

MATERIAL AND METHOD



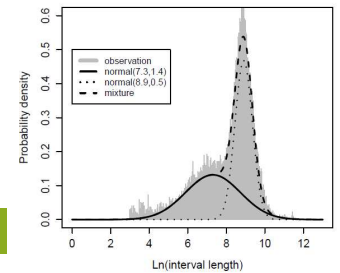
94 Romane lambs 5-28d. of age fed with an electronic self-milk feeder.

for each visit to the teat we recorded:

Lambs identification / Time start suckling / Time stop suckling / Milk quantity 4g accuracy



- 1) Structure visits to the teat into meals (meal criteria)
- 2) Define Traits describing feeding behaviour
- 3) Analyze factors influencing the traits



RESULTS

Individual feeding behaviour

- Main factors affecting individual feeding behaviour were the age and the sex of the lamb.

Nb. Visits per meal
 $\mu=1,4\pm0,7$

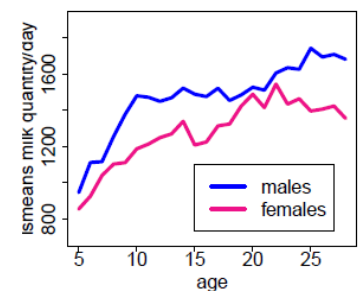
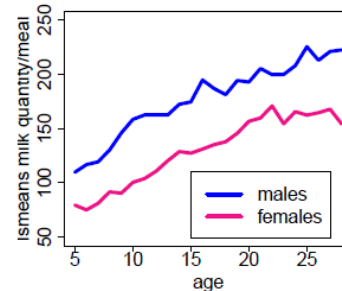
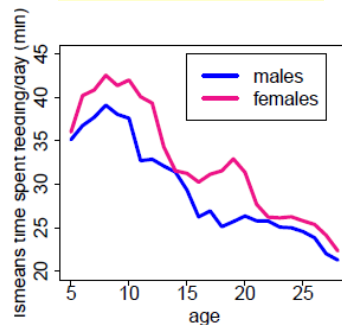
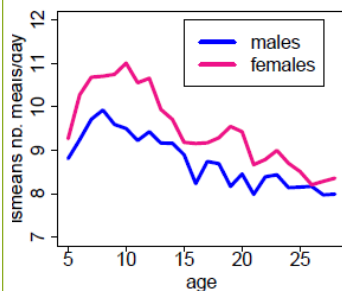
Length of meal
 $\mu=172\pm53s$

Nb. Meals per day
 $\mu=9,5\pm3$

Time spent feeding/day
 $\mu=26\pm11min$

Milk quantity per meal
 $\mu=180\pm126mL$

Milk quantity per day
 $\mu=1,7\pm0,7L$

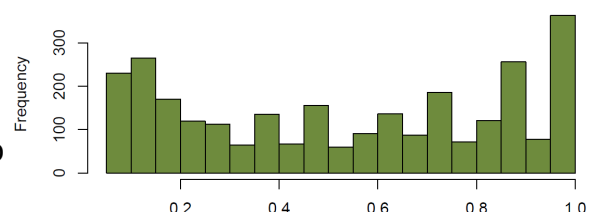


- The number of meals per day, the time spent feeding per day decreased with age while the milk quantity per meal and per day increased.
- Females made more visits to the teat per meal and more meals per day but consumed less milk per meal than males. The quantity of milk consumed per day is not significantly different between the 2 sexes.

Group feeding behaviour

- We observed feeding synchrony.
- The mean group-meal relative size =54%
- The quantity of milk consumed per visit tended to increase with the rank of a lamb in a group-meal

Distribution of the group-meal relative size
nb. lambs suckling at the same time/ nb. lambs in a pen



CONCLUSION

Results obtained showed that the electronic self-milk feeder is an interesting tool to study the feeding behaviour of lambs. In a near futur we will evaluate the impact of the stimulation of the lambs on their milk consumption.