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The *FABP4* gene polymorphism is associated with meat tenderness in three Chinese native sheep breeds

Q.L. Xu, G.W. Tang, .. Zhang QL, Y.K. Huang, Y.X. Liu, K. Quan, K.Y. Zhu, .. Zhang CX

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The aim of this study was to assess the association of single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNP) of sheep fatty acid binding protein 4 (*FABP4*) gene with *longissimus thoracis* muscle (LT) meat quality traits in sheep. The *FABP4* cDNA was cloned by RT-PCR method, and the sequence analysis showed that the open reading frame of sheep *FABP4* is 399 bp and codes 132 amino acids. A mutation (A/G) detected in intron 1 of *FABP4* gene was studied in 286 lambs of three Chinese native sheep breeds by PCR-SSCP procedure. Significant statistical association results revealed that AA genotype conferred higher tenderness ($P < 0.05$), muscle marbling score ($P < 0.05$) and intramuscular fat content (IMF; $P < 0.05$). Thus we suggested that the genotype AA could be regarded as a molecular marker for LT meat tenderness and IMF content in sheep.

Keywords:

sheep; *FABP4* gene; polymorphism; intramuscular fat

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