

Technical note:

Changes in the plant population in a coffee agrosystem due to the effect of grazing with ovines

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Abstract

Changes in plant population due to grazing with sheep was evaluated in a commercial coffee plantation, located in Junín county, Táchira state, latitude 7° north and longitude 72° west. Four treatments related to stocking rate were employed: 4.33 and 9.16 sheep unit (SU), (one SU = 30 kg live weight) during five days, and 9.16 (SU) with variable occupation rates. The fourth treatment was manual and chemical weed control. A split plot design was utilized in which the main plot was treatment, the blocks were shade conditions (0 % and 50% solar interception). The secondary plot was the climatic period. The evaluations were made over thirteen months covering dry cycles and the beginning and end of the rainy season. The variables to be evaluated were vegetal cover, frequency, dry matter production and weed diversity. Weed cover was not affected ($P < 0.05\%$) by treatment T1, T2 and T3. T4, shade and climatic conditions. Weed frequency and diversity did not change due to the affect of treatments or because climatic conditions and shade. Productivity was determined by the stocking rate, season and shade condition.

Key words: Arabic K coffee , sheep, grazing, botanical composition.

Recibido el 4-9-1999 ● Aceptado el 29-5-2001

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