani), Yankasa and Red Sokoto respectively. The Bunaji is the most widely distributed cattle breed in Nigeria. It is a typical Bos indicus with long legs, well pronounced hump, dewlap and predominantly white coat color. It has an average mature weight of about 270 - 290 Kg. A detailed description of the breed as well as its lactation characteristics and persistency has been documented (Abubakar and Buvanendran 1980, Ibeawuchi 1984). The Red Sokoto goat is found throughout the subhumid and semi-arid zones of Nigeria. It is a medium-sized breed with reddish-brown coat color with a mature average liveweight of 30 Kg kept for its milk, meat and skin. Detailed descriptions of its herd size (Gefu and Adu 1982), production (Mathewman 1980, Otchere et al. 1987), lactation (Ehoche and Buvanendran 1983) and reproductive performance (Adu et al. 1979) have been documented. The Yankasa breed of sheep is concentrated mainly in the semi -arid and subhumid zones of Nigeria but it has also been found thriving even in the subhumid zone. It is of medium body size with a pre dominantly white coat color and black patches around the eyes, muzzle and hooves. It has a mature liveweight of about 40 Kg. Detailed description of the breed, its growth and reproductive performances have been reported by Adu and Ngere (1979), Osinowo et al. (1982), Igono et al. (1982) and Taiwo et al. (1982). This study was conducted to determine variations in the milk composition of these Nigerian cattle, sheep and goats and to compute the phenotypic correlations between the milk constituents.

#### Materials and methods

The study utilized milk from Bunaji cattle, Yankasa sheep and Red Sokoto goats (35 each) that were in their first lactation at the Dairy and Small Ruminant Research Programmes of the National Animal Production Research Institute (NAPRI) Shika, Zaria. The milk samples were collected from animals grazing on natural pasture in the same Institute, during the same season, within the same year and stage of lactation. The newborn calves, lambs and kids were allowed to suckle their dams for about one week to ensure that they got all the colostrum. Thereafter, the milk samples were collected. Ehoche and Buvanendran (1983) and Malau-Aduli et al. (1996a, 1996b) have described animal management practices in NAPRI. In the laboratory, standard procedures ad opted by the Association of Official Analytical Chemists (AOAC, 1993) were followed in the determination of total solids (TS), solids -not-fat (SNF), fat (Gerber's method) and protein (Kjeldahl's method) percentages. Lactose percentage was calculated as TS - (Protein + Fat + Ash). One way analysis of variance was utilized in which species was fitted as a fixed effect in the model using the general linear model procedures (PROC GLM) of SAS (1986) to compute least squares means. Correlation coefficients between milk components were calculated using PROC CORR (SAS, 1986) and Bonferroni probabilities for tests of significance computed. PROC REG (SAS, 1986) was used in running simple linear regressions to predict protein and fat percentages.

## Results and discussion

Caprine milk contained the highest fat (5.80%), total solids (15.37%) and ash (0.77%) while ovine milk had the highest lactose (3.73%) and bovine milk had the least percentages (Table 1). Overall, the milk compositions of sheep and goats were very similar because they were not statistically different from each other (P>0.05). The fat content of the milk in this study compare favourably with the average percentage of

5.6% for the Zebu reported by O'Connor (1995), but the protein percentage was higher than the value reported for Bos taurus (3.5%) and Bos indicus (3.4%) by Webb et al. (1996). However, the protein percentages of 5.43, 5.49 and 5.43 for cattle, goat and sheep respectively, in this study agree with the values of 5.4, 5.6 and 5.9% in Finn, Lincol n and Rambouillet breeds of sheep respectively (Sakul and Boylan, 1992). The observation in Table 1 in which the milk compositions of sheep and goats were not statistically different from each other agrees with the findings of Boujenane and Lairini (1992) and Peters et al. (1992) which demonstrated that milk composition was not significantly influenced by the breed group of ewes, goats and their crosses.

Residual phenotypic correlations between the milk constituents were all positive, except those between protein and total solids (-0.44) and protein and solids-not-fat (-0.64) in cattle (Table 2). This implies that as the percentage of protein increases in bovine milk, there is a corresponding decrease in total solids (TS) and solids-not-fat (SNF). However, this relationship was not statistically significant (Table 2). This finding supports an earlier observation by Mba et al. (1975) in which the correlation between protein and SNF were not statistically significant. On the other hand, highly significant (P< 0.01) and positive correlations were observed between TS and SNF (0.97 and o.98 in cattle and sheep respectively). This indicates a very strong relationship in which there is a corresponding increase in SNF as TS increases.

Multiple linear regressions of protein and fat percentages on TS and SNF were carried out and the results portrayed in Table 3. It was evident that protein percentage could be predicted from TS and SNF with the highest accuracy of 94, 86 and 82% in cattle, sheep and goats respectively, w hereas fat percentage could not be accurately predicted. The implication is that we cannot have confidence in the predicted values of fat percentage since the R<sup>2</sup> values were 0, 0.03 and 0.37 in cattle, sheep and goats

(Table 3). This in turn infers that simple linear regression equations would be inadequate for predicting fat from TS and SNF. Perhaps other forms of complex regression procedures (e.g. stepwise regression) might be able to improve the accuracy of prediction.

### Conclusion

Species variation exists in the milk compositions of cattle, sheep and goats. Caprine milk appears to be more ideal for farmers interested in butter production since it contained the highest fat percentage. The fact that goat, sheep and cow milk contained the same or similar pe rcentages of protein implies that any of them can adequately serve as a nutritional source of protein for human consumption. Total solids and solids-not-fat are highly positively correlated in cattle and sheep, whereas protein and total solids and protein and solids-not-fat are negatively correlated. Therefore, incorporating these traits in a selection index should take into consideration these relationships for genetic progress.

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Species	Breed	Protein Fat	Total solids	Solids-no	ot-fat	Ash	Lactose*	
Cattle	Bunaji	$5.43\pm0.09^{a}$	4.82 ± 0.11 <sup>a</sup> 12.7	7 ± 0.58 <sup>a</sup>	7.95 ±	0.58 <sup>a</sup>	$0.68\pm0.02^{\text{a}}$	$1.84 \pm 0.01^{a}$
Goat	Red Sokol	to $5.49 \pm 0.14^{a}$	5.80 ± 0.14 <sup>b</sup> 15.3	$37\pm8.44^{b}$	9.57 ±	0.42 <sup>b</sup>	$0.77\pm0.03^{\text{b}}$	$3.31\pm0.12^{b}$
Sheep	Yankasa	$5.43\pm0.17^{\text{a}}$	$5.30 \pm 0.18^{b}$ 15.1	$19\pm0.69^{b}$	9.89 ± (	0.64 <sup>b</sup>	$0.73\pm0.04^{\text{b}}$	$3.73\pm0.14^{b}$

Table 1: Variations in the composition of bovine, ovine and caprine milk ( $\% \pm s.e.$ ).

Column means with different superscripts differ significantly (P<0.05) \* Lactose percentage was calculated as Total solids – (Protein + Fat + Ash)

Variables	Cattle (Bunaji)	Sheep (Yankasa)	Goats (Red Sokoto)	
Protein and Fat	0	0.17	0.25	
Total solids and Protein	-0.44	0.62	0.77	
Solids-not-fat and Protein	-0.64	0.73	0.77	
Fat and Total solids	0	0.14	0.51	
Solids-not-fat and Fat	0	0.12	0.20	
Total solids and solids-not-fa	ıt 0.97**	0.98**	0.77	
** D( 0.01)				

Table 2: Residual phenotypic correlation coefficients between milk constituents in cattle, sheep and goats

\*\* P(<0.01)

Species	Dependent variable Intercept (Y)		b <sub>1</sub>	b <sub>2</sub>	R <sup>2</sup>
Cattle	Protein	3.74	0.96	-1.33	0.94
	Fat	5.00	0	0	0.01
Sheep	Protein	5.00	-0.83	1.33	0.86
	Fat	4.50	0.17	-0.17	0.30
Goat	Protein	0.92	0.46	-0.30	0.82
	Fat	2.94	0.31	-0.20	0.37

Table 3: Multiple linear regressions of protein and fat on TS and SNF in cattle, sheep and goats