

# Summary

The research was conducted on an area of natural pastures in the Department of Zootecnia, Federal University of Viçosa, MG, Brazil (651 m.a.s.l., 19 °C, 20° 45' south, 42° 51' east), to evaluate diet selection by esophageal-fistulated animals. Samples were collected for 5 consecutive days in December 1990, January and February 1991 (rainy season) and in June, July and August 1991 (dry season) utilizing four fistulated animals. One day each month the botanical composition was determined and processed by computer program BOTANAL and compared that in the diet.

Molasses grass (*Melinis minutiflora*) was the major species in the diet of the animals (45%), not only in the rainy season, but also in the dry season. The high rate of selection of Jaragua grass (*Hyparrhenia rufa*) during the rainy season (24%) was in contrast to a high rate of rejection during the dry season (9%). Batatais grass (*Paspalum notatum*) was preferred by animal when it was in the regrowth stage or in an advance stage during

dry season. The animals rejected the legume plants, weeds and brush in the rainy season, but in the dry season the selection of those species was high.