Rabbit preference for cages and pens with or without mirrors

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Abstract

Five-week-old Pannon White rabbits were housed in a closed climatized rabbitry and randomly assigned to either pens (56 rabbits) having a basic area of 1 m2 with a stocking density of 16 and 12 rabbits/m2 or to 18 individual cages (0.24 m2/cage). The pens and the cages were divided into two halves and animals could move freely between the two halves through swing doors. The walls of one half of the pens and cages were completely covered with mirrors while the other half was covered with white plastic panels. A 24 h video recording was made twice a week using infrared cameras and the number of rabbits in each pen and cage was counted every 15 min. The duration of the trial was 6 weeks. The lighting period was 16L/8D. In each half of the cage or pen, a feeder and nipple drinkers were available and feed intake was measured separately. Throughout the entire rearing period, 72

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