EFFECT OF FEEDING ENRICHMENT ON THE BEHAVIOUR OF GAZELLES IN CAPTIVITY

Gazella cuvieri

Nanger dama

Gazella dorcas

INTRODUCTION

Optimal **welfare** is crucial for the success of *ex situ* programes.

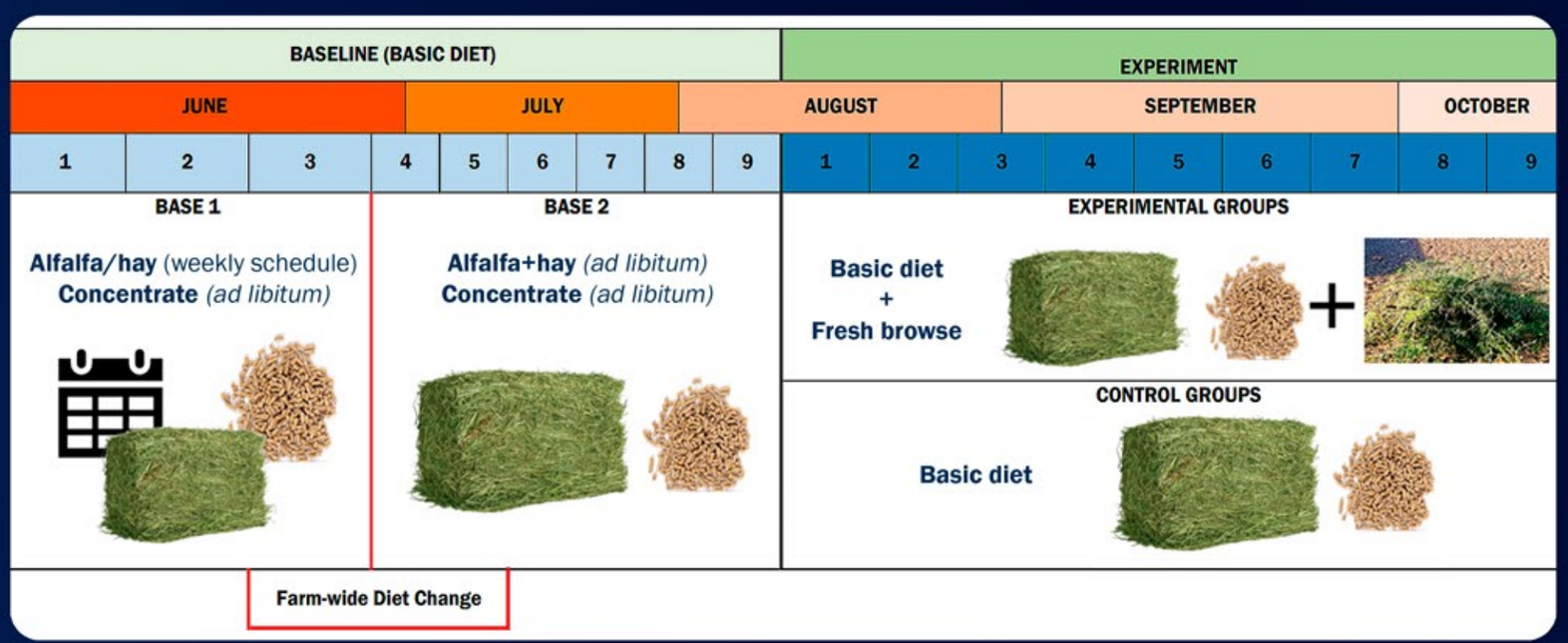
In captivity, **abnormal or stereotypic behaviours** may indicate subpar conditions. These are often "treated" by providing **enrichment** which fullfills the animals' needs.

In this study, we focus on how diet affects the behaviour of three species of endangered gazelles kept at **La Hoya Experimental Farm,** part of the Spanish National Research Council's Experimental Station of Arid Zones (EEZA-CSIC).

La Hoya Experimental Farm

AIM

We evaluated the importance of **diet for captive ruminants** – sometimes containing excessive concentrate feed and lacking roughage – as well as the potential of **enrichment as a tool to assess and improve their welfare**.



METHODS

Ad libitum **behavioural sampling**
(30 min/week/group)

Total: **63** individuals

For each species:

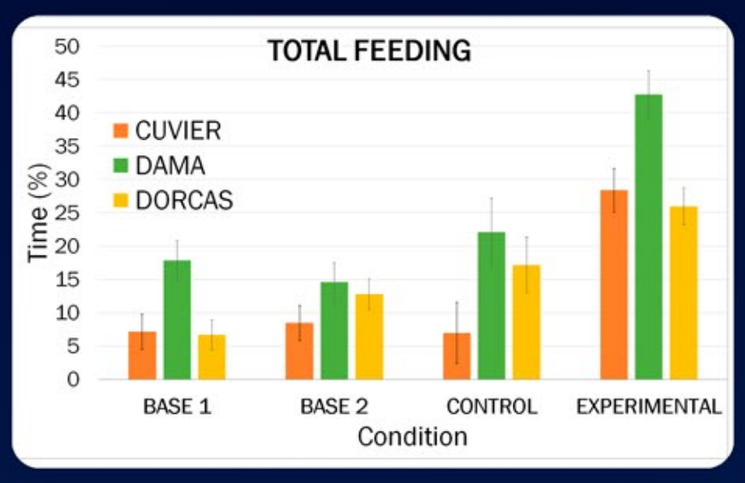
1 CONTROL group

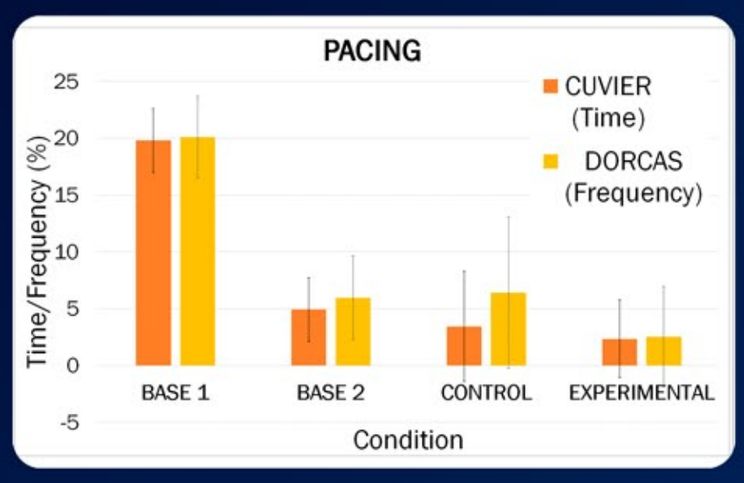
2 EXPERIMENTAL groups

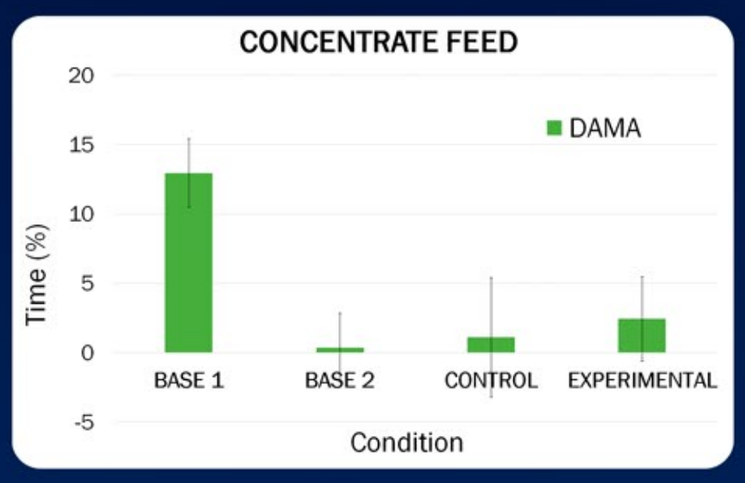
RESULTS

Total **time spent feeding** increased in all species when more roughage (especially **browse**) was provided.

Ad libitum **alfalfa** greatly decreased consumption of **concentrate feed** for Dama gazelles and reduced Cuvier's gazelles and Dorcas gazelles' **pacing** behaviour, which we considered to be a stereotypy *(possibly related to gut discomfort)*.







CONCLUSION

High-fibre naturalistic diets allow the gazelles choice and opportunity for species-specific behaviours, improving their welfare.

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