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Scholars Journal of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences (SJAVS) e-ISSN 2348-1854 Abbreviated Key Title: Sch. J. Agric. Vet. Sci. p-ISSN 2348-8883 ©Scholars Academic and Scientific Publishers (SAS Publishers) A Unit of Scholars Academic and Scientific Society, India  
www.saspublisher.com Effects of the Supplementation of Euphorbia hirta L. in Feed on the In-Vitro Rumen Fermentation and Digestibility Zulfa Elymaizar<sup>1\*</sup>, Arnim<sup>2</sup>, Salam N. Aritonang<sup>2</sup>, Mardiaty Zein<sup>3</sup>, Elly Roza<sup>2</sup>  
<sup>1</sup>Dairy Science of Animal Husbandry Faculty, Jambi University, Jambi, Indonesia <sup>2</sup>Department of Animal Production, Animals Science Faculty, Andalas University, Padang, Indonesia <sup>3</sup>Department of Animal Nutrition, Animals Science Faculty, Andalas University, Padang, Indonesia Abstract: The purpose of this research was to analyze the effect of Patikan Kerbau Original Research Article (Euphorbia hirta L) flour on the in-vitro rumen fermentation and digestibility using goat rumen fluid. The materials of the research were rumen fluid of goats, forage, tofu \*Corresponding author waste and E. hirta flour. The research method was experimental using Randomized Zulfa Elymaizar Block Design with 6 treatments and 4 groups of goat rumen fluid as replication. The treatments of this experiment were herbal supplements in feed with different Article History formulations: P0=

control feed (forage 60%: concentrate 40%); P1= P0 + 5% E. hirta  
Received: 03.04.2017 (dry matter basis); P2= P0 + 10% E. hirta; P3= P0 + 15% E. hirta; P4= P0 + 20% E. Accepted: 14.04.2018 hirta, and P5= P0 + 25% E. hirta. The measured variables were pH rumen fluid,  
Published: 30.04.2018 concentration of N-NH<sub>3</sub>, concentration of total VFA, [dry matter digestibility and organic matter digestibility in](#) the rumen fluid incubation 48 hour. Data were analyzed DOI: [using variance \(ANOVA\), if there any differences](#) in treatment, then continued with 10.21276/sjavs.2018.5.4.9 Duncan Multiple Range Test (DMRT). The result of the research showed that supplementation of E. hirta in feed did not significantly (P>0.05) affect on rumen pH, but it highly significant affected (P<0.01) on the total VFA concentration, N-NH<sub>3</sub> concentration, dry matter and organic matter digestibility of feed. Conclusion of the research was the supplementation of E. hirta can affect the in-vitro rumen fermentation and digestibility. The best treatment is the supplementation of E. hirta flour 15% (P3) in feed because it can increase the concentration of total VFA, concentration of N-NH<sub>3</sub>, dry matter in vitro digestibility and organic matter in vitro digestibility without changing the rumen fluid pH. Keywords: In-vitro, fermentation, digestibility, Euphorbia hirta, supplementation, goat rumen fluid. INTRODUCTION Many ways can be done to increase the milk production such as giving proper and supplementing with additive feed in the form of synthetic compounds. This would influence the increase of the substrate flow to mammary gland and also the increase of the number of cell secretion of mammary gland. However, arbitrary and long-term use of synthetic products could also provide the side effects that could reduce milk production, immunity and reproductive performance of animals. Currently, galactogogues herbs are developed to obtain the safe milk production. The use of galactogogues from herbs seems to reinforce the health of dairy cattle without causing damage on tissue reaction [1], does not have side effects and does not leave residue in tissue, secretion, excretion and milk [2]. One of medicinal plants that have properties of galactogogue is herb E hirta. E hirta is a wild plant commonly found in tropical regions, and has a reputation for increasing milk flow in women [3] and when it is given to female rabbits before puberty it can improve the development of mammary glands and cause secretion [4]. The ability of E. hirta to increase milk production involves active compounds that have the property to increase the secretion of prolactin (the main hormone of lactation), and increase the secretion of  $\beta$ -casein (the main protein of milk), and as a result they increase milk secretion in women and animals [5]. The phytochemical screening of E. hirta indicated the presence of alkaloids, flavonoids, tannins, phenolics, steroids, saponins and glycosides, whereas terpenoids was absent [6]. Feeding E. hirta at a dose of 10 g/kg body weight is non-toxic because there is no apparent change in behavior, food and water intake in Swiss mice and is relatively safe when administered orally [7]. There is a positive effects of E. hirta supplementation in feed on the intestinal microflora, histomorphology of the small intestine and the performance in broiler chickens [8]. The use of this plant in ruminants has not been studied Available online: [www.saspublisher.com](http://www.saspublisher.com) yet, therefore it is necessary to test the feasibility of using in in ruminant because the process of digestion of ruminants is very specific due to the presence of microbes in the rumen. This research was intended to obtain preliminary information about the effects of supplementing E. hirta in feed of goats on the in-vitro digestibility and the rumen environment. MATERIALS AND METHODS Experimental site and materials In-vitro experiment and variable analysis were conducted at the Laboratory of Nutrition and Feed Ruminants, Animal Science Faculty of Andalas University, from Augustus 2016 to October 2016. Plant E. hirta obtained from the area around in IV Angkat subdistrict Agam regency, West Sumatera, Indonesia. The materials used in this research were goats rumen liquid obtained from slaughterhouse, McDougall's buffer solution, flour of whole plants (E. hirta), forage crops and concentrate was tofu

dregs. The nutritional content of the rationing material [can be seen in Table-1. Table-1:](#) The nutritional content of Feeds Materials (%). Materials Nutritional Content (% DM) DM CP CF CF Ash BETN TDN\* Forage 89,37 10,83 28,64 1,73 9,70 49,11 54,41 Concentrate 89,88 24,05 17,58 1,70 2,73 53,94 70,85 E. hirta 94,19 18,41 21,44 1,43 9,98 48,74 61,28

Experimental design and procedures The design of experiment was Randomized Block Design (RBD) with 6 treatments and 4 groups of goat rumen liquid as replications. The treatments were supplementation of E. hirta in feed with the following diet formulations: P0 = control feed (60% forage and 40% concentrate based on dry matter); P1 = (P0 + 5% E. hirta); P2 = (P0 + 10% E. hirta); P3 = (P0 + 15% E. hirta); P4 = (P0 + 20% E. hirta) and P5 = (P0 + 25% E. hirta). The in-vitro method followed procedures of metode McDougall by [9]. One gram sample of feed (dry oven 60 °C) is fed into the fermentor tube. Meanwhile, rumen fluid was filtered at 38-39 °C. Likewise, McDougall solution was prepared. Furthermore, rumen fluid and McDougall solution with a ratio of 1: 4 were added to the feed sample, then saturated with CO<sub>2</sub> gas for 30 seconds and covered with a ventilated rubber cap. The next stage was incubated for 48 hours at a temperature of 38-39 °C. After that, centrifugation was done with a speed of 2,500 rpm for 15 minutes. The next step was the addition of pepsin and then incubated again at a temperature of 38-39 °C for 48 hours. To end the fermentation process, 0.2 ml of saturated HgCl<sub>2</sub> solution was added to kill microbes and then centrifuged at 2,500 rpm for 15 minutes. Part supernatant was used for the analysis of VFA and N- NH<sub>3</sub>. Part precipitate was filtered with Whatman filter paper, dried in an oven at 105 °C for 24 hours, then put into exicator and weighed to determine the final weight of the dry matter. The precipitate was then burned in an electric furnace and weighed to determine the content of residual organic matter digestion in-vitro. Measurement of the in-vitro rumen fermentation and digestibility Parameters measured included ruminal pH, total VFA and N-NH<sub>3</sub> concentrations of rumen fluid, dry matter digestibility (IVDMD) and organic matter digestibility (IVOMD). Ruminal pH was standardize the pH meter by dipping the cathode present at pH meters into buffer pH 7 before use, then dipped into the supernatant, then left for a few seconds and the emerging number represents the degree of acidity of the rumen fluid (pH). Total VFA measurement using "Steam distillation" method. Five ml of supernatant fluid were inserted into distillation tube, then 15% H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> added 1 ml, then the tube was closed so that it was airtight and connected with coolant flask (Leibiq type). After that the tube was directly inserted into a distillers flask containing boiling water (heated during distillation). The hot water vapor urges the VFA to condense in the coolant. The formed water was accommodated in Erlenmeyer containing 5 ml of NaOH 0.5 N solution up to about 300 ml. Destilat accommodated by phenolphthalein (PP) indicator 2 drops and then titrated with HCl 0.5 N until the color change from pink become colorless. Tumed titration of 5 ml NaOH was also performed. Total VFA production is calculated by the equation: VFA total (mM) = (a-b) × N HCl × 1000/5. N-NH<sub>3</sub> concentration were determined using the Conway diffusion micro technique. The Conway Cup consists of three chambers. In the center there was a small cup and two other rooms were located outside the circle. The measurement step begins by inserting a 1 ml boric acid into the center of the cup. One ml of supernatant was placed on the left side of the Conway barrier and 1 ml of saturated Na<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> solution was placed on the right partition. The cup was tightly closed and the vial cap was covered with vaseline before the cup was shaken for a few minutes so the supernatant mixes with NaOH. Then left for 24 hours at room temperature. Ammonia coming out of the supernatant due to react with Na<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> was immediately bound to boric acid. Ammonia bound to boric acid was titrated with H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> 0.005 N until a blue discoloration becomes reddish. The N-NH<sub>3</sub> content was calculated by the following formula: NH<sub>3</sub> = (ml Titration × N H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> × 1000) mM. The content of the dry matter and organic matter was analyzed. As blanks

were used rumen fluid without treatment. The dry matter and organic matter digestibility coefficients are calculated by the equation:  $DM\ initial - (DM\ residue - DM\ blanko) / IVDMD\ (\%) = \frac{DM\ initial - (DM\ residue - DM\ blanko)}{DM\ initial} \times 100$   $OM\ initial - (OM\ residue - OM\ blanko) / IVOMD\ (\%) = \frac{OM\ initial - (OM\ residue - OM\ blanko)}{OM\ initial} \times 100$

Statistical Analysis Data of the in-vitro rumen fermentation and digestibility parameters were analyzed by One Way - ANOVA using SPSS ver. 21 and Duncan Multiple Range Test (DMRT) was used to compared the treatments means [10].

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION** The effects of *E. hirta* supplementation in feed on rumen fermentation [can be seen in Table-2.](#)

**Table-2:** The effects of *E. hirta* supplemented in feed on the in-vitro rumen fermentation and digestibility. Parameters Treatments P0 P1 P2 P3 P4 P5

Parameter	P0	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
Rumen pH	71.28±0.37a	6.82±0.07	82.91±0.94b	6.86±0.05	88.53±0.48c	6.86±0.05
Total VFA (mM)	9.28±0.13b	10.64±0.46c	11.70±0.33d	13.86±0.19e	9.04±0.36b	4.81±0.60a
N-NH3 (mM)	53.82±0.26a	58.66±0.25b	62.32±0.99c	64.32±1.06d	54.84±0.36a	54.71±0.86a
IVDMD (%)	59.19±0.87a	58.96±0.79a	61.07±0.32b	63.01±0.80c	64.38±0.77d	59.19±0.87a
IVOMD (%)	59.19±0.87a	58.96±0.79a	61.07±0.32b	63.01±0.80c	64.38±0.77d	59.19±0.87a

Different superscripts on the same line shows significant difference (P<0.05)

The effect of herbal supplementation in feed on rumen pH High and low pH of the rumen fluid is a determining factor for whether or not the conditions for the process of rumen fermentation. Statistically, the supplementation of *E. hirta* in feed had no significant effect (P>0.05) on rumen fluid pH. The highest rumen fluid pH value was in P3 treatment (6.95±0.24) and the lowest one was in P5 (6.81±0.07) (Table-2). It indicated that there was no side effects of herbal addition into the rumen microorganisms and the in vitro rumen fermentation system. This pH value is ideal to support a good rumen environment for growing rumen microbe and digesting feed such as fiber and proteins. The pH value of rumen fluid of goats fed with the supplementation of *E. hirta* in feed was still within the normal range of between 6.5-7.0, [11]. The activity of cellulotic bacteria was inhibited when the rumen fluid pH was below 6.2 and the microbial activity is optimal at pH 6.7±0.5 [12]. The results of this experiment related with the study done by [13] who found that betel leaf herb (*Piper betle* L.) added to feed did not affect the rumen pH. This might be caused by betel leaf containing bioactive compounds which are also owned by *E. hirta*, therefore it might provide the same effect on the rumen pH. The bioactive compounds contained in betel leaves were steroids, diterpenes, tannins, flavonoids, saponins, coumarin and alkaloids [14].

The effect of herbal supplementation in feed on total VFA rumen concentrations The result showed that the supplementation of *E. hirta* in feed was highly significant effect (P<0.01) on total VFA concentration. The Duncan test showed that the highest concentration of total VFA was in P3 (P<0.01), 97.50±0.72 mM, followed by treatments of P2, P1, P4, P5 and the lowest was on P0 treatment, 71.28±0.37 mM (Table-2). The total VFA concentration among treatments of P0, P4 and P5 showed not significant difference (P>0.05). The high concentrations of VFA in the rumen of treatments of P3, P2 and P1 showed that content of bioactive compounds in *E. hirta* given up to 15% (P3). These did not cause fermentation by rumen microbes in degrading crude fiber (starch, cellulose, hemicellulose and pectin) until the formation of VFA so that the concentration of VFA produced is still high. The high concentrations of VFA in the rumen also increased availability of energy [for the growth of rumen microbes](#) where VFA in [the rumen is](#) the main source of energy and the [source of carbon](#) skeletons [for the formation of microbial proteins](#) in rumen [15]. However, at high concentration of *E. hirta*, 20% (P4) and 25% (P5), the VFA concentration in rumen fluid decreased to 72.05±0.02 mM (P4) and 71.32±0.30 mM (P5). It looks the two treatments were not significantly different in comparison with control (P0) with the concentration of VFA of 71.28±0.37 mM. The decrease of VFA concentrations in the rumen might be due to the

high concentration of *E. hirta* in the treatment of P4 and P5 leading to higher tannin intake, which may affect to the decrease of rumen microbial activity. This might be due to excessive tannin properties to inhibit some rumen microbial activity, particularly fibrolytic bacteria. According to [16, 17], many plant extracts and plant secondary metabolites at high doses might possibly reduce the total of VFA concentrations as well as partial VFA concentrations as a result of their antimicrobial effects. Bioactive compounds within *E. hirta* such as tannins, saponins, flavonoids and alkaloids have antibacterial properties. Secondary metabolites such as tannins, saponins, flavonoids and alkaloids have antimicrobial effects that could increase the permeability of microbial cells membrane without destroying them, inhibiting microbial enzymes and inhibiting multiplication and microbial growth [18]. With the disruption of rumen microbial activity, the process of fermentation of crude fiber in the rumen by microbes converting into volatile fatty acid (VFA) was also disrupted, it therefore the concentration of VFA produced also decreased up to the amount which was not different from the control (P0). The VFA concentration of rumen fluid resulted in this study was still within the normal range as recommended by [19], it was about 70-150 mM. Total VFA production as a response of *E. hirta* supplemented in feed varied according to level of supplementation in feed. The high level of herbal supplementation in feed might reduce the population of rumen bacteria. On the other hand, the low level of herbal supplementation in feeds could modulate the bacterial growth leading to produce high VFA concentration. The bioactive compounds at low doses, they have the potential to improve rumen fermentation, but at high doses, they have an adverse effects on rumen fermentation [20]. The effect of herbal supplementation in feed on N- NH<sub>3</sub> rumen concentrations The result showed that supplementation of *E. hirta* in feed was highly significant effect (P < 0.01) on N -NH<sub>3</sub> rumen concentration. The Duncan test showed that the highest concentration of N-NH<sub>3</sub> was found on treatment of P3 (P<0.01), 13.86±0.19 mM, followed by the treatments of P2, P1, P0, P4 and the lowest was on P5 treatment, 4.81±0.60 mM. The higher concentration of N-NH<sub>3</sub> in treatment of P3, P2 and P1 than those in control (P0) showed that the content of bioactive compounds contained in *E. hirta* such as saponins, flavonoids, alkaloids and tannins given up to 15% level did not disturb the rumen microbial activity in changing protein to ammonia, so that N-NH<sub>3</sub> concentration resulted was still high. It also increased the availability of microbial protein-forming components in which ruminal N-NH<sub>3</sub> is the principal microbial N source to synthesize amino acids for their growth [21, 22]. However, on the higher content of *E. hirta* (20%) in treatment of P4, N-NH<sub>3</sub> concentration decreased to 9.04±0.36 mM. Given 25% (P5) *E. hirta*, N-NH<sub>3</sub> concentration decreased more to reach the lowest concentration, 4.81±0.60 mM. The decrease of N-NH<sub>3</sub> concentration by increasing *E. hirta* (25% in P5), causes the intake of bioactive compounds, especially the tannins are higher in the rumen causing rumen microbial activity to be disturbed due to excessive tannins properties which could also poison some rumen microbes. As suggested by [23], tannins contain hydroxyl and carboxyl groups that can form complexes with bacterial cells membrane that may interfere bacterial activity. With the disruption of rumen microbial activity there is a decrease in feed protein degradation in the rumen to be converted into amino acids and ultimately into N-NH<sub>3</sub> ammonia, resulting in decreased N-NH<sub>3</sub> concentration. The results of this research are related with the results found by [24] with the addition of sambiloto (*Andrographis paniculata*); [25] with the addition of lemongrass (*Cymbopogon citratus* Stapf.), and [26] with the addition of lemongrass or galangal in the diet, where herbal supplementation significantly (P<0.05) decreased the N-NH<sub>3</sub> concentration in rumen fluid. This is because the herbs contain bioactive compounds that are also owned by *E. hirta*, when given in high concentrations they can disrupt the activity of rumen microbes. The result also reduced the rate of proteolysis, peptidolysis and protein deamination by microbes so as to

affect the decrease in N-NH<sub>3</sub> concentration produced. The N-NH<sub>3</sub> concentration resulted in this research is still within the normal range, 4.81-13.86 mM. In accordance with the opinion of [27], the concentration of N-NH<sub>3</sub> which supports the growth of microbes in the rumen is about 4-14 mM. The ammonia concentration in rumen fluid varies depending on the amount of feed protein, protein degradation rate and time after feeding [28]. N-NH<sub>3</sub> concentrations less than the minimum limit of the normal range may interfere with the fermentation process. The decrease in ruminal N-NH<sub>3</sub> concentrations is associated with a decrease in total VFA concentrations, which leads to a decrease in overall fermentation of feed [29], since VFA is a major source of energy for ruminants, a decrease in ruminal VFA production may have adverse nutritional consequences if this effect expressed through in-vivo. The effect of herbal supplementation in feed on dry matter in vitro digestibility. Statistically, supplementation of *E. hirta* in feed showed highly significant effect (P<0.01) on the dry matter in vitro digestibility. The Duncan test showed that the highest dry matter digestibility was found in treatment of P3 (P<0.01), 64.33±1.06%, followed by treatments of P2, P1, P4, P5 and the lowest was in treatment of P0, 53.82±0.26% (Table-2). There was no significant effect among treatments of P0, P4 and P5 (P>0.05). The high dry matter in vitro digestibility in the treatment of P1, P2 and P3 showed that bioactive compounds from *E. hirta* supplemented up to 15% in feed did not have a negative effect on rumen in vitro digestibility. The nutrient content of feeds such as crude protein and energy at the addition of 15% of *E. hirta* is sufficient enough for surviving of the microbes viability in the rumen and could increase the activity of rumen bacteria in the formation of cellulolytic bacteria to degrade carbohydrates. The results of this study were consistent with the findings of [26] suggesting that the addition of some herbs to the diet does not negatively affect the growth and activity of most species of cellulolytic bacteria. However, giving high concentration of *E. hirta* in feed, the treatment of P4 and P5, decreased the dry matter in vitro digestibility which was no different from control (P0). The decrease of dry matter in vitro digestibility in the rumen was due to the excess *E. hirta* in P4 and P5 treatments then leading to high intake of bioactive compounds present in the rumen, which could lead to decrease the number of rumen bacteria due to the nature of the bioactive compounds such as tannins that could bind bacterial cells membrane [23]. As a result, rumen microbes that degrade carbohydrates fermentatively also decreased and then followed by the decrease of the dry matter in vitro digestibility in the rumen. Dry matter in vitro digestibility is one of indicators to determine the quality of feed. The higher the dry matter in vitro digestibility, the higher the opportunities of nutrition to be used by cattle for growth and production [30]. In-vitro digestibility of dry matter shows the proportion of dry matter feeds that could be digested by rumen microbes. According to [19] feed digestibility is influenced by chemical composition of feed and fibrous feed fraction. The results of this research indicated that the average dry matter in vitro digestibility (57.72%) of *E. hirta* supplemented in feeds was higher than those results obtained by [24] using feed added with sambiloto (*Andrographis paniculata*) with the dry matter digestibility value of 45.33-55.00%, and by [13] using feed added with betel leaves (*Piper betle*) with the dry matter digestibility of 48.65-53.21%. This might be possibly because of betel and bitter leaf containing high bioactive compounds of antibacterial, thus decreasing the activity of rumen microbes in degrading dry matter feeds. As a result dry matter digestibility of feed supplemented by *E. hirta* were higher than those given sambiloto (*Andrographis paniculata*) and betel leaf (*Piper betle*). The effect of herbal supplementation in feed on the organic matter in vitro digestibility. Statistically, supplementation of *E. hirta* in feed showed highly significant effect (P<0.01) on the in vitro digestibility of organic matter. The Duncan test showed that the in vitro digestibility of organic matter on treatment of P3 was very significantly (P<0.01) highest, 64.38±0.77%, followed by

treatment of P2, P1, P4, P5, and the lowest was at P0 treatment,  $58.37 \pm 0.35\%$  (Table-2). There was no difference among P0, P4 and P5 treatments. Differences in the in-vitro digestibility of organic matter among treatments were caused by differences in dry matter in-vitro digestibility at each stage of supplementation. The increase of the in-vitro digestibility of organic matter on the supplementation of E. hirta in feed up to 15% level was caused by the increase of the dry matter in vitro digestibility, since the dry matter in-vitro digestibility is proportionally related to the in vitro digestibility of organic matter. The increase of the in-vitro digestibility of organic matter and the in vitro digestibility of dry matter might be due to the increase of microbial population and then the activity of microbes in the rumen as a result of the availability of adequate and balanced nutrition. It might be also due to feeds having the high crude protein content that causes increased rumen microbial activity, organic matter digestibility and protein synthesis in the rumen and bioactive compounds in E. hirta have not disturbed the digestive process in the rumen in this case the digestibility of organic matter. In addition, organic matters (starch, cellulose and hemicellulose) would be fermented by microbes into the organic fermentation products such as acetic acid (C2), propionic acid (C3), butyric acid (C4) and gas (CH<sub>4</sub> and CO<sub>2</sub>) [31], thereby increasing the rumen VFA concentration and consequently increasing the digestibility of organic matter. The increased concentration of rumen VFA was closely related to the digestibility of organic matter [32]. The decrease of in vitro digestibility of organic matter in treatment of P4 and P5 might be caused by the average of dry matter in vitro digestibility value in the treatment was also low as a result of too high concentration of E. hirta which were 20% and 25%. The decrease of the in vitro digestibility of organic matter might possibly be suspected because the ability of microbes in receiving nutrients (bioactive compounds) exceeds the maximum limit, causing the decrease of microbial activity in rumen. The increase of the content of bioactive compounds such as tannins, which could bind rumen bacterial cells membrane thereby decreasing the activity of rumen microbes in degrading nutrients in feed. As a result, the dry matter in vitro digestibility of feed in the rumen decreased and also followed by the decrease of the in vitro digestibility of organic matter in feeds. Apart from tannin, this reduction might be also suspected because of the presence of saponins that could lysis on protozoan cell walls, and also negatively affecting the activity of rumen bacteria. One factor that affects the effectiveness of saponins against protozoa was the dose of saponins [33]. The decrease in the in-vitro digestibility of organic matter might also be caused by the alkaloid compound within E. hirta that could also interfere the bacterial activity. The tannins, saponins, flavonoids and alkaloids have antimicrobial effects that could increase the permeability of microbial cells membrane, inhibit microbial enzymes and inhibit microbial multiplication and growth [18]. The digestibility of organic matter is higher than dry matter digestibility value, this might be due to the dry matter still contained ash, whereas in organic matter does not contain ash, so that the material without the ash content is relatively easy to be digested. According to [15], the rate of degradation of organic matter was closely related to the rate of degradation of dry matter since most of the dry matter consists of organic materials, which distinguishes it only on ash content in feed materials.

**CONCLUSION** Supplementation of E. hirta up to 15% based on dry matter in feed could affect the rumen environment such as the total VFA concentration and N-NH<sub>3</sub> concentration and the in vitro digestibility of dry matter and organic matter. **SUGGESTION** Further study is needed to explore the effect of supplementation of E. hirta in feed on the rumen microbial population, and in-vivo experiments to determine the effect of E. hirta in feed on the hematology and blood biochemistry aspect, and its effects on increasing production and milk quality.

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