

ISSN 2224-4980



**International
Journal of Ecosystems and Ecology Science
(IJEES)**

<https://doi.org/10.31407/ijeess>



Essays on Ecosystems and Environmental Research

Volume 13/2, 2023

February 2023- June 2023

<http://ijeess.net/>

**International
Journal of Ecosystems and Ecology Science
(IJEES)**

<https://doi.org/10.31407/ijeess>





International Journal of Ecosystems and Ecology Science (IJEES), ISSN: 2224-4980

Volume 13, Issue 2, February 2023 - June 2023, (Serial Number 50)



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Publication Information:

International journal of ecosystems and ecology science (IJEES), ISSN 2224-4980, publishing original articles, reviews and short communications of high scientific standard on ecosystems and science ecology. By: Hysen Mankolli, Professor, Ecologist, Plainfield, Illinois, USA; Health and Environment Association, Tirana, Albania;

ISSN International Centre, *Bibliographic Data Section*, PARIS, FRANCE;

Bib - ID 68337; ISO standard 3297;

Key title: International journal of ecosystems and ecology science

Abbreviated key title: *Int. j. ecosyst. ecol. sci.*

ISSN 2224-4980; <http://ijees.net/>

Frequency: four times a year. IJEES Electronic Journal Publication: Plainfield, Illinois, USA;

DOI prefix: 10.31407, <https://doi.org/10.31407/ijees>

IJEES doi crossref

<https://doi.org/10.31407/ijees>

EBSCO's library products, USA

<http://www.ebscohost.com/for-publishers/for-publishers>

Index Copernicus, ICV= 2020: **100.00**; ICV= 2019: **100.00**; ICV= 2018: **100.00**; ICV= 2017: **98.95**;

<https://journals.indexcopernicus.com/search/journal/issue?issueId=197247&journalId=31407>

CiteFactor, **IF 2019-2020=1.40**

<https://www.citefactor.org/impact-factor/impact-factor-of-journal-International-Journal-of-Ecosystems-and-Ecology-Science-IJEES.php>

Scientific Journal Impact factor, **SJIF: 2021: 6.121; 2020: 7.167; 2019: 7.64**

<http://sjifactor.com/passport.php?id=17557>

SCILIT

<https://app.scilit.net/publications?source-id=23651&type=journal-article>

Academic Resource Index Research Bible:

<http://journalseeker.researchbib.com/view/issn/2224-4980>

Google scholar Cited, **h-index: 10; Citations 510**;

<https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=W89N8qgAAAAJ&hl=en>

MIAR, **ICDS 2021: 9.5**;

<http://miar.ub.edu/issn/2224-4980>

Web of Science Master List 2018-2022

<https://rdmusm.files.wordpress.com/2020/01/journal-list-emerging-sources-citation-index-web-of-science-update-on-23-jan-2020.pdf>

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DPI Digital Library USA and assign unique digital no. DPI: 16.10047.IJEES

U.S. National Library of Medicine.

NLM ID: [101726509](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/nlmcatalog/101726509) [Serial]; Other ID: (OCOLC)879805056;

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/nlmcatalog/101726509>

This journal has the status of an international journal.

Aims and Scope:

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Abstracted / Indexed / Impact Factor in:

International journal of ecosystems and ecology science (IJEES), ISSN 2224-4980,

IJEES: <http://ijeess.net/>

IJEES have an international status and has been indexed, abstracted, and have impact factors:

ISSN Center responsible of the record: CIEPS - ISSN

<https://portal.issn.org/resource/ISSN/2224-4980>

IJEES doi crossref

<https://doi.org/10.31407/ijeess>

IJEES, Volume 13/2, 2023

[https://ijeess.net/journal-89-International-Journal-of-Ecosystems-and-Ecology-Science-\(IJEES\)-Volume-13-2,-2023.html](https://ijeess.net/journal-89-International-Journal-of-Ecosystems-and-Ecology-Science-(IJEES)-Volume-13-2,-2023.html)

EBSCO's library products, USA

<http://www.ebscohost.com/for-publishers/for-publishers>

Science gate Cited

<https://www.sciencegate.app/source/315335/top-cited>

Index Copernicus, ICV= 2020: 100.00; ICV= 2019: 100.00; ICV= 2018: 100.00; ICV= 2017: 98.95;

<https://journals.indexcopernicus.com/search/journal/issue?issueId=197247&journalId=31407>

CiteFactor, IF 2019-2020=1.40

<https://www.citefactor.org/impact-factor/impact-factor-of-journal-International-Journal-of-Ecosystems-and-Ecology-Science-IJEES.php>

Scientific Journal Impact factor, SJIF: 2021: 6.121; 2020: 7.167; 2019: 7.64

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Academic Resource Index Research Bible:

<http://journalseeker.researchbib.com/view/issn/2224-4980>

Google scholar Cited, h-index: 10; Citations 510;

<https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=W89N8qgAAAAJ&hl=en>

MIAR, ICDS 2021: 9.5;

<http://miar.ub.edu/issn/2224-4980>

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https://www.worldcat.org/search?qt=affiliate_wc_org_all&ai=Directory_ashok.drji%252540gmail.com&fq=&q=2224-4980&wcsbtn2w=Go

US. National Library of Medicine, NLM ID: 101726509 [Serial]; Other ID: (OCOLC)879805056;

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/nlmcatalog/101726509>

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<http://cassi.cas.org/search.jsp>

Environment-and-Nature/Biodiversity/Ecosystem.

<http://www.efita.org/Environment-and-Nature/Biodiversity/Ecosystem-Biodiversity/IJEES-details-28892.html>

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**International
Journal of Ecosystems and Ecology Science
(IJEES)**

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31407/ijeess>

Volume 13/2, 2023

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31407/ijeess13.2>

Table of contents:

Oleksandr Tkachuk*, Nadiya Viter, Snizhana Pankova, Olga Titarenko, Lyudmila Yakovets, THE CURRENT ENVIRONMENTAL STATE OF THE FIELD PROTECTIVE FOREST BELTS OF THE FOREST STEPPE OF UKRAINE, page 1-6;

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31407/ijeess13.201>

Mohammed Balubaid¹, Waqar Ahmad Gulzar¹, Hani Aburas¹, Osman Taylan¹, Abdulaziz S. Alkabaa¹, Omer A. Bafail¹, Anas A. Makki², Ammar Y. Alqahtani¹, Hassan M. Alidrisi¹, Basil Omar Al-Sasi¹, Shoukath Ali Karuvatt³, Hisham Alidrisi^{1*}, MONITORING THE PERFORMANCE OF AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD SECTOR COMPANIES USING DEA, page 9-24;

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31407/ijeess13.202>

DOUKANI Koula^{12*}, BOUHENNI Hasna¹, BOUKIRAT Dyhia³, HADJARAB Mohamed Hocine¹, MOKHTAR Asma¹, ZAHY Racha¹, EPIDEMIOLOGICAL STUDY OF GASTRODUODENAL DISEASES (*HELICOBACTER PYLORI*) IN THE REGION OF TIARET, ALGERIA, page 25-32;

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31407/ijeess13.203>

Eugena Tomini^{1*}, Adela Vasili¹, Elona Kureta¹, Artan Simaku¹, Silvia Bino¹, COVID-19: A PANDEMIC EXPERIENCE FOR THE COOPERATION OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY WORLDWIDE, page 33-36;

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31407/ijeess13.204>

Fatma Köprülü^{1*}, Osama Abduljalil Mohammad Hamad^{2*}, Aşkın Kiraz^{3*}, PERCEPTIONS OF LIBYANS TOWARDS CLIMATE CHANGE, page 37-44;

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31407/ijeess13.205>

Nevila Bushati^{1,2,*}, Anila Neziri², Arlind Mustafa³, PHYSICO-CHEMICAL AND BACTERIOLOGICAL EVALUATION FROM GROUNDWATERS OF PUKA CITY, page 45-50;

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31407/ijeess13.206>

Inna Honcharuk, Oleksandr Tkachuk*, Olexandr Mazur, Ruslan Kravets, Olena Mazur, Oleksiy Aliksieiev, Zabarna Tetyana, Lina Bronnikova, MANIFESTATION OF ECOLOGICAL-ADAPTIVE PROPERTIES OF SOYBEAN VARIETIES DEPENDING ON SOIL-CLIMATIC CONDITIONS, page 51-60;

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31407/ijeess13.207>

Mohammed Alamoudi^{1*}, SAFETY CLIMATE DIMENSIONS AS PREDICTORS FOR WORKER'S SATISFACTION REGARDING SAFETY LEVEL, page 61-70;

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31407/ijeess13.208>

Serhii Razanov^{1,2*}, Olha Koruniak³, Andrii Dydiv¹, Tetiana Holubieva⁴, Lyudmyla Symochko^{5,6}, Volodymyr Balkovskyy¹, Oleksiy Alekseev², Oksana Vradii², Halina Ohorodnichuk², Mikhaylo Polishchuk², Oleh Kolisnyk², Oleksandr Mazur², Olena Mazur², RADIOPROTECTIVE AND SORPTION PROPERTIES OF BEESPINE, page 71-76;

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31407/ijeess13.209>

Victor Mazur¹, Hanna Pantsyreva^{1*}, Oleh Ovcharuk², Kateryna Mazur¹, Ruslan Myalkovsky³, Oleg Tkach³, Serhii Verholiuk¹, FEATURES OF THE FUNCTIONING OF THE ASSIMILATION APPARATUS OF LUPINUS ALBUS DEPENDING ON THE USE OF ECO-BIOLOGICAL PREPARATIONS, page 77-84;

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31407/ijeess13.210>

Furkan TÜRK^{1,2}, Hayriye Nur NAYAN², Selim DOĞAN^{3*}, Ülkü Sultan KESKİN², THE CARBON COST OF THE BUILDINGS DESTROYED IN YALOVA IN THE 1999 MARMARA EARTHQUAKE, page 85-90;

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31407/ijeess13.211>

Alla Levishko¹, Iryna Gumeniuk^{1*}, Viktoriya Tsvigun¹, Svitlana Mazur¹, Yeuheniia Tkach¹, Olena Demyanyuk¹, Tetiana Kovalenko², THE INFLUENCE OF FIRE CULTIVATION ON THE SOIL MICROORGANISMS, page 91-96;

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31407/ijeess13.212>

Oleg Tkach¹, Viktor Dubik¹, Oleh Ovcharuk², Lyudmila Mikhaylova¹, Hanna Pantsyreva^{3*}, Dariia Vilchynska¹, Sergii Slobodian¹, Oleg Gorbovy¹, TECHNOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND POTENTIAL OF LANDFILL BIOGAS FOR ELECTRICITY GENERATION, page 97-108;

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31407/ijeess13.213>

Muhamet Kadrija^{1*}, Sabrije Kelmendi-Bardhaj², Besarta Pelaj³, Haxhi Kamberi^{4*}, NURSING CARE FOR PATIENTS AT THE END LIFE, page 109-124;

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31407/ijeess13.214>

MUNTING DIVINE TII^{1*}, TCHOBSALA¹, LOCAL EXPLOITATION AND CHARACTERIZATION OF *BALANITES AEGYPTIACA* (L.) DEL PARKS IN THE SUDANO-SAHELIAN ZONE OF CAMEROON, FAR-NORTH, CAMEROON, page 125-138;

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31407/ijeess13.215>

Ana T. Misoska¹, Snezhana Hristova^{1*}, Elena Bundaleska¹, Sanja Georgieva¹, HOW DO EMPLOYEES' ATTITUDES TOWARDS "GREEN BEHAVIOR" RELATE TO ENVIRONMENTAL CULTURE? page 139-152;

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31407/ijeess13.216>

Ihor Ya. Tymochko¹, Oleksandr Yu. Chornobrov¹, Olha V. Bezrodnova², Ihor V. Solomakha¹, Oksana I. Drebot¹, Valentyna M. Maliarenko^{3*}, DEADWOOD STOCK IN A LINDEN-PINE-OAK FOREST OF SLOBOZHANSKYI NATIONAL NATURE PARK, page 153-162;

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31407/ijeess13.217>

Hanna Myronova, Inna Honcharuk, Oleksandr Mazur, Oleksandr Tkachuk^{*}, Oksana Vradii, Olena Mazur, Yurii Shkatula, Liudmyla Peleh, Svitlana Okrushko, OPTIMIZATION OF MEASURES TO INCREASE DISEASE RESISTANCE OF POTATO VARIETIES AS A FACTOR OF REDUCING ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION, page 163-170;

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31407/ijeess13.218>

Rahimeh Dastranj¹, Azam Moslehi², Hoda Ahmari Tehran³, Asghar Elahi⁴, Fatemeh Nojavan^{5*}, AVICENNA'S PERCEPTION OF BLOOD PROPERTIES COMPARED WITH CURRENT BIOMEDICAL KNOWLEDGE, page 171-178;

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31407/ijeess13.219>

Amilda Ballata*, **Aferdita Shtembari**, STUDY OF MICROBIOLOGICAL QUALITY OF DIFFERENT VARIETIES OF WHEAT FOR PROCESSING FLOUR, page 179-184;
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31407/ijees13.220>

RADIOPROTECTIVE AND SORPTION PROPERTIES OF BEESPINE

Serhii Razanov^{1,2*}, Olha Koruniak³, Andrii Dydiv¹, Tetiana Holubieva⁴, Lyudmyla Symochko^{5,6},
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Received December 2022; Accepted January 2023; Published February 2023;

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31407/ijeess13.209>

ABSTRACT

The research aimed to study the radioprotective and sorption properties of beespine, which refers to the bodies of bees that die during the winter season. The goal was to expand the range of applications for beespine by exploring its potential as a source of radioprotective and sorption properties. The study found that beespine contains biologically active substances, including melitin, melanin, and sulfur-containing amino acids. These substances exhibited radioprotective and sorption properties, which could potentially be beneficial when ingested by quails as part of their feed mixture. Overall, the research suggests that beespine has the potential to be used in various applications beyond its current use as a waste product from beekeeping. Its radioprotective and sorption properties could have practical uses in areas such as animal feed and potentially even in human medicine. In particular, it was observed an increase in the lifespan of quails from 1.5 to 2.2 times with a content of 2 to 7.5% of beespine in the form of a powdered biological mass in the feed mixture after their fractional local irradiation of gamma rays with a total dose of 90 gr, compared to the poultry, in the diet of which there was no beespine. It was also determined that the removal from the bodies of quails with indigestible feed remains (droppings) of ¹³⁷Cs by 6.6 p.p., ⁹⁰Sr by 18.7 p.p., Pb by 15.3 p.p. and Cd by 34.6 p.p., respectively, was observed to be higher when adding the beespine (3%) in their diet. It was found a lower level of ¹³⁷Cs by 32.7%, Pb by 53.2% and Cd by 20.0% in their muscle tissue, compared to their analogues that were not fed beespine.

Keywords: beespine, melanin, melittin, quail, radioprotective and sorption properties, feed mixture, biologically active substances.

INTRODUCTION

The current ecological situation in some territories of Ukraine and in the whole world is characterized as unsatisfactory due to the high man-made load on the environment (Razanov et al, 2022). It especially concerns the

areas with intensive use of industrial production, where the accidents due to various production violations cause a high level of environmental pollution with various toxic substances, including radionuclides and heavy metals (Bonazzola et al, 1997; Borawska et al, 2013; Ji-gen, Lu et al, 2006; Kryvyi et al, 2021). Territories have experienced a high man-made impact on the environment as a result of accidents at nuclear power plants, both in Ukraine and throughout the world. It is known that over 54 different types of accidents at nuclear power plants have been recorded during the period of use of nuclear energy in the world (Rose et al, 2016).

Ukraine suffered a significant impact on the environment in 1986 as a result of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, during which a large area was contaminated with radionuclides and heavy metals (Yakymchuk, 2018). Among these toxic substances, ¹³⁷Cs, ⁹⁰Sr, Pb and Cd represent a high danger due to their intensive migration in the environment (Marciulioniene et al, 2004; Kohanoff et al, 2021). Accumulating in food products, these toxic substances enter living organisms, causing a whole series of changes, which are mainly accompanied by the occurrence of diseases. It is known that ¹³⁷Cs has a decay period of 60 years, accumulates mainly in muscle tissue and is removed from the body within 60 days. This radionuclide can replace potassium in living organisms; therefore it is concentrated mainly in those tissues that require a high content of this element. Such toxic substances as ⁹⁰Sr, Pb and Cd accumulate mainly in cartilage and bone tissues, from where they are removed slowly; therefore they cause greater harm to the body.

The decay period of ⁹⁰Sr is 59 years; this isotope can replace Ca in the body, which is accompanied by its displacement from bone tissue and its irradiation. The entry of ¹³⁷Cs and ⁹⁰Sr into living organisms leads to radiation above the norm, which reduces their protective functions, especially during their puberty, which is characterized by rapid cell division and growth of the organism as a whole. It has been determined that as a result of irradiation the cellular link is damaged, its biologically important structures are destroyed, the number of lymphoid cells decreases, which is evidence of immunodeficiency (Horalsky, 2003). It is known that because of the radioactive pollution of the environment, living organisms receive a radiation dose exceeding the annual average from natural sources that leads to a violation of the functions of the central nervous system (Tronko et al, 1995). It has also been experimentally proven that irradiation is accompanied by a violation of metabolic processes, a gradual decrease in the number of leukocytes in the blood, and other negative consequences. It has been proven that Pb is a weak migrant in environmental objects, so it is concentrated in high quantities in soils. As a result of various chemical reactions in the soil environment, Pb can change into an exchangeable form and its migration becomes higher. This toxic substance is a permanent component of body tissues. The entry and accumulation of Pb in living organisms significantly reduces the antioxidant activity of erythrocyte membranes and suppresses the activity of enzymes (Razanov et al, 2022).

Cd, unlike Pb, has a higher migration capacity. This element is slowly removed from the body. A high tendency to accumulate Cd was found in kidneys and liver. This chemical biomicroelement has high toxicity (Rose et al, 2016). It has also been determined that Cd also reduces immunity, negatively affects heredity, damages the kidneys, increases blood pressure, and increases the formation of oxygen free radicals (Solovyov et al, 1997).

Pb and Cd entering living organisms lead to a decrease in immunity, an increase in stress factors and, as a result, a whole series of diseases. The high toxic effect of heavy metals is observed during the period of intensive ontogenesis of organisms. To reduce the negative effects of ¹³⁷Cs, ⁹⁰Sr, Pb and Cd in practice, a number of measures are used, which are mainly aimed at reducing the level of their digestion in the gastrointestinal tract of living organisms and increasing their resistance to these toxic substances. In particular, substances with sorption and protective properties are widely used. Beekeeping products containing biologically active substances of radioprotective and sorption direction, in particular beeswax as their wastes, are of great interest.

The biologically active substances with unique properties are formed from nectar and flower pollen in the body of bees (Al-Kahtani et al, 2020; Cornara et al, 2017; da Costa et al, 2021; da Silva et al, 2016; Estevinho et al, 2008). In particular, royal jelly, its chemical composition and quantity can affect the anatomical features of the structure of insects, as well as their lifespan (Donkersley et al, 2017). It is known that the body of a bee and the body of a bee queen can be formed from the same larva, which depends on the quantity and quality of the royal jelly that the bees feed the larvae with (Ibatullin et al, 2020; Nemo et al, 2021; Nurdin et al, 2021). Grown bees have a lifespan of 1.5 months to 7 months, while the queen bee lives up to 60 months or more. At the same time, it should be noted that grown individuals (queen and bees) have fundamentally different functions and anatomical structure. The body of bees contains a number of important substances, including protein, fat, minerals, vitamins, bee venom, heparin, melanin, etc. (Makarchuk, 2006). Chitin-melanin components and bee venom with their specific characteristics are of special value in the bee body.

Bee venom contains peptides, enzymes, free amino acids, nitrogen, carbon, iron, magnesium, calcium, phosphorus, copper, zinc, sulfur, manganese, iodine, chlorine, amino acids, lipids, nucleic acids and other substances, as well as the polypeptide melanin. Bee chitin contains 20 to 30% of melanin. It contains carbon, nitrogen, hydrogen and other substances. Sulfur was also detected in melanin, the amount of which is up to 12%. Melanin has radioprotective and sorption characteristics. It has been determined that when it enters the body, there is a decrease in the formation of free radicals (under the influence of ionizing radiation, it is recognized as a highly effective antioxidant). Melanin also absorbs Pb, Zn, Cu and other ions. In particular, it is known that one melanin molecule binds 20,730 lead molecules. The bee colony is characterized by intensive growth of its biomass (number of individuals). Up to 200,000 bees are raised in families per year. Due to the short lifespan of bees, from 1.5 months to 7 months, these insects are constantly renewed (growing from eggs) in colonies. And on average, there are from 20,000 to 80,000 individuals in bee families during the year (Samuelson et al, 2020).

The most accessible for study and use is the biomass of bees, which is formed as a result of the death of bees (die-off) during their wintering. During the winter period, a certain part of the bodies of bees that die during this period accumulates at the bottom of the hive, which is called the "beespine". The amount of beespine can reach from 10 to 30%. That is, from 400 to 600 g of beespine is formed per 1 family after each winter period.

These beekeeping wastes contain a high level of protein, which is up to 58.5%. The content of fat is up to 12.7%; the content of carbohydrates is up to 13.5%; the content of minerals is up to 5.36%. In addition, they contain the chitin-melanin complex, bee venom and other biologically active substances. However, information on the preservation of radioprotective and sorption properties of biologically active substances in beespine is insufficient, which does not allow to use effectively these wastes in the national economy, in particular, in agricultural production in conditions of man-made load, where the issue of reducing the negative impact of toxic substances on the animal body and their products is of great urgency.

Therefore, the aim of our research was to study the radioprotective and sorption characteristics of beespine obtained after the winter period, as a result of the natural death of bees in bee colonies.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The studies on the radioprotective and sorption properties of beespine (bodies of bees that died during the winter period) were conducted on quails of the Japanese breed. Two groups of quails participated in the research. The first group of quails was a control group, the second was an experimental group, and each group of quails included three subgroups of birds with 50 heads each, which in total amounted to 150 heads in the control group and 150 in the experimental group. The conditions for keeping quails of the control and experimental groups were the same; the difference was only in the composition of feed mixture. The quails of the control group consumed a standard feed mixture (compound feed) during their rearing up to 60 days of age, while their analogues of the experimental group consumed a feed mixture, the part of which was replaced by beespine (2%, 3%, 5%, 7.5%) in the form of crushed biomass. During 40 days the quails of both control and experimental groups of 20 to 60 days of age were exposed to gamma irradiation with fractional local doses, which totaled 90 gr for the entire period. The study of the sorption properties of the biomass of beespine was carried out by evaluating the balance of ^{137}Cs , ^{90}Sr , Pb and Cd in the body of quails, which included the intake of these toxic substances with feed, their removal with droppings (indigestible remains of feed) and their retention in the body of the experimental poultry.

The experimental groups of quails were formed according to the principle of analogue groups. The ratio of females to males in each group was 50:50%. The specific activity of ^{137}Cs in the feed mixture, the muscle and fat tissue and the droppings of quails were determined by spectrometry. The activity of ^{90}Sr was defined by chemical way, the concentration of Pb and Cd by atomic absorption.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As a result of the conducted research, it was determined that the intake of the powdered mass of beespine after fractional local irradiation of gamma rays with a total dose of 90 gr into the body of quails as part of the main diet contributed to an increase in their lifespan compared to their analogues of the control group, in the diet of which there was no that biomass (Fig.1).

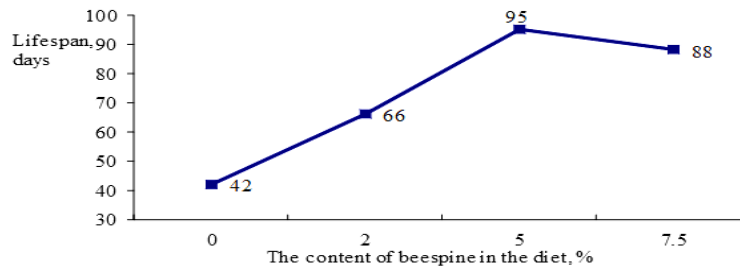


Figure 1. Lifespan of quails after their local-fractional gamma-irradiation, days

In the first experimental group of quails, where the compound feed included 2% of the powdered biomass of beespine, the average lifespan was by 1.5 times ($P < 0.001$) higher compared to their analogues in the control group, the diet of which did not contain that biomass. The increase of the powdered mass of beespine in the diet of quails up to 5% increased their lifespan by 2.2 times ($P < 0.001$), while the increase of up to 7% increased the lifespan by 2.1 times ($P < 0.001$) compared to the poultry of the control group. Thus, the increase in the lifespan of quails due to their gamma irradiation confirms the preservation of radioprotective properties of beespine biomass. Along with that, it was found that feeding quails with compound feed containing beespine biomass contributed to an increase in the removal of ^{137}Cs from their bodies with droppings (Table 1). It was found that ^{137}Cs was removed with droppings from the body of quails of the experimental group by 6.7 p.p. more, while it retained in the body less, i.e. 38.4% compared to 45.1% ($P < 0.05$) in the poultry of the control group.

Table 1. The balance of ^{137}Cs and ^{90}Sr in the body of quails ($n=3$, M+m).

Groups of quails	Feed mixture	Intaken with compound feed, Bq	Removed with droppings		Retained in the body	
			Bq	%	Bq	%
Balance of ^{137}Cs						
1-control	compound feed	0.1688 ± 0.043	0.0927 ± 0.0019	54.9	0.0761 ± 0.0028	45.1
2-experimental	compound feed + biomass of beespine	0.1595 ± 0.021	0.0983 ± 0.0025	61.6	0.0612 ± 0.0031	38.4
Balance of ^{90}Sr						
1-control	compound feed	0.0032 ± 0.00017	0.0016 ± 0.0005	50.0	0.0016 ± 0.00005	50.0
2-experimental	compound feed + biomass of beespine	0.0032 ± 0.0004	0.0022 ± 0.0003	68.7	0.001 ± 0.00005	31.3

With the same total specific activity in the diet of quails of the experimental group, ^{90}Sr was removed with droppings by 18.7 p.p. Bq more compared to their analogues of the control group. It was accompanied by a lower retention of ^{90}Sr in the body by 18.7 p.p. ($P < 0.001$). A similar trend was observed for heavy metals (Pb and Cd) (Table 2). Pb, which belongs to cumulative poisons, was removed from the body of quails of the experimental group by 15.3 p.p., while Cd by 34.6 p.p. more intensively compared to their analogues in the control group.

Table 2. The balance of Pb and Cd in the body of quails ($n=3$, M+m).

Groups of quails	Feed mixture	Intaken with compound feed, mg	Removed with droppings		Retained in the body	
			mg	%	mg	% from intaken
Balance of Pb						
1-control	compound feed	0.0591 ± 0.0031	0.0218 ± 0.004	36.9	0.0373 ± 0.004	63.1
2-experimental	compound feed + biomass of beespine	0.0598 ± 0.0012	0.0312 ± 0.006	52.2	0.0286 ± 0.01	47.8
Balance of Cd						
1-control	compound feed	0.0030 ± 0.0004	0.0017 ± 0.0002	56.7	0.0013 ± 0.0001	43.3
2-experimental	compound feed + biomass of beespine	0.0023 ± 0.0007	0.0021 ± 0.0003	91.3	0.0002 ± 0.00003	8.7

47.8% of Pb and 8.7% of Cd, intaken with the feed, were retained in the body of quails of the experimental group. It was less compared to 63.1% and 43.3% in the poultry of the control group ($P < 0.001$). According to the research data, it was determined that the decrease in the intensity of digesting ^{137}Cs , Pb and Cd in the gastrointestinal tract of quails had a positive effect on the level of accumulation of these toxic substances in their muscle and fat tissue (Table 3).

Table 3. Specific activity of ^{137}Cs and concentration of Pb and Cd in muscle-fat tissue of quails (n=3, M+m).

Indicators	Groups	
	Control	Experimental
Activity of ^{137}Cs , Bq/kg	15.9 ± 0.12	10.7 ± 1.0
Pb, mg/kg	0.440 ± 0.01	0.206 ± 0.003
Cd mg/kg	0.11 ± 0	0.088 ± 0.001

In particular, the specific activity of ^{137}Cs in the muscle-fat tissue of quails of the experimental group was by 32.7% lower compared to their analogues of the control group. The accumulation of Pb and Cd in the muscle-fat tissue of quails of the experimental group was also lower by 53.2% and 20.0%, respectively, compared to the poultry of the control group. At the same time, it should be noted that Cd had a higher migration and deposition activity in the muscle-fat tissue of quails than Pb.

CONCLUSIONS

The intake of 2 to 7.5% of beespine biomass into the compound feed contributed to an increase in the lifespan of quails by 1.5 to 2.2 times after their fractional-local gamma irradiation with a total dose of 90 gr compared to the poultry, the diet of which did not contain beespine.

3% content of beespine biomass in the composition of feed mixture contributed to an increase in the removal of ^{137}Cs by 6.7 p.p., ^{90}Sr by 18.7 p.p., Pb by 15.3 p.p. and Cd by 34.6 p.p., respectively, from their body with indigestible feed remains (droppings). It was found a lower level of ^{137}Cs by 32.7%, Pb by 53.2% and Cd by 20.0% in their muscle tissue, compared to their analogues of the control group, which were fed compound feed without the biomass of beespine.

That is, according to the research results, it has been determined the preservation of radioprotective and sorption properties of biologically active substances of beespine biomass when entering the body of quails in the composition of feed mixture. It gives the prospect of using these beekeeping wastes in feeding poultry (quails) with the aim of reducing the man-made load of radionuclides and heavy metals on their bodies and production (meat).

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