Foraging Experiment on Rabbits

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**Introduction**

The research experiment to cover is regarding the foraging behaviors of the cotton tail rabbit. He research involves the analysis of results that is provided in charts and tables from the research carried out. The data is imperative for it enables a person to comprehend better the aspect of the rabbits searching for food in order to survive in the rather dynamic environment. Moreover, the information has people comprehending whether or not they can offer food to the rabbits depending on the environment or they have the ability to find food for themselves. A GUD represents the remains after the rabbits finish consuming the food.

**Materials and Methods**

The materials used in the experiment included sand and this was spread all over the patch section. There was also a basin of water which was used to pour in water for the rabbits to take at any time that they wanted. The method included taking the commodities to the patch section where the food would be spread in the patch section and this was for both locations. However, only for food commodity B was it spread in the area. For the food commodity A it would be put in one section alone.

Results

The first day of the experiment was June 4 2019. The experiment involved two variables where one of the variables was the location of the food while the other variable was the type of food. In the first day and using location one and the type of food as A, the starting weight in grams of the food was 14 grams and the GUD or rather the end weight was 0 grams. The patch results for this showed that the sand was wet and the patch was full of water.

The experiment results here proved that the rabbits were comfortable in the location and that they liked or rather the food type A was appealing to them. It is also essential to note that the fact that the sand was wet showed the sense that the rabbits managed to gather some supplements from the environment and this went along with the food that was provided. Moreover, one can identify that the patch was full of water meaning that the water was an important factor in the food type A. The rabbits completed all the food that was offered and this should have farmers comprehending the conditions and thus use this for the rabbits. It is also imperative to note that the food was in one corner and there was no wastage of food. The reason for this conclusion is the fact that the rabbits had quality management practices and they actually liked the food commodity A.

Coming from the same location but having a different type of food commodity, notably Food type B, one gets to note that the starting weight of the food was similar to the initial experiment and this is where the starting weight was 14 grams. However, for this time, the end weight was 3.24 grams. From here, one can note that the sand was damp. From this information, one can conclude that the rabbits were not quite attracted to food type B as compared to food type A and this is owing to the fact that they did not complete all of it and this is presented by the remaining grams. It is also vital to note that food had spread out in the entire area and this shows the mismanagement practices of these rabbits with regard to the food type B. The rabbits were clearly hungry but they were not attracted to the product.

It is also imperative to go through variable one where there was a change in location. With a different location, there was the provision of food type B. In the end, the results showed that the amount of food provided was 14 grams and this was just like the initial count. The same amount that resulted in the first experiment was presented here and this is where the GUD was 0 grams. From the experiment, one gets to note that the change in location was not determining of the food that was consumed by the rabbits. The meaning of this was the fact that the rabbits actually liked the food and this is where they consumed it in a fast manner and the consequent of this was them being healthy. It is also essential to note that there was a change in the results from the consumption of food type B in the second location.

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| **LOCATION** | **FOOD TYPE** | **RESULTS** | **MEANING** |
| Location A and B | Food Type A | Completed all food | The meaning of these results is that since the food products were located in one place it was possible for the rabbits to complete the food effectively |
| Location A and B | Food Type B | There was remaining food  | The meaning of this was that it was rather impossible to have the animals completing all the food owing to the fact that they could not forage well thus if not fed would starve.  |

**Discussion**

According to Koy and Roy, (Koy & Roy, 2007), foraging is the ability of an animal or an organism to gather food on its own. Further, there are three major decisions that an effective forager ought to make while carrying out research, one of the decisions is relating to the type of food to eat, the other aspect to consider is how long or rather the duration the forage will have, and the final aspect is when and where to hunt. The experiment took place in a span of three days but these days were not consecutive.

According to the information presented, the starting weight of these rabbits’ food was 14 grams. However, it is notable that the amount of GUD was 5.36 grams. The 5 grams was a high amount and this meant that the rabbits were still not attracted to the food and making issues worse was that they felt that consuming the food Type B in that location did not go well with them. It is imperative for a farmer to ensure that he notes this and thus ensure that they avoid offering the food type B to the rabbits.

It is imperative to note that the patch in this second location at the time of the presentation of food type B was in such a manner that the sand there was set as dry. It is also critical to note that this was the same as the patch prepared for the rabbits for the consumption of food type B in the initial location. As identified by Miguel and Carthey (2013), different locations have the ability to offer different results with regard to the GUD owing to the fact that one location might be open where it is possible for the rabbits to gather the food required while some locations are bushy and have a lot of vegetation and the consequent of this is having the rabbits finding it hard to gather the food. It is essential for the researcher to ensure that the locations vary when carrying out the experiment in order to note the foraging abilities of these animals.

It is possible that the rabbits were not pleased with the dampness of the location. The rabbits wanted to remain in a location that had wet soil and through this they would also get water to consume and this goes along with the type of food that is provided. However, it is vital to note that there are some limiting factors and this is provided the fact that these rabbits are very delicate and consequently can be attacked by predators in a rather easy manner. In order to evade this risk, it is imperative to note that the person that was responsible for the provision of the patch ensured that he created the patch in an area where there were many trees. With the many trees, the rabbits would remain hidden and this is a rather positive aspect and through this the experiment would go on well. It is also essential to note that other limiting factors are the environmental conditions with regard to climate. In case it rains, the results might be altered which is rather detrimental to the experiment.

According to Mohammad and Joel Brown (Mohammad & Brown, 2009), studies that have been carried out on the effect of the patch size show that the greater the size of the patch the more risky it is for the rabbits owing to the fact that they might be easily attacked by the other animals in the area. The same information applies to the rabbits and this is where one gets to comprehend that the rabbits were prone to attack during the experiment and this is where Sarah, who was responsible for the creation of the patch ensured that he created a small patch size provided the fact that the food commodities were not much and that this was for the purpose of an experiment.

One can also get to note that the food commodities were not presented in the same design and this is where there was the scattering of food in the second phase of the experiment while in the first phase all the food was located in a single area. The reason for this control in the experiment was to identify the ability of the rabbits to get the food commodities they required. As identified in the first experiment carried out, all the food was located in one place and the rabbits completed all 14 grams of it. The information shows that the rabbits were quite hungry and that they had the ability to finish all the food. However, for the second experiment regardless of the food commodity, one can note that some of the food remained and the rabbits did not complete all that was provided. As identified, the scattering was vital to have the rabbits searching for the food on their own and the fact that some remained showed that they were not quite keen on finding the food and also for the second location, the amount that remained was much showing the conditions there were not conducive.

References

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