Journal of Animal Research: v.14 n.01, p. 59-65. February 2024

DOI: 10.30954/2277-940X.01.2024.8

Effect of different Parameters of Rumen functions and Microbiota on Crossbred Cattle in Summer Season in Eastern Uttar Pradesh

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Received: 20 Dec., 2023 **Revised:** 24 Jan., 2024 **Accepted:** 29 Jan, 2024

ABSTRACT

This study examines the complex interplay between summer stress and its effects on the microbiota and rumen function of crossbred cattle. Summer stress is becoming an increasingly important issue for animal health and production as a result of the exceptional problems brought about by the continued rise in global temperatures, which pose a threat to the livestock sector. Feed intake, nutrient utilization, and volatile fatty acid synthesis are some of the factors that are examined the rumen function. In order to further understand how the rumen microbiota changes in response to summer stress, we will also use high-throughput sequencing methods. Our goal is to find biomarkers that show how stress creates rumen alterations by studying the dynamic relationship between environmental stressors and the rumen ecosystem. Livestock management practices in the context of climate change can benefit greatly from this study. To reduce the detrimental impacts on animal health and productivity, it is important to understand how summer stress affects the rumen function and microbiota in crossbred cattle. This knowledge may then guide targeted treatments such dietary changes and environmental adjustments. This research adds to the body of information in the scientific community and helps create long-term strategies to protect crossbred cattle from harmful environmental stress.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Determination of different parameters of rumen function on summer stress in cross bred cattle.
- Effect of climate change on livestock practices.

Keywords: Impact, Summer Stress, Rumen Function, Microbiota, Cross Bred Cattle

More people's livelihoods are generated by the agricultural sector than by any other sector on the planet. Livestock farming under conventional production methods provides a livelihood and ensures food security for millions of people living in rural areas. Because of the many goods and services that domestic mammals (including birds) provide, including food, fiber, transportation, fuel, and fertilizer, these creatures have a direct impact on the livelihoods of people in both urban and rural areas (Smith, 2018). Domesticated animals are invaluable in times of distress, in addition to their crucial roles in food supply and money generating. They provide a safety net in case the agricultural sector fails (Anderson, 2019).

There are several forms of stress that domestic animals encounter, including physical, nutritional, chemical, psychological, and temperature pressures. Exposure to

How to cite this article: Kumar, A., Maurya, S.K., Maurya, P.K., Shrivastava, D.P., Rai, V., Verma, R.K. and Kumar, P. (2024). Effect of different Parameters of Rumen functions and Microbiota on Crossbred Cattle in Summer Season in Eastern Uttar Pradesh. *J. Anim. Res.,* **14**(01): 59-65.

Source of Support: None; **Conflict of Interest:** None

extremely hot or cold temperatures causes physiological stresses and pain, known as thermal stress (Martinez and Brown, 2017). The cattle production system is impacted by climate change in two ways: directly and indirectly. Temperature, humidity, solar radiation, wind speed, and rainfall are examples of environmental factors that have a direct impact, while pests, diseases, diminished fodder crop quality, dwindling pasture land availability, and scarcity of feed and water have indirect effects. As a result of changed hormonal, behavioural, and physiological systems, animals attempt to adjust to these unfavourable environmental problems, which impacts their development and production capacity (Baker, 2019).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Trial was conducted in the Division of Instructional Livestock Farm Complex, Lucknow in three phases (6 animals):

Phase-I: In April 2023 (used as the Control) to examine the parameters in March in the favorable weather conditions that were prevalent at the time.

Phase-II: To examine how heat summer impacts rumen function and microorganisms in August 2023 (as T1).

Phase-III: In August and September 2023 (as T2) to investigate if giving the animals cold water mitigates the negative impacts of summer stress on the rumen's function and microorganisms. The animals were given seven days to adjust to the new environment and food before the first and second phases of the experiment began.

Under aseptic conditions, blood samples were drawn from the jugular veins of the animals. Separate vacutainers containing sodium fluoride (for blood glucose determination) or disodium salt of ethylene diamine tetra acetic acid (di sodium-EDTA) were used to collect about 10 ml of blood from each animal. Plasma was extracted from the blood samples and stored at -20°C.

Analysis of rumen fluid

Physical parameters: Colour, Consistency, Odour, Sedimentation rate and Biochemical parameters such as Methylene blue reduction time, Carboxymethyl cellulase activity, pH, Estimation of individual and total volatile fatty acid concentration was done.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The data recorded were analyzed by using SPSS-22.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The present study set out to fill that gap by studying how summer stress affected the microbiota and rumen function of crossbred cattle. We evaluated the stress that the animals experienced by taking their meteorological factors, temperature-humidity index, and biomarker expression levels into account. During the summer stress period, we alone measured rumen function and changes in rumen microbial population.

Every day during the various stages of the experimental period, we collected the lowest and highest temperatures as well as the relative humidity (RH). From these records, we derived the temperature-humidity index (THI). On the one hand, during the control/comfort period of the first phase of the experiment, the average minimum temperature was 12.71 ± 0.56°C, and on the other, during the summer period (T1 & T2), the average minimum temperature was 25.85 ± 0.59°C, and on the other, 34.19 ± 0.97°C. During the first trial period, the average relative humidity (RH) was 51.36 ± 1.38%, while during the second phase, it was 81.06 ± 1.94%. The animals appeared to be at a high level of comfort, as the mean THI throughout the initial portion of the trial was 70.02 ± 0.49. However, the animals were under stressful conditions due to increased climatic temperature and atmospheric moisture content, as demonstrated by the mean THI in the second part of the experiment (80.50 ± 1.94).

Feeding the experimental animals was done at a rate of 3% of their body weight using a 70:30 ratio of roughage to concentrate. In Table 6.2, we can see the different experimental phases' roughage (kg/d) and water (L/d) consumption for the animal group. In the control, T1 and T2 phases, there was a significant difference ($p<0.05$) in the total amount of roughage consumed. Compared to the control group, which consumed 17.83 ± 0.25 kg/d of roughage, a notable reduction of 12.85 ± 0.34 kg/d and 16.29 ± 0.21 kg/d, respectively, was noted throughout the T1 and T2 phases ($p<0.05$). Nevertheless, as comparison to the T1 phase (12.85 ± 0.34 kg/d), the T2 group showed a notable rise in roughage consumption (16.29 ± 0.21 kg/d).

There was a significant difference ($p<0.05$) in the total water consumption (L/d) between the control, T1 and T2 phases. Compared to the control group, which consumed 94.14 ± 1.80 L/d of water, the T1 and T2 groups significantly increased their water consumption to 126.09 ± 1.52 and 103.57 ± 1.53 L/d, respectively, with a p-value of less than 0.05. There was a substantial decrease in water consumption (103.57 ± 1.53) in the T2 phase compared to the T1 phase (126.09 ± 1.52), when comparing the T1 and T2 groups ($p<0.05$).

There was a significant difference ($P<0.05$) in the SOD activity of erythrocytes (U/mg protein) between the control, T1 and T2 phases. While comparing the control phase (46.79 ± 0.94 U/mg protein) to T1 (63.49 ± 1.35 U/mg protein) and T2 (57.27 ± 0.90 U/mg protein), the SOD activities showed a substantial increase ($p<0.05$). Nevertheless, compared to the T1 phase (63.49 ± 1.35 U/mg protein), the cold drinking water provision phase showed a substantial drop ($p<0.05$) in SOD activity, with 57.27 ± 0.90 U/mg protein. Between the control, T1 and T2 phases, there was a significant difference ($P<0.05$) in the enzyme catalse activity of erythrocytes, measured in µmol of H_2O_2 consumed/min/mg protein. In comparison to the control phase, which had a catalase activity of 118.12 ± 4.96 µmol of H_2O_2 consumed/min/mg protein, a notable increase in catalase activities ($P<0.05$) was noted in the T1 and T2 phases, with 131.85 ± 3.28 µmol and 125.93 ± 1.13 µmol of H_2O_2 consumed/min/mg protein, respectively. You can see that catalase activity is somewhere in the middle of its comfort and stressed phases during the T2 phase.

There was a significant difference ($P<0.05$) in the GPx enzyme activity of erythrocytes (U/mg Hb) between the control, T1 and T2 phases (Table 1). In comparison to the control phase (4.14 ± 0.08 U/mg Hb), the T1 and T2 groups showed a notable rise in GPx activity (8.36 ± 0.28 U/mg Hb and 7.07 ± 0.23 U/mg Hb, respectively) with a p-value of less than 0.05. GPx activity followed a pattern comparable to that of SOD and catalase throughout all experimental stages. Compared to the control/comfort phase, the rate of rumen motility reduced considerably ($P<0.05$) throughout the T1 and T2 phases. The rate of rumen motility increased considerably towards normal compared to the summer stressed period (T1) after cool drinking water was provided. The control, T1 and T2 phases were shown to have substantially different rumination rates (per minute) ($P<0.05$). In the T1 phase, the rate of rumination was considerably lower ($P<0.05$) at 54.25 ± 0.75/min compared to the control period (64.75 ± 0.70/min). However, during the T2 phase, when cold drinking water was provided, the rate returned to normal (59.63 ± 0.68/min).

How the rumen fluid of crossbred cattle changed in colour, consistency, and aroma during the course of the trial. During the control period, the rumen fluid had a brownish hue, a somewhat viscous texture, and an aromatic scent. During T2 phase, the rumen fluid was found to be olive in colour, somewhat watery in viscosity, and fragrant smelling. Rumen fluid remained the same hue and smell throughout T1 and T2, however it became somewhat thicker during T2. Within the control, T1, and T2 phases, there was a significant difference ($P<0.05$) in the sedimentation rate (per min) of the rumen fluid (Table 2). Compared to the control phase (5.03 ± 0.14), the sedimentation rate of the rumen fluid was substantially greater ($P<0.05$) in the T1 and T2 phases (7.20 ± 0.23) and 5.87 ± 0.16, respectively. Nevertheless, the sedimentation rate was found to be significantly lower in the T2 phase (5.87 ± 0.16) compared to the T1 phase (7.20 ± 0.23), with a p-value less than 0.05.

In the T1/maximum stressed period (6.45 ± 0.22 min), the MBRT of the rumen fluid was considerably higher ($P<0.05$) compared to the control/comfort phase (2.91 ± 0.13 min). Nevertheless, as shown in Table 3, the MBRT of rumen liquor decreased considerably (P0.05) during the cold drinking water provision/T2 phase compared to the stressed time, reaching 4.060.14 minutes. The rumen fluid's pH as measured at several points throughout the

Table 1: Activities (Mean ± SE) of oxidative enzymes during different experimental phases

Phase	SOD (U/mg of protein)	Catalase (µmol of H_2O_2 utilized/ min/ mg of protein)	GPx (U/ mg Hb)
Control	46.79 a ± 0.94	118.12 a ± 4.96	4.14 a ± 0.08
T1	63.49 c ± 1.35	131.85 c ± 3.28	8.36 c ± 0.28
T2	57.27 b ± 0.90	125.93 b ± 1.13	7.07 b ± 0.23

Table 2: Colour, consistency, odour and sedimentation rate (Mean ± SE) of rumen fluid of crossbred cattle during different experimental phases

Phase	Colour	Consistency	Odour	Sedimentation rate (min)
Control	Brownish	Slightly viscous	Aromatic	5.03 a ± 0.14
T1	Olive	Slight watery	Aromatic	7.20 c ± 0.23
T2	Olive	Slightly viscous	Aromatic	5.87 b ± 0.16

Table 3: MBRT, pH and CMC activity of rumen fluid (Mean ± SE) of crossbred cattle during different experimental phases

Phase	MBRT (min)	pH	CMC activity (µmol glucose/ hr/ml)
Control	2.95 a ± 0.13	6.68 b ± 0.06	4.78 c ± 0.18
T1	6.45 c ± 0.22	6.10 a ± 0.08	2.93 a ± 0.15
T2	4.06 b ± 0.14	6.27 a ± 0.05	3.65 b ± 0.13

Table 4: Volatile fatty acid profile of rumen fluid (Mean ± SE) of crossbred cattle during different experimental phases

Phase	Acetate (mmol/ dl)	Propionate (mmol/ dl)	Butyrate (mmol/ dl)	TVFA (mmol/ dl)
Control	4.99 b ± 0.46	1.41 b ± 0.13	0.38 a ± 0.02	6.78 b ± 0.59
T1	3.41 a ± 0.12	0.95 a ± 0.04	0.56 b ± 0.05	4.92 a ± 0.15
T2	3.84 ab ± 0.09	1.17 ab ± 0.08	0.42 ab ± 0.02	5.45 ab ± 0.13

Table 5: Total bacteria and protozoa count of rumen fluid of crossbred cattle during different experimental phases (Mean ± SE)

Phase	Total Bacteria (109/ ml of rumen fluid)	Total Protozoa (106/ ml of rumen fluid)
Control	11.19 ± 0.15	2.51 ± 0.05
T1	10.89 ± 0.16	2.58 ± 0.03
T2	11.10 ± 0.29	2.52 ± 0.02

experiment. In the control, T1 and T2 phases, there was a notable difference in pH ($P<0.05$). A substantial ($P<0.05$) drop in. Under control/comfortable climatic conditions, the pH of the rumen fluid was 6.68 ± 0.06, but it was noticeably lower during the T1 (6.1 ± 0.08) and T2 (6.27 ± 0.05) phases. Despite this, the pH of the rumen was not improved by drinking cold water in a stressed environment shown in table 3.

Find out what the rumen fluid volatile fatty acid profile looks like in hybrid cattle. As compared to the control/ comfort phase, the T2 phase showed a substantial drop ($P<0.05$) in the levels of acetate, propionate, and butyrate in the rumen fluid of cross-bred cattle. The levels of volatile fatty acids (VFAs) reach a maximum when cold water is provided during summer stress, which is similar to their levels during the climatic comfort period. There was a substantial difference ($P<0.05$) in the total volatile fatty acid (TVFA) profile of the rumen fluid between the control, T1 and T2 phases. The TVFA profile of the rumen fluid of CB cattle showed a notable decline in the T1 and T2 phases (4.75 ± 0.17 mmol/dl and 5.36 ± 0.12 mmol/dl, respectively) compared to the control (6.96 ± 0.65 mmol/ dl), with a significance level of $P<0.05$. Nevertheless, a notable increase in the TVFA profile (4.75 ± 0.17 mmol/ dl) was noted during the T2 phase in comparison to the T1 phase (Table 4). Various peaks of volatile fatty acids (acetate, propionate, and butyrate) are shown in a chromatogram taken at various points throughout the experiment.

Table 5 displays the findings representing the total number of bacteria and protozoa per millilitre of rumen

fluid from crossbred cattle throughout the various stages of the experiment. The total number of bacteria and protozoa in the rumen fluid of crossbred cattle dropped non-significantly throughout T1 and T2 phases compared to control, although there was no significant difference ($P<0.05$) between the control, T1 and T2 phases.

Table 6 displays the findings of the Real-time PCR tests conducted on crossbred cattle at various experimental phases with respect to the rumen microbial count (log 10 no. of cells/ ml of rumen fluid). The overall rumen microbial count did not change significantly across the several experimental stages. Over the course of the trial, a comparable pattern emerged for total bacteria, *Ruminococcus flavefaciens*, and *Ruminococcus albus*.

The control, T1, and T2 phases of the study did not differ in terms of the consistency or colour of the stool material. Faeces were found to be brown or light brown in hue.

Among the control, T1 and T2 phases, there was a significant difference ($P<0.05$) in the plasma glucose levels of crossbred cattle (Table 7). During the months of July and August, when the weather is stressful, the plasma glucose concentration drops considerably ($P<0.05$) to 51.5 ± 0.80 mg/dl, compared to 60.24 ± 1.03 mg/dl in March, when the weather is favourable. Animals were able to raise their plasma glucose concentration (55.780.42 mg/dl) to levels similar to those in pleasant climates when given cold drinking water under stressful climates. Nevertheless, this concentration also differed considerably ($P<0.05$) from the values in both pleasant and stressful climates. There was a substantial difference ($P<0.05$) in the blood urea nitrogen content of crossbred cattle throughout all three stages, namely control, T1, and T2. It is possible that the chilly drinking water is to blame for the notable ($P<0.05$) drop in plasma ALT levels during the T2 phase, as seen in Table 6. In phase T2 of the experiment, plasma AST concentrations decreased considerably ($P<0.05$) from 130.44 ± 0.96 IU/L to 122.71 ± 1.08 IU/L, suggesting that the availability of cool water alleviated summer stress to a certain degree.

When the body's regular equilibrium is disrupted, stress is created, which can have negative consequences. Many forms of stress, including those related to diet, chemicals, psychology, and temperature, affect domestic animals. Hot weather makes livestock more susceptible to heat stress than any other season (Sharma, 2017). Because heat stress changes the rumen's fundamental physiological environment and/or the kind or number of microbes that live there, it can impact nutrient digestion and the formation of end products of digestion. There is a dearth of research, however, that details how summer stress alters the microbial pattern and rumen fermentation. Some research suggests that drinking cold water might help mitigate heat stress by lowering core body temperature (Gonzalez, 2018). When cattle experience a rise in body temperature without an equal or greater ability to disperse that heat, a condition known as heat stress sets develop. Cattle heat stress may be measured using the temperature-humidity index (THI), which is based on the microclimate's relative humidity (RH) and ambient temperature (RT). Nonetheless, THI is a quite imprecise way to gauge heat stress in cattle. In order to establish that experimental animals experience summer stress, the

Table 6: Rumen microbial composition of rumen fluid of crossbred cattle during different experimental phases (Mean ± SE)

Phase	Total Bacteria (log 10 no. of cells/ ml of rumen fluid)	Ruminococcus flavefaciens (log10 no. of cells/ ml of rumen fluid)	Ruminococcus albus (log10 no. of cells/ ml of rumen fluid)
Control	10.92 ± 0.06	8.59 ± 0.12	6.87 ± 0.10
T1	10.44 ± 0.12	7.67 ± 0.37	6.13 ± 0.37
T2	10.59 ± 0.16	7.56 ± 0.45	6.15 ± 0.28

Table 7: Plasma biochemical parameters (Mean ± SE) during different experimental phases

Phase	Glucose (mg/dl)	BUN (mg/ dl)	Total Protein (g/dl)	Creatinine (mg/ dl)	ALT (IU/L)	AST (IU/L)
Control	60.24 c ± 1.03	13.29 a ± 0.71	6.76 a ± 0.13	1.82 a ± 0.13	32.95 a ± 1.49	116.37 a ± 2.05
T1	51.5 a ± 0.80	28.51 c ± 0.88	7.82 b ± 0.09	2.49 c ± 0.05	55.25 c ± 0.94	130.44 c ± 0.96
T2	55.78 b ± 0.42	21.64 b ± 0.69	7.51 b ± 0.25	2.09 b ± 0.05	41.47 b ± 1.48	122.71 b ± 1.08

current study measures biochemical markers (SOD, CAT, and GPx) that are unique to heat stress in addition to the THI value (Adams, 2020).

In reaction to oxidative stress, animals develop a variety of antioxidants on their own. Instantaneously, those compounds work to halt the generation of stress-inducing free radicals. As a first line of defence against free radical damage, the enzymes glutathione peroxidase (GPx), superoxide dismutase (SOD), and catalase (CAT) convert hydrogen peroxide (H_2O_2) and other hydroperoxides to inert molecules. Therefore, levels of these three enzymes in animals during the experiment were also taken into account to determine animal stress (Yang, 2020). Because of its significance as a heat transporter, water is crucial to the homoeotherms' heat regulation. Ruminants' thermoregulatory system is intricately linked to their water metabolism in times of heat stress. Therefore, drinking more water occurs naturally when people are under heat stress. In this study, participants were shown to drink significantly more water during the T1 phase (summer stress period) compared to the control group during the spring, when the weather was nice (Garcia, 2019).

In the summer stress (T1) phase, the current study found that rumen motility and rumination rate were significantly lower ($p<0.05$) than in the control phase. The results are consistent with previous research in cows and beef calves from Korea and Italy. The rate of rumen motility and chewing/rumination did not vary significantly ($p>0.05$) in heat-stressed goats (Patel, 2020). In the control phase, the rumen fluid was brownish green and rather viscous; in contrast, during the summer stress (T1) phase, it was olive green and quite watery. There was no discernible shift in smell over the summer stress period. The food of the animals and diseases like acidity and trauma can cause changes in the rumenal fluid's colour, consistency, and smell (Nguyen, 2021).

Compared to the control group, participants in the summer stress phase showed a substantial ($p<0.05$) increase in the amount of time it took for rumen fluid to reduce methylene blue. The reduction in pH of the rumen fluid (referenced in the preceding paragraph) and the subsequent buildup of harmful amounts of ammonia and other amines because of disrupted microbial activity may be the causes of this rise in MBRT. During summer stress, the current analysis found that blood urea nitrogen (BUN) concentrations significantly increased ($p<0.05$). One possible explanation for the rise in blood urea nitrogen levels under summer stress is the mobilisation of protein from muscle tissue or an increase in the utilisation of amino acids as an energy source (Baker, 2019).

Consistent with previous research, this study found that total protein levels rise during heat stress, which may be due to an increase in extracellular fluid loss and excess protein catabolism. Total protein concentrations significantly rise ($p<0.05$) in response to summer stress (Martinez and Brown, 2020). In addition to helping animals recover from heat stress, the cooling impact of drinking cold water reduced the activity of superoxide dismutase (SOD), catalase (CAT), and glutathione peroxidase (GPx). Plasma glucose, total protein, BUN, creatinine, AST, and ALT levels all improved towards normal, further confirming this continuous rate of recovery (Dikmen *et al.,* 2012).

In light of the current climate change scenario, heat stress is the abiotic stressor that causes the greatest worry. Heat stress makes animals more susceptible to infections and stunts their development and output. Up until now, there has been a dearth of thorough research on the detrimental impact of heat stress on the rumen. Therefore, the current research set out to determine the negative impacts of summer stress on rumen function and microbial population and to investigate the efficacy of cool drinking water in relieving summer stress in cross-bred cattle. The current study indicated that blood biochemical parameters and rumen fermentation pattern in cross-bred cattle are significantly affected negatively by summer stress. Giving heat-stressed animal's cold water to drink may help them chill down and may even restore normal rumen fermentation and plasma biochemical parameter concentrations. Nevertheless, the precise process by which cold drinking water helps restore a normal rumen fermentation pattern remains unclear. Therefore, further research is needed to determine the precise function of cold drinking water's ameliorative impact in reestablishing normal rumen fermentation and the formation of volatile fatty acids in this organ.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Authors are highly thankful to Dean College of Veterinary Science and Animal Husbandry Kumarganj Ayodhya.

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