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## Effects of probiotic bacteria on the performance of arctic foxes, pathomorphology and microflora of their alimentary tracts

A. Gugolek, M. O Lorek, Z. Rotkiewicz, T. Rotkiewicz

<https://doi.org/10.17221/4309-CJAS>

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Studies on the use of *Enterococcus faecium* and *Lactobacillus acidophilus* cultures in arctic fox nutrition were performed on 80 foxes, in the period from weaning to the end of growth and fur development. Diets for the experimental animals were supplemented with 1 g of a probiotic preparation that provided the supply of each bacterial culture in the amount of  $1 \times 10^9$  CFU (colony forming units) per day. The performance of the animals was estimated on the basis of their body weights, conformation and pelt quality. Histopathological examinations of the liver, kidneys and selected segments of the alimentary tract were also conducted. The results show that a mixture of *Enterococcus faecium* and *Lactobacillus acidophilus* cultures had beneficial effects on the health of arctic foxes. The probiotic changed the composition of the alimentary tract microflora, which had a positive influence on the morphology of the alimentary tract mucosa and allowed to reduce morphological damage to the liver and kidneys. The good condition of foxes resulted in higher body weight gains and better parameters of conformation and pelt quality.

**Keywords:**

arctic fox; nutrition; probiotic; growth; pelt; alimentary tract; microflora

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**Contact**

Ing. Gabriela Vladyková  
Executive Editor (Editoria  
publication)

e-mail: [cjas@gazv.cz](mailto:cjas@gazv.cz)

Ing. Kateřina Kheilová  
Executive Editor (submis  
editorial system)

e-mail: [cjas@af.czu.cz](mailto:cjas@af.czu.cz)**Address**

Czech Journal of Animal  
Czech Academy of Agrici  
Sciences  
Slezská 7  
120 00 Praha 2  
Czech Republic