GROWTH PERFORMANCE AND CARCASS CHARACTERISTICS OF MALE BLACK AUSTRALORP, DWARF MALAWI LOCAL CHICKEN AND THEIR CROSSES FROM 8 TO 20 WEEKS OF AGE.

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ABSTRACT
An experiment was conducted to compare the growth performance and carcass characteristics of Black Australorp (BA), Dwarf Malawi Local Chicken (MLC) and their F1 crosses (BA x MLC and MLC x BA) from 8 to twenty weeks of age. Birds were raised in a traditionally built deep litter house covered with wood shavings. Birds were raised on commercial starter (day 1-8 weeks) and then on grower mashes during the whole experimental period (8-20 weeks). Significant (P<.05) differences were observed in growth performance and carcass characteristics of BA, MLC and their crosses. At twenty weeks of age, body weights were 2424g, 2250g, 2183g and 2100g for BA, BA x MLC, MLC x BA and MLC roasters, respectively. A similar trend was observed for carcass weights. However, no differences were observed when carcasses were evaluated as percentage of live body weight. Drumstick, thigh, wing, and breast carcass parts yields were similar for BA and MLC x BA crosses but significantly (P<.05) higher than those for BA x MLC and MLC birds. No differences were observed in thigh and wing weights when taken as percentage of carcass weights for all genotypes. Feed intake was highest for BA birds (12, 501g) while that of MLC birds was the lowest (11, 719). Feed consumption was similar for the crosses. However, BA (5.98:1), BA x MLC (6.60:1), and MLC x BA (6.5:1) were similar in feed conversion but significantly (P<.05) better than that of the MLC (6.95:1). It is concluded that of the performance of the MLC in terms of body weight, feed efficiency and selected carcass parts can be improved through crossbreeding.

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