

THOMAS & SABINE VINKE, Haan

Die Rolle ungesättigter Fettsäuren in der Landschildkrötenernährung - eine Annäherung an einen vernachlässigten Aspekt

Effects of unsaturated fatty acids at nutrition of tortoises - an approximation to a neglected aspect

Abstract

The general impact of mono- and poly-unsaturated fatty acids on immune system, energy metabolism, and fertility are given. Symptoms are described that are known from vertebrates (chicken, fish), which occur when insufficient unsaturated fatty acids are given and compared with problems of captive tortoises. It is shown that feeding recommendation for phytophagous lizards usually contain sprouts and seeds, meaning unsaturated fatty acids are supplied. Sources of unsaturated fatty acids in natural food of tortoises are identified. The possibility that unsaturated fatty acids are an essential portion of food for tortoises is evaluated. First positive results after giving low doses of walnut or thistle oil to chronically diseased or weak tortoises are presented. Risks of overdoses or abuse are described.

More research is clearly necessary. However it is recommended that tortoises, at least those who are to be fed in winter, should be fed with a diet with special attention to providing a portion of unsaturated fatty acids by incorporating seeds or sprouts.

Key words

Testudines, Testudinidae, diet, feeding under captive conditions, unsaturated fatty acids, immune system, fertility, seeds, sprouts, walnut oil, thistle oil

Authors

Thomas & Sabine Vinke, S-T-Vinke@gmx.de