

A comparison of indirect methods of estimating feed intake on pasture.

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Abstract

The data from 12 individual cattle grazed on a uniform sward were used to compare field sampling of faeces with three time-schedules for rectal sampling of faeces. Estimates of digestibility from a faecal nitrogen equation were compared with estimates based on in vitro digestibility, or modified acid-detergent fibre determinations, on clipped herbage samples. Field sampling gave a lower coefficient of variation (8%) in chromic oxide content than did grab sampling (14%). Grab sampling introduced an upward bias in estimates of faecal output compared with field samples. The estimate of digestibility based on the faecal index was intermediate to those based on clip samples from the upper and lower horizons of the sward. There was no difference in the mean digestibility's estimated from in vitro or MAD fibre.