Effect of dietary incremental levels of flaxseed supplementation on productive performance of lactating Damascus goats

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Abstract—It is believable that supplemental essential fatty acids can change the fatty Acid (FA) composition in the milk. Feeding flaxseed to dairy animals improves milk production and milk quality, resulting in healthier milk for consumer. So, the objective of our study was to evaluate the effect of inclusion of ascending levels of flaxseed in Damascus goat’s ration on performance and milk composition. Twenty-four of lactating Damascus goats (39.60 ±0.50 kg weight and 2-3 years old) were divided into three groups (randomly, eight animals each). The basic diet of control group (T1) consisted of 56.67% concentrate feed mixture (CFM) and 33.33% alfalfa hay and supplemented with 10% full fat soya, while the other groups were supplemented with 5% flaxseed + 5% full fat soya (T2) and 10% flaxseed (T3), respectively. Inclusion of higher level of flaxseed (10%) in goat’s ration increases dry matter intake (DMI) with the positive effect on digestibility of most nutrients. In addition, rumen fermentation was affected with increased fat supply where levels of total volatile fatty acids (TVFA’s) and ammonia-N (NH₃-N) are increased with reduced rumen pH values in animals fed on T3. In this study, significant increase of blood plasma total protein, globulin, albumin, urea and high-density lipoprotein concentration, whereas significant decrease of triglycerides, cholesterol and Low-density lipoprotein concentration in response to higher supplemental fat than T1 and T2. Goats supplemented with higher level of flaxseed recorded higher body weight, milk yield and fat corrected milk (FCM) yield, milk fat, protein and total solid content than the other groups (T1 and T2). In conclusion, higher flaxseed supply in dairy Damascus goat’s diets resulted in improved total tract digestibility, feed efficiency and rumen fermentation parameters and milk production, milk composition while reduced blood lipids.

Keywords—Flaxseed, Damascus goat, digestibility, feed intake, milk production.

I. INTRODUCTION

Recently there has been an interest in using flaxseed in animal rations as it can be used to alter the fatty acid composition of milk products and improve animal performance, therefore, provide functional health benefits for the consumer. Flaxseed is an excellent source of high-quality protein and energy for ruminants (Neveu et al., 2014). The oil content in flaxseed ranges between 40% and 45% (Mohamed, 2013). Flaxseed is a great source of essential fatty acids, which contains approximately 50%–70% of α-linolenic acid (ω-3 fatty acids) (Xu et al., 2013). So, there has been an increasing interest in use of oilseeds to improve the ruminant dairy products, because of the increasing consumer awareness of food healthiness. Although, Benchaar et al. (2012) reported that the inclusion of supplemental fat did not decrease or increase the nutrient digestibility, but Piantoni et al. (2013) found that palmitic acid enhanced the total tract digestibility of NDF, organic matter and CP. Nawaze and Ali (2016) suggested that generally fat inclusion in diet increased the milk production clearly compared with control diet while Gargouri et al. (2006) demonstrated that up to certain level of fat inclusion in diet leads to increased milk production and after that level of milk yield decrease. On the other hand, increasing inclusion level of fats in the diets of the ewes and goats resulted in linear increase of milk fat content (Casals et al., 2006) whereas, decreased the milk protein in cows and ewes but not in goats (Nawaz and Ali, 2016).
This study aimed to evaluate the effect of increment of flaxseed supply levels (two levels versus control) in Damascus goat’s ration on its productive performance during lactation period.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This experiment was conducted at the Mariout Research Station (30 km to Alexandria) and labs of animal nutrition department, Desert Research Center (DRC) , El- Matarya , Cairo, Egypt.

The experimental animals, design and rations

Twenty-four Damascus goats (39.60 ±0.50 kg and 2-3 years) were randomly divided into three groups (eight animals each). All of the experimental groups were fed on 90% basal diet that consisted of 56.67% concentrate feed mixture (CFM) and 33.33% alfalfa hay) and supplemented with one of these supplements:10% full fat soya (T1), 5% flaxseed + 5% full fat soya (T2) or 10% flaxseed (T3), respectively. Three experimental rations were formulated to cover goats requirements according to (NRC 1981). The chemical composition of the feed ingredients and the experimental rations are presented in Table (1).

| Items                        | Flaxseed | Concentrate | Full fat soya | Hay | T1   | T2   | T3   |
|------------------------------|----------|-------------|---------------|-----|------|------|------|
| Dry matter, %                | 95.93    | 90.76       | 93.58         | 92.66 | 91.68 | 91.79 | 91.91 |
| organic matter, %            | 96.04    | 92.47       | 92.75         | 87.15 | 89.88 | 90.07 | 90.26 |
| Ash, %                       | 3.96     | 7.53        | 7.25          | 12.85 | 10.12 | 9.93  | 9.74  |
| Crude protein, %             | 20.06    | 16.73       | 37.64         | 16.28 | 20.37 | 19.38 | 18.40 |
| Ether extract, %             | 40.24    | 3.30        | 16.28         | 2.19  | 4.61  | 5.91  | 7.21  |
| Crude fiber, %               | 28.55    | 13.16       | 10.23         | 30.83 | 20.46 | 21.43 | 22.40 |
| Neutral detergent fiber, %   | 48.43    | 30.76       | 31.89         | 46.31 | 39.33 | 40.18 | 41.03 |
| Acid detergent fiber, %      | 32.32    | 14.71       | 13.65         | 30.78 | 21.77 | 22.76 | 23.75 |
| Nitrogen Free Extract, %     | 7.20     | 59.30       | 28.60         | 37.80 | 44.44 | 43.35 | 42.25 |
| Non fiber carbohydrate, %    | --       | 41.68       | 6.94          | 22.37 | 25.57 | 24.6  | 23.62 |

Oilseeds Fatty acids analysis

Fatty acids contents of soybean and linseed were analyzed according to AOAC, (2000) using Ultra Gas Chromatographs (Table 2).

Digestibility trials

A digestibility trial was performed at the end of lactation period and samples were taken through 45 days of lactation period. The feces were collected using fecal grab samples method from all doses, three times daily (7.00, 14.00 and 18.00) for three consecutive days. Acid-insoluble ash was used as an internal marker to estimate fecal output and nutrient digestibility. The digestibility coefficient of a given nutrient was calculated according to the following formula (Van Kulen and Young, 1977):

\[
Digestibility = 100 - \frac{\% \text{ indicator in the feeds}}{\% \text{ indicator in the feces}} \times \frac{\% \text{ nutrient in the feces}}{\% \text{ nutrient in the feed}}
\]

Rumen liquor samples

Rumen liquor samples were randomly collected from four goats within each group using a stomach tube as described by Khattab et al. (2011) before the morning feeding (zero time), 3 and 6 h after the morning feeding. pH was immediately determined using pH meter (Gallen Kamp pH Stick pH K-120 – B). Then samples were filtered through two layers of sheethcloth, into 25 ml glass bottles with adding few drops of toluene to stop fermentation and 5 ml of paraffin oil just to cover the surface and kept in deep freeze (-18°C) till subsequent analysis.
Table 2: Fatty acids content (% of total) of the experimental oilseeds.

| Fatty acid                  | Flaxseed | Full fat soya |
|-----------------------------|----------|---------------|
| C16:0, Palmitic acid        | 5.52     | 13.90         |
| C18:0, Stearic acid         | 4.90     | 5.72          |
| C18:1n-9, Oleic acid        | 19.4     | 23.6          |
| C18:1n-7, Vaccinic acid     | 0.74     | 1.30          |
| C18:2n-6, Linoleic acid     | 14.73    | 50.36         |
| C18:3n-4                    | 0.20     | ND            |
| C18:3n-3, Linolenic acid    | 53.4     | 4.53          |
| C20:0, Arachidic acid       | 0.18     | 0.40          |
| C20:1n-9, Gadolic acid      | 0.13     | ND            |
| C22:0, Behenic acid         | 0.15     | 0.19          |
| Non identified fatty acids  | 0.65%    | ND            |

ND: not detected

Blood samples
At the end of the experimental trial, blood samples were taken from 4 animals for each group (the same animals were used to get rumen liquor content sample). A sample of 10 ml of blood per animal was withdrawn from the jugular vein before morning feeding. The blood samples were directly collected into vacinationer tubes (containing EDTA as an anti-coagulant). The blood plasma was obtained by centrifuging the blood samples soon after collection at 4000 rpm for 15 minutes. Blood plasma was transferred into a clean dried glass vials and then stored in deep freezer at -18°C for subsequent specific chemical analysis.

Milk samples
Daily milk yield (DMY) was individually recorded weekly after colostrum period, up to 12th week of lactation. Doses were kept away from their kids for 12 h (9 pm: 9 am) (overnight), and then one teat was hand milked while the second teat was left for suckled kids. The daily milk yield was determined in two consecutive days the first for left teat and the second for right teat. Consequently, DMY was estimated as an average of the two teats. Milk was multiplied by 4: (2 teats X 2 (two half day) to complete 24 h) (Alsheikh, 2013). Milk samples were obtained weekly from each goat for 12 weeks and stored in glass bottles (50 ml) then analyzed to determine milk composition.

Analytical methods
Feedstuffs and fecal analysis
Samples (feeds and feces) were oven-dried (55°C for 72 h), then ground in welly mill fitted with a 1 mm screen (local manufacture). Feeds and fecal samples were subjected to proximate chemical analyses crude protein (CP), crude fiber (CF), ether extract (EE) and Ash according to AOAC (2000) while nitrogen free extract (NFE) was calculated by difference. Neutral detergent fiber (NDF), acid detergent fiber (ADF) and acid detergent lignin (ADL) were determined in sequential procedures of Van Soest et al. (1991), analysis using Ankom200 apparatus (Ankom Technology Corp., Fairport, NY) filter bag technique. Non-fiber carbohydrate (NFC) was calculated according to the following formula:

\[ \text{NFC} (%) = 100 - (\%NDF + \%CP + \%fat + \%ash) \]

(NRC, 2001).

Determination of basic rumen fermentation parameters
The pH of rumen liquor was immediately recorded using Gallen Kamp pH Stick pH K-120 – B. quantitative analysis of ammonia concentration was carried out by a modified Nessler’s method modified by Szumacher-Strabel et al. (2002) and total volatile fatty acids (TVF’s) were determined by steam distillation according to Warner (1964).

Biochemical analysis of blood plasma
Blood serum samples were analyzed using commercial kits (Human Co. Germany). Total protein, albumin, urea, and creatinine were used as indicators for kidney function, while alanine aminotransferase (ALT) and aspartate aminotransferase (AST) were used as indicators for liver function and lipid profile (triglycerides (TG), cholesterol, high-density lipoprotein (HDL)-cholesterol, low-density lipoprotein (LDL)-cholesterol and total lipids) as indicators for fat mobilization. All measurements were done using Jenway spectrophotometer (UK) and the kits purchased from Human Co. Globulin concentration was calculated by
The subtraction of total plasma protein and plasma albumin. The albumin /globulin (A/G) ratio was calculated.

**Milk analysis**

Milk samples were analyzed for total solids, fat, total protein and lactose by infrared spectrophotometry (Foss 120 Milko-Scan, Foss Electric, Hillerød, Denmark). Solids-not-fat (SNF) was calculated by difference. Fat corrected milk (4% fat) was calculated by using the following equation according to Gaines (1928):

\[
FCM = 0.4 \text{ milk yield (gm) } + 15 \text{ fat yield (gm)}
\]

**Statistical analysis**

Data were statistically analyzed using (SAS, 2006). Separation among means was carried out according to Duncan Multiple Range test (Duncan, 1955). Data of body weight changes, digestibility and blood parameters were statistically analyzed according to the following model: \( Y_{ij} = \mu + T_i + e_{ij} \) Where \( Y_{ij} \) represents observation, \( \mu = \) the overall mean, \( T_i = \) effect of treatment (experimental group), \( e_{ij} = \) experimental error. While the data of rumen fermentation parameter and milk production were statistically analyzed according to the following model: \( Y_{ij} = \mu + T_i + S + \text{an}(t) + S*T + e_{ij} \) Where: \( Y_{ij} \) = the observation on the \( i^{th} \) treatment, \( \mu = \) Overall mean, \( T_i = \) Effect of the \( i^{th} \) treatment, \( S = \) Effect of the period, \( \text{an}(t) = \) Effect of the animal in the treatment and \( e_{ij} = \) Random experimental error.

**III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Oil seeds fatty acid composition:**

Fatty acid (FA) profiles of the two oilseeds are completely different as indicated in Table (2). It is evident that linseed is the richest source of linolenic acid (C18:3n-3) (53.4% of the total fatty acids) followed by oleic (C18:1n-9), linoleic (C18:2n-6), palmitic (C16:0), then stearic acid (C18:0) as (19.4, 14.73, 5.52 and 4.90%, respectively). However, soybean is the richest source of linoleic acid (50.36%) and the rest of FA which are oleic, palmitic, stearic and linolenic acids accounting for formed 23.6, 13.9, 5.72 and 4.53% of the total FA, respectively.

**Effect of experimental rations on digestibility and nutritive value**

Animals supplemented with the highest level of flaxseed (10%, T3) recorded significant higher digestibility of all nutrients (DM, P=0.019, OM, P=0.044, EE, P=0.007, CF, P=0.02 except CP showed non significant differences P=0.45 and nitrogen free extract (P=0.056) compared to 0 and 5% levels (T1 and T2) (table 3), improved digestibility with 10% flaxseed supply may be due to that flaxseeds are small, flat and oval-shaped (2×5 mm), therefore, flaxseed may result in higher possibility of escaping from mastication so, increased passage rate from the rumen and packaging the fat and protein in such a way not to negatively affect rumen function, while promoting feed intake, increase the energy content of the diet and gives a partial protection versus microbial attack or reduces the impact of oil on ruminal microbial or both, leading to negligible effect on the digestion of fibers as well as Improved CP digestibility (Khorasani et al., 1992, Syed et al., 2012 and Kim et al., 2004). In this connection, Dayani et al. (2011) reported that feeding flaxseed to ruminants affecting rumen function positively and increase the nutrients availability in the small intestine. Also, Gonthier et al. (2004) reported an increment of total digestibility of organic matter and fiber with extruded flaxseed supply. In addition, flaxseeds are sources of unsaturated fatty acids which, generally, highly digestible compared to saturated fatty acids (Palmquist and Mattos, 2006). Conversely, Machmüller et al. (2000) did not find any variations in digestibility when they feed lambs 6.7% flaxseeds, Wachira et al. (2000) with sheep fed 10.5% flaxseeds and Paula et al. (2014) with oilseeds in Saanen goat diets.

The reduction in CF digestibility in the animals fed ration of T1and T2 (supplemented with 10 and 5% full fat soybean) compared to the animals fed ration of T3 (supplemented with 10 % flaxseed) may be due to that the fats in full fat soy is not protected and affect negatively on rumen function and cellulolytic bacteria which led to decrease fiber digestion on the contrary for flaxseed the fat is protected as indicated by Khorasani et al. (1992); Syed et al. (2012) and Kim et al. (2004)

Improved feed digestibility in the present study resulted in significant enhancement of nutritive value as total digestible nutrients (TDN, P= 0.001 % with 10% flaxseed supplementation (T3). However, digestible crude protein (DCP%) increased (P=0.009) with 10% soybean supplementation. This may be due to that the ration containing 10 % soybean recorded higher CP contents (20.37) compared to the other experimental treatments Table (1)
Effect of experimental rations on Feed intake

Results of dry matter intake (DMI) Table (4) showed that supplementation with higher level of flaxseed (T3) resulted in numerically higher dry matter intake (DMI) during the lactation period. This may be attributed to the increment in nutrient digestibility (table 4) which promote rumen discharge consequently force the animal to eat a lot.

Effect of experimental rations on rumen fermentation parameters

Concerning ruminal fermentation parameters Table (5) it is clear that 10% supply of flaxseed improved rumen fermentation where total volatile fatty acids (TVFA’s) and ammonia concentration increased as a mean value due to the effect of treatment compared to the other groups (T1 and T2). These results disagree with the results of Broudiscou et al. (1994), who reported a decrease in total VFA concentration in sheep supplemented with 6% of flaxseed oil in a forage-based diet. Also, in this connection Ueda et al. (2003) observed higher ruminal ammonia with flaxseed...
oil supply to dairy cows, whereas Doreau et al. (2009) reported no change in ammonia concentration with flaxseed oil supply in dairy cows. Contradicting with these results, Ikwuegbu and Sutton, (1982) and Broudiscou et al. (1994) reported a decrement in ammonia concentration in sheep supplemented with different levels of flaxseed oil.

This controversial in results may be due to the level of supplement and it’s form (oil or seed), experimental animal, experimental ration or experimental conditions as whole. Regarding the ruminal pH level, it is decreased significantly with higher level of flaxseed supply and this may be related to increased production of TVFS resulting in decrease in pH value.

### Table 5: Effect of feeding experimental rations on rumen fermentation parameters during the lactation period.

| Items                  | T1          | T2          | T3          | mean(time) | SE   |
|------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------|
| **Total volatile fatty acids meq dl⁻¹** |             |             |             |            |      |
| 0h                     | 7.95        | 5.88        | 9.70        | 7.84b      | 0.2245 |
| 3h                     | 5.38        | 7.90        | 8.63        | 7.3b       | 0.2245 |
| 6h                     | 7.23        | 7.48        | 12.33       | 9.01a      | 0.2245 |
| Mean                   | 6.85b       | 7.083b      | 10.22a      |            |      |
| **Ammonia concentration, mg dl⁻¹** |             |             |             |            |      |
| 0h                     | 5.025       | 5.3         | 6.325       | 5.55       | 0.1578 |
| 3h                     | 4.225       | 6.4         | 5.95        | 5.53       | 0.1578 |
| 6h                     | 4.575       | 5.65        | 6.925       | 5.72       | 0.1578 |
| Mean                   | 4.61b       | 5.78b       | 6.40a       |            |      |
| **pH value**           |             |             |             |            |      |
| 0h                     | 6.95        | 6.83        | 6.77        | 6.85a      | 0.0818 |
| 3h                     | 6.58        | 6.55        | 6.25        | 6.46b      | 0.0818 |
| 6h                     | 6.68        | 6.43        | 6.41        | 6.51b      | 0.0818 |
| Mean                   | 6.74a       | 6.61a       | 6.47b       |            |      |

*a and b, means with different superscripts in the same row are significant different.

**Effect of experimental rations on blood parameters**

Blood plasma concentrations of total protein (TP), albumin and globulin (Table 6) were increased significantly (P<0.0001) with higher flaxseed level (T3) compared to the other experimental groups (T1 and T2). This may be due to that T3 recorded the highest CP digestibility (table 3) and the highest DMI and TDNI compared to the other experimental groups (table 4). Kumar et al. (1980) and Bush, (1991) postulated that blood plasma total proteins concentration reflects the nutritional status of the animal and reported a positive correlation between blood total proteins concentration and dietary protein level. Moreover, protein fractions of flaxseed composed of albumin, globulin, glutelin and prolamin where the globulin being the major fraction (Oomah and Mazza, 1993).

Blood plasma levels of lipid profile were mainly affected by flaxseed level. Concentrations of triglycerides (TG), cholesterol, total lipids and low-density lipoproteins (LDL) were decreased significantly (P<0.0001) with increasing the level of flaxseed supply compared with zero flaxseed supply. These may be due to the higher (ω-3) fatty acids concentration in flaxseed compared to soybean seed (53.4 Vs 4.53, Table 2). In this connection Harris et al. (1997) found that (ω-3) fatty acids reduce plasma triglyceride levels, by inhibiting the synthesis of low-density lipoprotein and triglycerides in the liver. The present results supported this concept because about 53% of fatty acids content of flaxseeds are α-linolenic acid (ω-3) (table 2) that inhibiting the synthesis of very low-density lipoprotein cholesterol and triglycerides in the liver. Consequently, feeding whole flaxseed increased blood concentrations of (ω-3) fatty acids and decreased the ω-6 fatty acid level in blood (Petit, 2002). It is also possible to attribute the reduction of cholesterol and triglycerides levels to flaxseed CP content, where Bhathena et al. (2002) found that flaxseed proteins were effective in lowering plasma cholesterol and triacylglycerol levels compared to soybean and casein proteins in obese rats. The gradual increase
(P=0.0001) in level of high-density lipoprotein (HDL) in blood plasma of animals fed on rations supplemented with 5 and 10% flaxseed in the current study was matching with the reduction of cholesterol, triglycerides and LDL levels because HDL removes fats and cholesterol from cells including within artery wall and transport it back to the liver for excretion or reutilization (Peter, 2005).

Blood urea concentration was increased in animals fed on ration supplemented with 10% flaxseed compared to the animals fed ration supplemented with zero and 5% flaxseed (Table 6). This increase in urea concentration was supported by the increased CP digestibility (Table 3) as an indicator to improved protein metabolism and improved N utilization with increasing flaxseed level. These results are also supported with higher levels of plasma total protein as an indicator for improved protein metabolism in liver. In this line, Sharma et al. (1972) reported lower urea N concentration is usually reported with decreased N digestibility and vice versa.

Regarding creatinine levels, animals fed on T1 recorded significantly higher levels of creatinine than other treatments (T2 and T3), but all values were within the normal range indicating normal renal function. Blood plasma level of aspartate amino transferase (AST) was similar among treatments while flaxseed supply stimulates (P<0.01) blood alanine amino transferase (ALT) activity and its highest level was recorded in goats supplemented with higher level of flaxseed (T3) compared with other treatments although ALT activity lies within the normal range in all treatments. Nudda et al., (2013) agree with the present findings and they found that inclusion of extruded linseed in dairy goat’s diets did not affect renal and hepatic function biomarkers in serum except AST and ALT which tended to differ.

**Milk yield, Composition and feed conversion ratio**

Data of Table, (8) showed the effect of experimental treatment on milk yield and its composition. Introducing higher level of flaxseed in goats diets (T3) increased milk yield (P<0.01) and improved its composition compared with milk of goats fed T1 or T2 rations. This may be due to increased DM and TDN intake (table 5), improved nutrients digestibility (DM, OM, CP, CF, NDF and ADF) in goats fed on T3 ration (Table 4), leading to increased nutrients availability for milk constitutes synthesis. Similar observations were reported by Chilliard and Ferlay, (2004) who generally observed that increase dietary lipids led to increase milk yield. Gomez-Cortes et al. (2009) in ewes, Hurtaud et al. (2010) in dairy cows and Kholif et al. (2011) in dairy buffaloes with flaxseed. Also, higher fat corrected milk (FCM) and fat content% (P<0.01) in milk of T3 fed goats were definitely attributed to high fat content of

### Table 6: Effect of feeding experimental rations on some blood plasma parameters during lactation period.

| Items                             | T1     | T2     | T3     | SE  | P value  | Normal rang |
|-----------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|-----|----------|-------------|
| Total protein, g/dl               | 7.12<sup>a</sup> | 7.40<sup>b</sup> | 8.52<sup>a</sup> | 0.23 | <.0001   | 6.4 - 7.8   |
| Albumin, g/dl                     | 4.66<sup>b</sup> | 4.59<sup>b</sup> | 5.14<sup>a</sup> | 0.18 | <.0001   | 2.4 - 4.4   |
| Globulin, g/dl                    | 2.45<sup>c</sup> | 2.80<sup>b</sup> | 3.38<sup>a</sup> | 0.25 | 0.0022   | Ne          |
| Urea, mg/dl                       | 39.13<sup>b</sup> | 41.21<sup>b</sup> | 51.17<sup>a</sup> | 3.28 | <.0001   | 15 - 50     |
| Creatinine, mg/dl                 | 0.84<sup>a</sup> | 0.65<sup>b</sup> | 0.54<sup>a</sup> | 0.07 | <.0001   | 0.9 - 1.8   |
| Total lipids, mg/dl               | 868.0<sup>a</sup> | 866.4<sup>a</sup> | 745.6<sup>b</sup> | 27.6 | <.0001   | Ne          |
| Cholesterol, mg/dl                | 210.8<sup>a</sup> | 188.6<sup>b</sup> | 174.9<sup>4</sup> | 5.3  | <.0001   | 150 - 225   |
| Triglycerides, mg/dl              | 111.2<sup>a</sup> | 99.6<sup>b</sup> | 90.5<sup>c</sup> | 4.34 | <.0001   | 40 - 140    |
| High-density lipoprotein, mg/dl    | 59.7<sup>c</sup> | 66.1<sup>b</sup> | 73.9<sup>a</sup> | 2.74 | 0.0001   | Ne          |
| Low-density lipoprotein, mg/dl     | 176.1<sup>a</sup> | 159.2<sup>b</sup> | 141.4<sup>c</sup> | 5.18 | 0.0001   | Ne          |
| Aspartate aminotransferase, Units / ml | 33.97  | 34.25  | 36.47  | 2.47 | 0.2281   | Up to 40    |
| Alanine aminotransferase, Units / ml | 14.94<sup>b</sup> | 15.28<sup>b</sup> | 15.55<sup>a</sup> | 0.15 | 0.0003   | 15 - 52     |

a and b mean with different superscripts in the same row are significant different. Normal rang: http://goat-link.com/content/view/204/194/#.XFgUrlwzbIU; ne: not estimated.
flaxseed consequently high energy source. Moreover, Bernard et al. (2009); Bionaz et al. (2012) found that fats as dietary supplements encourage the nutrient toward the mammary gland instead of toward fat deposition in the adipose tissue and activate the lipogenic gene expression at mammary gland, leading to an increase of milk fat secretion. Indeed, according to Zenou and Miron, (2005) and Schwab et al. (2006) increased fiber digestibility in goats fed on T3 diets (table 3) leading to increased milk fat contents. Moreover, use of whole flaxseed as protected fatty acids inside a seed coat did not disturb rumen function so, increased mammary lipogenesis as a result of increased supply of polyunsaturated fatty acid (table 3). Gargouri et al. (2006) and Nudda et al. (2013) consistent with the current results, in sheep Conversely, Martin et al. (2008) reported decreased FCM yield and fat content on feeding lactating Holstein cows on extruded flaxseed and flaxseed oil diets and they explained these findings by lower DMI and lower digestibility of fiber due to the high level of oil intake. However, Petit, (2003) reported no change in milk yield with feeding of (13.3%) whole flaxseed and also Petit and Cortes, (2010) when feeding of (72 and 36 g/kg DM) whole flaxseed. Increased milk protein concentration (P<0.01) in T3 fed goats may be due to the increased CP digestibility (table 3) and increase blood total protein and albumin (table 6). Nudda et al. (2013) agreed with the present results where they reported that flaxseed supplementation to Saanen goats led to increased milk protein concentrations as a result to higher protein availability in the intestine. Milk total solids (TS) were increased (P<0.01) with increased level of flaxseed supply (T3) than the other groups (T1 and T2). This may be due to the increasing content of fat, protein and lactose in milk (table 8). These results agree with Silva-Kazama et al. (2007) with dairy cows.

Also, increased percentage of solids not fat (SNF) in the same pattern (P<0.05) may be due to increased protein and lactose in milk hence SNF are residual substances after extraction of fat from milk. lactose % results didn’t affected in the current study similar to Miroslava et al. (2013) with goats fed flaxseed. The previous results of the current study indicating general and mostly significant improvement in animal performance (increased DMI, nutrients digestibility, milk yield and all milk macro compounds) with increased supply of flaxseed (T3) so, this improvement associated with the best (P<0.01) feed conversion ratio (FCR) either related to milk yield or to fat corrected milk.

IV. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, flaxseed supplementation in Damasc goat's diets during lactation period, lead to improve total tract digestibility, reduced blood plasma lipids and rumen fermentation. Also, flaxseed increase milk production (milk yield and fat corrected milk yield), milk fat content and protein concentration in milk. Finally, flaxseed inclusion (10%) has beneficial impacts on the fat profile of milk producing healthier dairy products for consumers. Further studies should be conducted to obtain the best inclusion level of flaxseed to get more benefits.

| Table 8: Effect of feeding experimental rations on milk production, composition and feed conversion ratio. |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Item                           | T1    | T2    | T3    | SE    | P     |
| Milk production                |       |       |       |       |       |
| Milk yield, g/h/d              | 1335.7<sup>b</sup> | 1300.9<sup>b</sup> | 1542.5<sup>a</sup> | 136.8757 | 0.0004 |
| Fat corrected milk, g/h/d      | 572.1<sup>b</sup> | 709.7<sup>b</sup> | 1485.9<sup>a</sup> | 120.342 | <.0001 |
| Milk composition               |       |       |       |       |       |
| Fat, %                         | 2.52<sup>b</sup> | 2.41<sup>b</sup> | 3.74<sup>a</sup> | 0.163  | <.0001 |
| Protein, %                     | 2.67<sup>b</sup> | 2.09<sup>c</sup> | 3.33<sup>a</sup> | 0.1893 | <.0002 |
| Total Solids, %                | 11.68<sup>b</sup> | 9.64<sup>b</sup> | 12.08<sup>a</sup> | 2.2374 | 0.0002 |
| Solids Not Fat, %              | 7.28<sup>b</sup> | 7.22<sup>b</sup> | 8.34<sup>a</sup> | 0.3093 | 0.0292 |
| Lactose, %                     | 4.46  | 4.21  | 4.58  | 0.1842 | 0.2112 |
| Feed conversion ratio calculation by |       |       |       |       |       |
| Milk yield, kg/kg DM           | 2.088<sup>d</sup> | 2.4198<sup>c</sup> | 1.632<sup>c</sup> | 0.4514 | 0.0028 |
| Fat corrected milk, kg/kg DM   | 4.22<sup>a</sup> | 4.463<sup>a</sup> | 1.70<sup>b</sup> | 0.6714 | <.0001 |

<sup>a</sup> and <sup>b</sup> mean with different superscripts in the same row are significant different. Feed Conversion Ratio (FCR) calculation based on DMI.

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