Journal of the Hellenic Veterinary Medical Society

Vol 59, No 1 (2008)

Impact of thyroid status on the response to ram effect in ewes

J. MENEGATOS (Ι. ΜΕΝΕΓΑΤΟΣ), S. CHADIO (Σ. ΧΑΔΙΩ), D. KALOGIANNIS (Δ. ΚΑΛΟΓΙΑΝΝΗΣ), V. BAMBIDIS (Β. ΜΠΑΜΠΙΔΗΣ), I. VALASI (Ε. ΒΑΛΑΣΗ), V. CHRISTODOULOU (Β. ΧΡΙΣΤΟΔΟΥΛΟΥ), D. KANTAS (Δ. ΚΑΝΤΑΣ)

doi: [10.12681/jhvms.14947](https://doi.org/10.12681/jhvms.14947)

Copyright © 2018, J. MENEGATOS (Ι. ΜΕΝΕΓΑΤΟΣ), S. CHADIO (Σ. ΧΑΔΙΩ), D. KALOGIANNIS (Δ. ΚΑΛΟΓΙΑΝΝΗΣ), V. BAMBIDIS (Β. ΜΠΑΜΠΙΔΗΣ), I. VALASI (Ε. ΒΑΛΑΣΗ), V. CHRISTODOULOU (Β. ΧΡΙΣΤΟΔΟΥΛΟΥ), D. KANTAS (Δ. ΚΑΝΤΑΣ)

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/).

To cite this article:

MENEGATOS (Ι. ΜΕΝΕΓΑΤΟΣ) J., CHADIO (Σ. ΧΑΔΙΩ) S., KALOGIANNIS (Δ. ΚΑΛΟΓΙΑΝΝΗΣ) D., BAMBIDIS (Β. ΜΠΑΜΠΙΔΗΣ) V., VALASI (Ε. ΒΑΛΑΣΗ) I., CHRISTODOULOU (Β. ΧΡΙΣΤΟΔΟΥΛΟΥ) V., & KANTAS (Δ. ΚΑΝΤΑΣ) D. (2018). Impact of thyroid status on the response to ram effect in ewes. *Journal of the Hellenic Veterinary Medical Society*, 59(1), 52–57. <https://doi.org/10.12681/jhvms.14947>

■ Impact of thyroid status on the response to ram effect in ewes.

Menegatos J., DVM, PhD, Chadio S., BSc Pharm, PhD, Kalogiannis D., BSc Chem, PhD, Bambidis V., DVM, PhD, Valasi I., DVM, PhD, Christodoulou V., BSc Agron, PhD, Kantas D., BSc Agron, PhD

- Dept. Anatomy & Physiology of Farm Animals, Agricultural University of Athens, Greece.
- ATEI Thessaloniki, Department of Animal Production. • Veterinary Faculty, University of Thessalia, Karditsa.
- NAGREF – Thessaloniki. • TEI Larissa, Department of Animal Production.

■ Συμβολή του θυρεοειδούς στην απάντηση στην "επίδραση του αρσενικού" στις προβατίνες.

Ι. Μενεγάτος, DVM, PhD, Καθηγητής ΓΠΑ, Σ. Χαδιώ, BSc Pharm, PhD, Επίκουρη Καθηγήτρια ΓΠΑ, Α. Καλογιάννης, BSc Chem, PhD, Ειδ. Επιστ. ΓΠΑ, Β. Μπαμπίδης, DVM, PhD, Επίκουρος Καθηγητής ΤΕΙ Θεσ/νίκης, Ε. Βαλάση, DVM, PhD, Β. Χριστοδούλου, BSc Agron, PhD, Ερευνήτης ΕΘΙΑΓΕ, Δ. Καντάς, BSc Agron, PhD, Επίκουρος Καθηγητής ΤΕΙ Λάρισας

- Εργαστήριο Ανατομίας και Φυσιολογίας Αγροτικών Ζώων, Γεωπονικό Πανεπιστήμιο Αθηνών.
- ΤΕΙ Ζωικής Παραγωγής, Θεσσαλονίκη. • Τμήμα Κτηνιατρικής, Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλίας, Καρδίτσα.
- ΕΘΙΑΓΕ, Γιαννιτσά. • ΤΕΙ Ζωικής Παραγωγής, Λάρισα.

ABSTRACT. The role of thyroid hormones on the transition to anestrus has been well established in ewes, but their possible involvement in the induction of reproductive activity remains obscure. The aim of the present study was to investigate the role of thyroid hormones in the induction of the first ovulation in relation to "ram effect" in ewes. Forty-four ewes of the Greek Zackel mountain type breed were used. The ewes were housed separately from the rams until day 0 (entrance of rams). Blood samples were collected weekly for 4 weeks until 11 weeks after the ram entrance for the determination of thyroxine and progesterone levels. Thirty-five out of 44 ewes (group A) had a silent heat, while the rest 9 ewes (group B) exhibited a delayed estrus. Thyroxine levels rose immediately after ram entrance in animals of group A, but in group B the increase in thyroid hormone levels was evident only after the first week. The difference in T_4 levels between week 0 and 1 for ewes of group A was significantly higher than that observed for animals of group B ($p < 0.05$). The pattern of progesterone release was similar between the two groups, but a two week delay in the increase of progesterone concentration was observed in animals of group B compared to group A. It is concluded that thyroid hormones may act at the beginning of the breeding season to cause a modification in gonadotrophin secretion leading to early ovulation.

Key words: thyroxine, ewes, ram effect

ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ. Ο θυρεοειδής αδένας είναι αποδεδειγμένα απαραίτητος για την έναρξη της άνοιξης περιόδου, ενώ δεν έχει αποδειχθεί ακόμη η σημασία του στην έναρξη της οιστρικής περιόδου στο πρόβατο. Σκοπός της παρούσας μελέτης ήταν η διερεύνηση των θυρεοειδικών ορμονών, καθώς και της προγεστερόνης σε σχέση με την έναρξη της ωθητικής δραστηριότητας μετά από «επίδραση του αρσενικού». Χρησιμοποιήθηκαν 44 προβατίνες Βλάχικης φυλής, οι οποίες ελέγχονταν καθημερινά για εμφάνιση οίστρου καθ' όλη τη διάρκεια του πειραματισμού. Δείγματα αίματος συλλέγονταν εβδομαδιαία για 4 εβδομάδες πριν

Correspondence: Menegatos J.

Dept. Anatomy & Physiology of Farm Animals, Agricultural University of Athens, Greece
75, Iera Odos str., Votanikos, 118 55 – Athens, Greece, Tel.: 210 5294381-2, e-mail:jmen@aua.gr

Αλληλογραφία: Ι. Μενεγάτος

Γεωπονικό Πανεπιστήμιο Αθηνών, Εργαστήριο Ανατομίας & Φυσιολογίας Αγροτικών Ζώων,
Ιερά οδός 75, Βοτανικός, 118 55 – Αθήνα, Τηλ.: 210 5294381-2, e-mail:jmen@aua.gr

Submission date: 30.05.2008

Approval date: 23.06.2008

Ημερομηνία υποβολής: 30.05.2008

Ημερομηνία εγκρίσεως: 23.06.2008

έως 11 εβδομάδες μετά την είσοδο των κριών, οπότε όλα τα ζώα παρουσίασαν οίστρο. Στα δείγματα αυτά προσδιορίστηκαν τα επίπεδα της θυροξίνης και της προγεστερόνης με ραδιοανοσολογική μέθοδο. Οι 35 από τις 44 προβατίνες αντέδρασαν στην είσοδο των κριών με σιωπηλό οίστρο και χαρακτηρίστηκαν ως ομάδα Α, ενώ οι υπόλοιπες 9 που δεν αντέδρασαν και εμφάνισαν καθυστερημένα οίστρο αποτέλεσαν την ομάδα Β. Η συγκέντρωση της θυροξίνης παρουσίασε άμεση άνοδο (1η εβδομάδα) και διατηρήθηκε αυξημένη για 4 εβδομάδες στην ομάδα Α, που αντέδρασε στην είσοδο των κριών με σιωπηλό οίστρο. Στα ζώα της ομάδας Β η συγκέντρωση της θυροξίνης αυξήθηκε μετά την πρώτη εβδομάδα (από την είσοδο του κριού) και διατηρήθηκε αυξημένη για τις δύο επόμενες εβδομάδες. Η διαφορά στη συγκέντρωση της T_4 μεταξύ της εβδομάδας 0 και 1 για τα ζώα της ομάδας Α ήταν στατιστικά σημαντική ($p < 0.05$), ενώ δεν παρατηρήθηκε διαφορά μεταξύ αυτών των τιμών για τα ζώα της ομάδας Β. Το πρότυπο της μεταβολής της συγκέντρωσης της προγεστερόνης ήταν παρόμοιο και στις δύο ομάδες με τη διαφορά ότι στα ζώα της ομάδας Β παρουσιάστηκε καθυστέρηση δύο εβδομάδων στην αύξηση των επιπέδων της. Διαφορά παρουσιάστηκε και στις γόνιμες οχείες, οι οποίες για τις προβατίνες της ομάδας Α έγιναν στις 4.6 ± 0.3 εβδομάδες ($X \pm SEM$), ενώ σε αυτές της ομάδας Β στις 8.4 ± 0.8 εβδομάδες, μετά την είσοδο του κριού. Συμπερασματικά, φαίνεται ότι η θυροξίνη κατά την «επίδραση του κριού» επηρεάζει την έκκριση του GnRH αυξάνοντας την ευαισθησία των υποθαλαμικών νευρώνων στη δράση των οιστρογόνων και επομένως στην πρόκληση της ωοθυλακιορρηξίας.

Λέξεις ευρετηρίασης: θυροξίνη, προβατίνα, επίδραση κριού

INTRODUCTION

The involvement of the thyroid in the regulation for seasonal reproduction has long been recognized. Thyroid hormones have crucial role in seasonal reproductive cyclicity in a number of species (Jallegeas and Assenmacher, 1979; Follet & Nochols, 1984; Shi and Barrel, 1992; O'Callaghan et al., 1993; Dahl et al., 1995; Wilson and Reinert, 1995). In ewes thyroid hormones are of physiological significance to generation of the seasonal reproductive cycle (Karch et al., 1995). Thyroidectomy was found to block the transition from the breeding season to anoestrus by preventing the seasonal increase in responsiveness to the negative feedback action of oestradiol on episodic GnRH secretion, thus interfering with a key neuroendocrine process necessary for anoestrus to develop (Webster et al., 1991a; Moenter et al., 1991a; Anderson et al., 2002). Furthermore, reduced thyroxine secretion, following treatment with methyl - thiouracil (Follett and Potts, 1990; Saleh et al., 1998) or propylthiouracil (Hernandez et al., 2003; Wells et al., 2003) has been shown to extend the breeding season, albeit marginally. Thyroxine exhibits a seasonal fluctuation, rising gradually from a nadir just prior to the onset of the breeding season to peak concentrations shortly before the transition to anestrus (Dahl et al., 1994).

Although the role of thyroid hormones on the transition to anestrus has been well established, their possible involvement in the induction of reproductive activity remains obscure. When intact, thyroidectomized (THx) and THx supplemented with thyroxine (T_4) groups of animals were examined, a delay in the

onset of the breeding season was observed in animals of the THx group compared to other two groups. Although the difference did not reach significance, the great variability detected in these animals probably indicates that thyroid gland may also exert an effect on the onset of reproductive activity. These findings were observed when animals were driven by the endogenous rhythm that underlies the seasonal changes of reproductive activity (Webster et al., 1991b).

Data on rats support a role of thyroid hormones in ovulation, since it has been shown that prepubertal hypothyroidism inhibits the first ovulation in eCG-primed immature female rats and this blockage of ovulation is mainly mediated through the inhibition of preovulatory LH surge from the pituitary (Tamura et al., 1998).

The introduction of rams in anestrus ewes, previously completely isolated from the rams, brings about increases in tonic LH secretion, preovulatory LH and FSH surge and –in many instances– ovulation. The ewe response to the ram-effect is believed to be mediated by pheromones, which appear to reverse the photoperiod effects on the mode of LH secretion (Cushwa, et al., 1992; Martin and Scaramuzzi, 1983).

Therefore the aim of the present study was to investigate the role of thyroid hormones in the induction of the first ovulation in relation to "ram effect" in ewes.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Animals and experimental design

Forty-four ewes of the Vlachiko breed (Greek Zackel mountain type) were used.

The experiment was carried out from March 18th to May 20th at the Institute of Animal Production in Giannitsa (40° 47'N 22° 24'E), North Greece. Animals were kept outdoors under the influence of natural changes in photoperiod and temperature, fed a balanced diet and allowed free access to water. All animals gave birth in December and were suckling until February. Ewes were kept separated from rams until April 15th (ram entrance, week 0). Following ram entrance ewes were checked for estrus, accompanied by matings, daily. The experiment lasted until all animals exhibited overt estrus (11 weeks after ram entrance). Fertile estrus was retrospectively confirmed by the lambing date.

Blood samples were collected weekly from jugular vein during the whole experimental period. Blood collection continued in the non-pregnant ewes until positive pregnancy determination by serum progesterone. Samples were stored until analyzed.

Hormone determinations

Thyroxine levels were determined by radioimmunoassay, using a commercial RIA kit (Amerlex-M T₄, of Amersham, UK). The sensitivity of the assay was 2.6 ng/ml. Inter- and intra-assay coefficients of variation were 2.6% and 3.6%, respectively.

Progesterone plasma concentrations were measured by a coated-tube RIA kit (Coat-A-Count, DPC, USA). The sensitivity of the method was 0.02 ng/ml and the inter- and intra-assay coefficients of variation were 4.0% and 5.7%, respectively.

Progesterone values greater than 1ng/ml were considered as indicative of corpus luteum function, while after mating, progesterone concentrations greater than 1 ng/ml were followed by at least four more consecutive high values as indicative of pregnancy.

All data are presented as least square means $\pm$ SEM and were analysed using the SAS Statistical Programme (SAS 2005). Data for hormone levels were analysed using a General Linear Model (GLM) for repeated measures. All other data were analysed using chi-square test. Statistical significance was set at $P < 0.05$.

RESULTS

Thirty-five out of 44 animals responded to ram effect by exhibiting silent heat, as was indicated by the first progesterone increase, different from the undetectable levels, which occurred at a mean time of

0.4 ± 0.1 weeks following ram entrance. These animals were classified as group A. For the remaining nine animals this increase occurred at a mean time of 3.9 ± 0.6 weeks and were classified as group B. This difference was found to be significant ($p < 0.001$). Ewes of group A exhibited overt estrus at 3.5 ± 0.1 weeks (mean $\pm$ SEM). The number of animals that conceived was 33/35 and fertile estrus took place at 4.7 ± 0.8 weeks following ram entrance, as was estimated by both weekly progesterone levels (≥ 1.5 ng/ml) and lambing data. In group B overt estrus was detected at 4.6 ± 0.3 weeks and fertile estrus at 8.4 ± 0.8 weeks after ram entrance. The number of animals that conceived was found to be 7/9. Significant differences were detected for the time of estrus occurrence ($p < 0.05$) and for the time of fertile estrus ($p < 0.001$) between the two groups of ewes.

Mean weekly concentration of thyroxine and progesterone levels for both groups are presented in figures 1 and 2, respectively.

During the time from week -4 until week 0 (ram entrance), thyroxine levels were nearly the same, fluctuating between $90. \pm 3.5$ (week -4) to 79.9 ± 3 (week 0) for group A. A significant increase in T₄ levels was detected between values of week 0 and those of weeks 1, 2 and 3 following ram entrance (98.5 ± 3 , 102.6 ± 3 and 102.2 ± 3 ng/ml, respectively) ($p < 0.05$). From week four onwards thyroxine concentrations fluctuated between 60.4 ± 3.7 and 86.5 ± 3 ng/ml.

In group B, during the above period, T₄ concentrations were almost the same, fluctuating between 84.8 ± 3 and 83 ± 3 ng/ml ($X \pm SEM$). In contrast to group A, the increase in thyroxine levels was evident only after the first week and significant differences were observed between values of week 1 and those of weeks 2 and 3 following "ram entrance". In animals of group A a significant difference for T₄ concentration was detected between week 0 and 1 ($p < 0.05$), while in animals of group B no difference was observed. This finding indicates an advanced elevation in T₄ levels in ewes that have responded to ram effect. Thereafter (week 4 to 11) thyroxine levels in group B fluctuated from 63.1 ± 7.6 to 85.5 ± 7.3 ng/ml ($X \pm SEM$) and were not different from those of group A.

The pattern of progesterone secretion was similar between the two groups, but a two week delay in the increase of progesterone concentration was observed in animals of group B compared to group A.

Figure 1. Weekly progesterone concentrations of groups A and B ewes.

S.H. = Silent heats.

Εικόνα 1. Εβδομαδιαίες συγκεντρώσεις προγεστερόνης των προβατινών των ομάδων Α και Β.

Weeks from ram entrance = εβδομάδες από την είσοδο των κριών.

S.H. = σιωπηλοί οίστροι, Estrus = οίστρος

Figure 2. Weekly thyroxine concentrations of groups A and B ewes.

S.H. = Silent heats.

Εικόνα 2. Εβδομαδιαίες συγκεντρώσεις θυροξίνης των προβατινών των ομάδων Α και Β.

Weeks from ram entrance = εβδομάδες από την είσοδο των κριών.

S.H. = σιωπηλοί οίστροι, Estrus = οίστρος, Entrance of rams = είσοδος των κριών

DISCUSSION

The entrance of rams resulted in silent heats, as was indicated by a rise in progesterone levels in animals of group A. It is well established that a proportion of ewes exposed to "the ram effect" exhibit silent heat (Hawken et al., 2007; Ungerfeld et al., 2005; Ungerfeld et al., 2004b), accompanied by increased episodic LH pulses (Martin, 1984, Karsch et al., 1993; Ungerfeld et al., 2004a). Moreover, an elevated TSH concentration has also been detected during proestrus in hamsters (Howes et al, 1991). Peeters et al. (1989) found that plasma T₄ levels in ewes were higher during estrus and lower during the luteal phase. Also, in goats a rise in plasma T₄ was observed during induced or spontaneous estrus (Colavita and Malfatti, 1989). Taking together the above data support the hypothesis that an increase in LH may have enhanced TSH and thus T₄ release in ewes of group that responded earlier to ram effect by exhibiting silent heat. Data in humans and rats have reported that hCG increases TSH and consequently T₄ levels (Glinioer, et al., 1993; Glinioer, et al., 1990; Pekary, et al., 1983; Kimura et al., 1990; Grun. et al., 1997).

It has been shown that in ewes thyroidectomy blocks the transition from the breeding season to anestrus by preventing the seasonal increase in responsiveness to the negative feedback action of oestradiol on episodic GnRH secretion (Karsch et al., 1995a; Moenter et al., 1991). Furthermore, it has been postulated that in sheep the responsiveness of the reproductive neuroendocrine axis to thyroid hormones is season-dependent, hence, a strict time 'window' plays a regulatory role on thyroid hormones in sheep reproduction (Thrun et al., 1997).

A number of neurotransmitters control the GnRH pulse generator and a number of in vivo and in vitro studies suggest that the thyroid hormones affect the

turnover, release and receptor binding affinity of these neurotransmitters. Therefore, changes in thyroid hormone concentration alter the control of GnRH secreting neurons (Harris et al, 1986), (Reymond et al., 1987, Velasquez et al., 1997).

Thyroid hormones have been shown to influence synaptic transition and are also involved in ovarian steroidogenesis and follicular maturation. In humans hypothyroidism causes reduced response of LH to GnRH, which increases after T₄ administration (Velazquez et al., 1997). Studies in vitro reported that thyroid hormones have a synergistic effect with FSH and lead to an increase 3-β hydroxysteroid dehydrogenase and aromatase activities (Maruo et al., 1987).

Data on rats have shown that after thyroidectomy a greater amount of estrogen is necessary to induce preovulatory LH surge than in intact animals (Freeman et al, 1976).

So, the results of the present study support a facilitatory action of thyroid hormones, which may be exerted at the level of hypothalamus by increasing the sensitivity of GnRH neurons to estrogen action. Thyroid hormones may act at the beginning of the breeding season to cause a modification in gonadotrophin secretion.

If this modified mode of secretion is the cause or the consequence of the cascade of physiologic events leading to resumption of breeding season, remains to be elucidated.

Acknowledgements

The above research was supported by the "EPEAEK Archimedes II". Programme funded in part by the European Union (75%) and in part by the Greek Ministry of National Education & Religious Affairs (25%). ■

REFERENCES - ΒΙΒΛΙΟΓΡΑΦΙΑ

1. Anderson GM, Connors JM, Hardy SL, Valent M and Goodman RL (2002). Thyroid hormones mediate steroids-independent seasonal changes in luteinizing hormone pulsatility in the ewe. *Biol Repr*; 66: 701-706.
2. Colavita GP and Malfatti A, (1989). Hematic concentration of thyroid hormones T₃ and T₄ in goats at the beginning of the seasonal sexual activity. *Atti della Societa Italiana delle Scienze Veterinarie* 43, 467-471.
3. Cushwa WT, Bradford GE, Stabenfeldt GH, Berger YM, Dally MR, 1992: Ram influence on ovarian and sexual activity in anestrus ewes: effects of isolation of ewes from rams before joining and date of ram introduction. *J. Anim. Sci.* 70 1195-200.
4. Dahl GE, Evans NP, Moenter SM, Karsch FJ (1994). The thyroid gland is required for reproductive neuroendocrine responses to photoperiod in the ewe. *Endocrinology* 135, 10-15.
5. Dahl, GE, Evans NP, Thrun LA and Karsch FJ (1995). Thyroxine is permissive to seasonal transition in reproductive neuroendocrine activity in the ewe. *Biol Reprod* 52, 690-696.
6. Follet B.K. & Nichols T.J. (1984). Influence of thyroidectomy and thyroxine replacement on photoperiodically controlled reproduction in quail. *J. Endocrinology* 107: 211-221.
7. Follett, B. K., and Potts, C. (1990). Hypothyroidism affects reproductive refractoriness and the seasonal oestrous period in Welsh

- Mountain ewes. *Journal of Endocrinology* 127: 103-109.
8. Freeman ME., LaRochell FT Jr., Moore RB (1976) Effect of thyroid status on spontaneous and induced surges of luteinizing hormone. *Endocrinology* 99: 713-719.
 9. Glinier D, de Nayer P, Bourdoux P, Lemone M, Robyn C, van Steirteghem A, Kinthaert J, Lejeune B, 1990: Regulation of maternal thyroid during pregnancy. *J. Clin. Endocrinol Endocrino. Metab.* 71 276-87.
 10. Glinier D, De Nayer P, Robyn C, Lejeune B, Kinthaert J, Meuris S, 1993: Serum levels of intact human chorionic gonadotropin (hCG) and its free alpha and beta subunits, in relation to maternal thyroid stimulation during normal pregnancy. *J. Endocrinol. Invest.* 16 881-8.
 11. Grun JP, Meuris S, De Nayer P, Glinier D, 1997: The thyrotrophic role of human chorionic gonadotropin (hCG) in the early stages of twin (versus single) pregnancies. *Clin. Endocrinol. (Oxf)* 46 719-25.
 12. Harris PE, Dieguez C, Lewis BM, et al (1986). Effects of thyroid status on brain catecholamine biosynthesis in adult rats: assessment by a steady-state method. *J. Endocrinology* 111: 383-389.
 13. Hawken PA, Evans AC, Beard AP, 2007: Prior exposure of maiden ewes to rams enhances their behavioural interactions with rams, but is not a pre-requisite to their endocrine response to the ram effect. *Anim Reprod Science* (in press).
 14. Hernandez J.A., Hallford D.M., Wells N.H., (2003). Ovarian cyclicity in thyroid-suppressed ewes treated with propylthiouracil immediately before onset of seasonal anestrus. *J. Anim. Sci.* 81: 29-34.
 15. Jallegeas M, Assenmacher I (1979). Further evidence for reciprocal interactions between the annual sexual and thyroid cycles in peking ducks and teal. *Gen. Comp. Endocrinol.* 36: 201-210.
 16. Karsch FJ, Dahl GE, Evans NP, Manning JM, Mayfield KP, Moenter SM, Foster DL, 1993: Seasonal changes in gonadotropin-releasing hormone secretion in the ewe: alteration in response to the negative feedback action of estradiol. *Biol. Reprod.* 49 1377-83.
 17. Karsch FJ, Dahl GE, Hachigian TM, Thrun LA, 1995: Involvement of thyroid hormones in seasonal reproduction. *J. Reprod. Fertil. Suppl.* 49 409-22.
 18. Karsch FJ., Dahl GE, Hachigian TM Thurn LA (1995). Involvement of thyroid hormones in seasonal reproduction. *J. Rep. Fert. (sup)*; 49:409-422.
 19. Kimura M, Amino N, Tamaki H, Mitsuda N, Miyai K, Tanizawa O, (1990). Physiologic thyroid activation in normal early pregnancy is induced by circulating hCG. *Obstet. Gynecol.* 75 775-8.
 20. Martin GB, Scaramuzzi RJ, 1983: The induction of oestrus and ovulation in seasonally anovular ewes by exposure to rams. *J. Steroid Biochem.* 19 869-75.
 21. Martin GB, 1984. Factors affecting the secretion of luteinizing hormone in the ewe. *Biol. Rev.* 59: 1-87.
 22. Maruo T., Hayashi M., Matsuo H et al., The role of thyroid hormone as a biological amplifier of the actions of follicle stimulating hormone in the functional differentiation of cultured porcine granulosa cells. *Endocrinology* 1987 121:1233-1241.
 23. Moenter SM, Woodfill CJ, Karsch FJ, 1991: Role of the thyroid gland in seasonal reproduction: thyroidectomy blocks seasonal suppression of reproductive neuroendocrine activity in ewes. *Endocrinology* 128:1337-44.
 24. O'Callaghan D, Wendling A, Karsch FJ and Roche JF (1993). Effect of exogenous thyroxine on timing of seasonal reproductive transitions in ewes. *Biology of Reproduction* 49, 311-315.
 25. Peeters, R., Buys, N., Pauwels, I., Kuhn, E. R., Decuyper, E., Sian, O., Van Isterdael, J. (1989): Relationship between the thyroidal and gonadal axes during the estrus cycle of ewes of different breeds and ages. *Reprod. Nutr. Develop.* 29: 237-245.
 26. Pekary AE, Azukizawa M, Hershman JM, 1983: Thyroidal responses to human chorionic gonadotropin in the chick and rat. *Horm. Res.* 17 36-42.
 27. Reymond MG, Benotto W., Lemarchand-Beraud T. The secretory activity of the tuberoinfundibular dopaminergic neurons is modulated by the thyroid status in the adult rat: consequences on the prolactin secretion. *Neuroendocrinology* 1987 46 62-68.
 28. Saleh D.M., Barrell G.K., Bailey C.I., Frampton C.M.A. (1998). Effects of exogenous triiodothyronine (T3) and a goitrogen, methylthiouracil (MTU), on thyroid gland function in sheep. *Small Ruminant Research* 30, 49-56.
 29. Shi ZD, Barrel GK (1992). Thyroid hormones are required for the expression of seasonal changes in red deer stags. *Rerod. Fertil Dev* 6: 187-192.
 30. Tamura K., Hatsuta M., Watanabe G., Taya K and KOGO H. (1998). Blockage of gonadotropin induced first ovulation caused by thyroidectomy and its possible mechanisms in rats. *Am J Physiol Endocrinol Metab* 275: 380-385.
 31. Thrun LA, Dahl GE, Evans NP, Karsch FJ, 1997: A critical period for thyroid hormone action on seasonal changes in reproductive neuroendocrine function in the ewe. *Endocrinology* 138 3402-9.
 32. Ungerfeld R, Carbajal B, Rubianes E, Forsberg M, 2005: Endocrine and ovarian changes in response to the ram effect in medroxyprogesterone acetate-primed Corriedale ewes during the breeding and non-breeding season. *Acta Vet. Scand.* 46 33-44.
 33. Ungerfeld R, Dago AL, Rubianes E, Forsberg M, 2004a: Response of anoestrous ewes to the ram effect after follicular wave synchronization with a single dose of estradiol-17beta. *Reprod. Nutr. Dev.* 44 89-98.
 34. Ungerfeld R, Forsberg M, Rubianes E, 2004b: Overview of the response of anoestrous ewes to the ram effect. *Reprod. Fertil. Dev* 16 479-90.
 35. Velazquez EM., Belabarba Arata G. (Effects of thyroid status on pituitary gonadotropin and testicular reserve in men *Arch. Androl* 1997 38:85-92).
 36. Webster JR, Moenter SM, Woodfill CJ and Karsch FJ (1991a). Role of the thyroid gland in seasonal reproduction. II. Thyroxine allows a season-specific suppression of gonadotropin secretion in sheep. *Endocrinology*, Vol 129, 176-183.
 37. Webster JR, Moenter SM, Barrell GK, Lehman MN, Karsch FJ (1991b). Role of the thyroid gland in seasonal reproduction. III. Thyroidectomy blocks seasonal suppression of gonadotropin-releasing hormone secretion in sheep. *Endocrinology* 129: 1635-1643.
 38. Wells N.H., Hallford D.M., Hernandez J.A., (2003). Serum thyroid hormones and reproductive characteristics of Rambouillet ewe lambs treated with propylthiouracil before puberty. *Theriogenology*; 59:1403-1413.
 39. Wilson FE, Reinert BD (1995). The thyroid and photoperiodic control of seasonal reproduction in American tree sparrows (*Spizella arborea*). *J. Comp. Physiol. B*; 163: 563-573.