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IS OSTRICH AN PROPER SPECIE FOR OUR ZONE?

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Abstract

Is the east region of Europe, particularly the western zone of Romania, and a good one for breeding ostrich?

Is a seam that it is because ostriches are successfully farmed in at least 50 countries from the coldest climates of Alaska to the equatorial areas of central Africa and Romania is not an exception.

Generally the correct feeding rates were not observed in small farms from our zone that we visited. Some small farms from western zone of Romania were evaluated for a better understanding of this new sector demands.

The knowledgeable nutritionist designs rations around a specific daily feeding rate. Value of chick and adults, even eggs, increases dramatically in spite of a poor intern market for ostrich products.

Key words: *ostrich, Romania, western zone.*

Birds are descendent from pseudosuchiaus, reptiles that began to live in trees about 225 million years ago, Archaeopteryx, the first true bird probably appeared some 136 million years ago. If all the birds are descendent from Archaeopteryx, where then do flightless come?

Ratites, the most common flightless birds, have their muscular arrangements unsuitable for flight. Ostrich is the most familiar ratite and the largest of all living birds and can only be found am ht e hot dry savannahs of Africa.

Ostrich (*Struthio Camelus*), became more attractive in last few year for economic reasons: meat, eggs, skin and feathers.

Adult males may be more than 2.5m tall, weighting 155 kg, females are somewhat smaller and weight less.

Ostrich eggs roughly 15cm long and 12 cm in diameter weigh up to 1.3kg.

Ostrich meat is red not unlike beef. It is very low in cholesterol, calories and it is almost fat free.

They have some of the most beautiful feathers and high-quality skin used in shoe, handbag etc. The infertile eggs are used in decorative crafts.

Those theoretic advantages must be tested and than obtained also in our country.

Materials and methods

The present paper serves to appreciate the extension degree of ostrich's farms from Timiș and Arad districts.

In the last few years, in our country a new agricultural sector appeared: ostriches. It is a dynamic sector in which new small and even medium farms are created, in majority for their „exotic” kind.

We visited 3 farms from Timiș district and one farm in Arad district. In these farms we analysed:

- some aspects concerning the farms placement
- number of birds, sex and ostriches age
- feeding (the diet structure , number of tains, particles size etc.)
- maintenance conditions
- information about the origin of birds, prices and possibilities to sell the obtained products.

The situation found in visited farms is shown in table nr.1

Table 1. *The ostrich farm from Timiș and Arad districts.*

	Farm from Buziaș		Farm from Orțișoara		Farm from Mehala		„Bella” farm from Arad	
Nr. of birds	5		10		2		7	
Sex	Female 3	Male 2	Female -	Male -	Female 2	Male -	Female 5	Male 2
Age	one year		5 months		One year and 2 months		one year and 5 months	

Results

Mehala farm

Mehala represents a neighbourhood in Timișoara.

The ostrich are kept in a yard together with other domestic birds.

The yard has a wooden fence 1.3m tall

The food consists in dry Alfa Alfa and barley.

The animals are exposed to accidents caused by the low fence and they are bothered by the noise from the road nearby.

Buziaş farm

Buziaş farm is located at approximately 2 km of Buziaş city. Here we found proper conditions:

- appropriate surface/bird
- alternative using of the 4 folds. This allows regeneration and relative decontamination of the grass.
- Maintaining birds isolated from noise and other stress factors.
- A covered fold for bad weather

Orţişoara farm

The ostrich are maintained in a yard near other houses from the village. In spite the fact that initially the 3 month-old birds received special ostrich feed from Italy the next period, with inadequate nutrition and hygienic conditions, led to the death of 6 chicks from a total of 10.

"Bella" farm

"Bella" farm is formed exclusive for aesthetic purpose. Here in a yard live together some exotic species: ostrich, dears and peacocks. The ostrich benefits of proper feed imported from Hungary and are relatively isolated from noise.

Measurements concerning the space to mean for each bird comparing with those from speciality literature are included in table nr.2

Table 2. *The surfaces/bird in visited farms.*

Surfaces recommended by speciality literature		Buziaş farm(m2)	Orţişoara farm(m2)	Mehala farm(m2)	"Bella" farm(m2)
	Yard	742.5*	30	70	600
	Shelter	30	17.5	-	-
	Nr. of birds	5	10	2	7
120-237 m2/bird	M2/bird	148.6	3	35	85.5

*Total of 3025m2 surface was divided in 4 sectors

Surfaces recommended by speciality literature show that 5-10 ostrich families need 1 ha land and 15/45 m for one ostrich pair.

To conclude, all the other farms do not have enough space excepting the Buziaş farm that has a proper situation.

Conclusions

- Ostrich breeding in western zone of Romania is an dynamic process
- Generally the correct feeding rates were not observed in small farms from the visited zone.

- The knowledgeable nutritionist designs rations around a specific daily feeding rate to ensure the correct daily intake of all required nutrients
- The purpose of 75% from visited farms was for economic reasons and 25% was just for their exotic kind
- Ostrich growing in all visited farms is done without proper scientific information and only sometimes using specific feed.
- The existence of a specific pathology (occlusions, prolaps, "open jaret", etc.) require a new branch of veterinary medicine
- One from the visited farms registered an important damage losing in only 4 months 60% of the birds. The damage is so important because they are expensive birds
- The majority of visited farms do not benefit of enough space necessarily for the normal bird developing.

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