PARASITOLOGICAL EVALUATION OF LETTUCE (*Lactuca sativa*) AS A PRACTICAL TOOL FOR TEACHING BIOTECHNOLOGY

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Parasitology is the science that studies the relationship between parasites and hosts, modes of infection, diagnostic methods and health education strategies for prevention and control. Contamination of food consumed raw is a concern since one of the main sources of contamination is fecal-oral. The aim of this study was to assess the presence of parasitic evolutionary forms in lettuce (*Lactuca sativa*) sold in supermarkets, greengrocers and street markets in the municipality of Catalão - GO. One head of lettuce was purchased/collected from each establishment and placed in two separate thermal boxes for the supermarket and the market, which had previously been sterilized under ultraviolet light. The lettuce leaves were washed in the original plastic bag with one liter (1000ml) of sterile normal saline solution. After sedimentation and centrifugation, the material was observed under a 40x light microscope. *Giardia lamblia* cysts were found in all the samples. *Toxocara* sp eggs were seen in samples from the market and the sacolão. It was also possible to detect hookworm and *Taenia* sp eggs in the market samples. Hookworm rhabditoid larvae were present in the supermarket samples. The results found during this study made it possible to work with the students not only on parasitological diagnostic techniques, but also on health education and surveillance. It is hoped that the results will contribute to the development of local prevention programs.

Keywords: *Giardia lamblia*, *Taenia* sp., Lettuce