REFERÊNCIA:

PARANHOS da COSTA, M. J. R.; ALBUQUERQUE, L. G.; ELER, J. P.; SILVA, M. V. B. Differences in suckling of three Brazilian beef cattle breeds. In: 32th CONGRESS OF INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF APPLIED ETHOLOGY, 32, 1998, **Anais...** 1998. p.134.

DIFFERENCES IN SUCKLING BEBAVIOUR OF THREE BRAZILIAN BEEF CATTLE BREEDS

M.J.R. PARANHOS DA COSTA [1, 2]; L.G. ALBUQUERQUE[2]; J.P. ELER[3]AND M.V.B. SILVA[4]

[1] *ETCO - Grupo de Estudos e Pesquisas em Etologia e Ecologia Animal*
[2]*Depto Melhoramento Animal, FCAV-UNESP, 14870-000, Jaboticabal-SP, Brazil*
[3]*Depto. Ciencias Basicas, FZEA-USP, Pirassununga-SP*
[4]*Instituto de Zootecnia*

The knowledge of suckling behaviour contributes to optimise management and selection of beef cattle. However, there is little information about it in Brazilian beef cattle. Forty one cows, 14 Gyr, 17 Nelore (both *Bos taurus indicus)* and 10 Caracu (a creole cattle, *Bos taurus taurus)* were bred according to a diallelic crossing design. The animals were kept in pasture from birth to weaning and were observed once weekly during daylight. Three traits were recorded: Suckling frequency (SF), time spent in each suckling (TS) and total suckhng time per day (ST). Breed of the cow affected the suckling frequency and the time spent in each suckling ($p<0.05$), Nelore and Gyr presented the highest suckling frequency means (2.52±0.03 and 2.57±0.04 times/day, respectively), followed by Caracu cows (2.02±0.07). The highest time spent in each suckling was that of Caracu (12.71±0.73 min.), followed by those of Nelore (8.47±0.31) and Gyr (8.29±0.41). No significant difference was observed among dam breeds with respect to the total time suckling spent per day (Caracu=26.47±2.72, Nelore=21.86±1.31 and Gyr=21.51±1.68 min.). Genetic group of calf affected all behavioural traits when the dam was Nelore ($p<0.01$) and the suckling frequency when it was Gyr ($p<0.05$); the averages of these groups were:

	Gyr/Gyr	Gyr/Caracu	Gyr/Nelore	Nelore/Gyr	Nelore/Caracu	Nelore/Nelore
SF(times/day)	2.78±0.05a	2.26±0.07b	2.67±0.08a	2.36±0.04b	2.29±0.06b	2.96±0.03a
TS (min.)	-	-	-	9.23±0.45a	7.20±0.62b	8.99±0.32a
ST (min.)	-	-	-	21.65±1.83b	16.60±2.62c	27.32±1.40a

There are genetic differences in suckling behaviour and these shoud be considered in planning crossbreeding in order to choose dam's breed. The effect of calf group may not be related with individual heterosis.

(Supported by Fapesp and CNPq)