

**THE EFFECT OF FOLIC ACID ON GROWTH AND SURVIVAL RATE OF  
NEWLY BORN CALIFORNIAN WHITE AND NEW ZEALAND WHITE  
RABBITS**

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Rabbits are considered as good meat producers suitable for developing countries as it possesses several good characteristics such as body size, short generation intervals, high reproductive potential, rapid growth rate and high feed conversion efficiency. The only drawback in introducing them in commercial-scale farming in developing countries such as Sri Lanka is the high mortality of newly born and young rabbits.

This experiment was conducted to investigate the influence of folic acid feeding on the reproductive performance of does and the survival and growth rates of newly born rabbits as a remedial measure for the above problem. Ten does from each of Californian White and New Zealand White breeds were included in the study. Folic acid was given along with the usual diet to five does of each breed for seven days prior to and after mating. Data collected included litter size at birth, total litter weight at birth, litter size at weaning, total litter weight at weaning, individual weekly weights of weaned rabbits up to one month and survival rates in each week. Data were analyzed using Probit and GLM models.

The results revealed that there was significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) influence of folic acid on litter size at birth and the survival rate up to weaning. Folic acid showed no significant effect on growth rate of newly born rabbits.

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