GETTING STARTED IN THE MEAT GOAT BUSINESS


Trends, Development, Challenges and Opportunities in the Meat Goat Industry in Southeastern United States

by

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New publications from the “Getting Started in the Meat Goat Business” series are coming soon

http://www.famu.edu/goats

This publication is also available on CD
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Introduction

Goats first appeared on earth 20 million years ago during the Miocene Age, a period in which most modern day mammals evolved. Primitive man slaughtered small male goats for food leaving the larger mature males to breed the adult females. The early explorers kept goats aboard their ships during their long voyages and goats were part of the diet of the earlier settlers (Starvianos, 1988).

Modern man has used goats to pull carts, to serve as pack animals, to control undesirable vegetation and brush and for research models in biological studies. The skins from goats are also used to make leather goods such drums, boots, gloves; and their pelts can be used to make rugs or robes. Other products from goats include gelatin, fertilizer, bath soaps, hand creams, lotions, clothing, ice cream, cheese, milk and meat.

Overview of the Meat Goat Industry

In the U.S. today, meat goat production has become one of the fastest growing livestock industries and has proven to be a profitable enterprise for many farm families (Bowman, 2003). According to the Census of Agriculture report for 1997, the total number of goats in the U.S. was estimated at 2,251,613 which included fiber, dairy and meat goats.

In 1998, 400,000 goats were slaughtered at federally inspected facilities. By 1999, 492,000 goats were slaughtered (Agricultural Statistical Service, 2002). Thus, the number of goats inspected increased by 92,000 during this period.

Today, there are approximately 1,965,000 meat goats in the United States and 505,200 of this population resides in the southeastern corridor of the U.S. Texas (1,010,000) continues to lead in the total number of goats by almost 10 to 1. Tennessee (98,000) ranks number two followed by Georgia (77,000), Oklahoma (65,000), Kentucky (63,500), North Carolina (52,200), California (50,000) and South Carolina (41,000). Alabama ranks ninth (37,800) and Florida tenth (36,000) among the states with...
the highest population of meat goats (Kebede, 2005).

Persistence among ethnic consumers (i.e., Caribbean Islanders, Hispanics, Muslims and Africans, Jewish) in maintaining their religious or cultural practices has increased demand for goat meat. The strongest demand for goat meat is coming from the eastern U.S. coast, southern California, Detroit, Florida and the northwest corridor stretching from Washington to Boston (Agricultural Utilization Research Institute–AURS, 2001). It is expected that demand will continue to rise as the ethnic population in the U.S. continues to grow. In fact, the U.S. Census Bureau projects that between 1995 and 2050, Hispanics will account for 5% of the immigration into the U.S. Thus, they will make up 25% of the U.S. population in 2050 (Attra, 2002).

Americans of European Ancestry (a small sector of consumers) are also selecting goat meat (i.e., chevon or cabrito) as a nutritious, gourmet food item. On average, Americans consume 130 pounds of beef, 65.5 pounds of pork 63 pounds of chicken, 15 pounds of fish and 15 pounds of turkey per year; thus the American diet is disproportionately high in saturated fats (Arddrizzo, 1989).

Goat meat, on the other hand, is lower in fat, lower in cholesterol; lower in saturated fats, but higher in protein and iron content compared to beef, pork, mutton and poultry (USDA, 1989). This makes chevon (goat meat) a healthier alternative red meat. These facts along with consumer demand have created a myriad of opportunities for small and limited resource farm families as a means of generating a source of income.

**Challenges in the Goat Industry**

Despite demand for goat meat, there are several challenges facing the industry. Foremost is the lack of a well established regional or national marketing infrastructure by which goats are distributed from the farm to the consumer. Most goats in the U.S. are sold through livestock auctions or directly from the farm where backyard slaughtering is a common practice. Since, supply is low while demand for goat meat is high, chevon is rarely seen in mainstream grocery stores.

Another problem in the industry includes the lack of medications labeled for use in goats. Because goats are considered minor livestock species in the United States, most pharmaceutical companies have not developed products for use in goats. Left without other treatment options, many producers have turned to experimenting with unproven dosage rates, treatment frequencies and route of administration (i.e., oral versus topical) with medications intended for other livestock species. Information on the appro-
appropriate withdrawal period for these medications when used in goats is also unknown.

The use of any medications that differs from what is labeled on the bottle and has not been cleared by the Food and Drug Administration is considered "off-labeled use". The off-label use of any product in a food producing animal is considered illegal without a written prescription from a veterinarian (FDA, 2001).

Other factors that have slowed growth in the goat industry include: (1) Competition from other red meats (i.e., beef), (2) Seasonality of demand for goat meat, (3) High marketing cost, (4) Traveling distance from wholesaler to processor, (5) Erratic carcass quality, (6) Commercial trade resistance, (7) Negative consumer attitudes regarding goat meat and (8) Competition from foreign imports (Pinkerton et al., 1991; 2005).

In 1990, approximately 1500 metric tons of frozen goat carcasses were imported into the U.S. mainly from Australia and New Zealand because domestic production, processing and marketing systems could not keep pace with demand. In 2004, imports of frozen goat carcasses increased to 9,000 metric tons. In terms of dollar value, profits were estimated around $1.59 million to more than $21 million from 1990 to 2004 (Kebede, 2005) which are profits that should have been made by American producers.

The Outlook for the Goat Industry

In spite of the many challenges that face the goat industry, forty meat goat producers from Franklin County in North Carolina organized and founded the North Carolina Meat Goat Producers, Incorporation in 2001. The organization was a pilot program in North Carolina designed to develop alternative meat goat markets for producers.

Today, the group has grown to over 70 members. The group is marketing goat meat that is antibiotic and medicinal residue-free through the internet, and through retail stores and restaurants.

The Tri-County Cooperative was established in 2001 after receiving funding from Heifer International (HI). The grant was submitted by the New North Florida Cooperative and Florida A&M University (FAMU) for the purpose of assisting small and minority farmers to generate income by creating alternative ways to market agricultural products. This group was comprised of producers from Florida, Georgia and Alabama. They were selected for this project based on their need, land availability and willingness to follow through on project objectives.

After they were selected for this project, the producers attended a five-day compre-
hensive meat goat training course that was facilitated by a team of faculty and staff from FAMU. Project participants also attended a one-day goat seminar at Tuskegee University as part of a joint initiative (IFAS goat project) between FAMU, the Federation of Southern Cooperatives and seven other 1890 land grant institutions (SOFSEC institutions).

In 2004, the Tri-County Cooperative changed their organizational name (Southeastern Small Farmer's Network, LLC or SESFN) to reflect the diversity of the group; and during this same period, they marketed their goats to a retail store in Alabama and again to the same establishment in 2005.

Today, SESFN continues to provide educational opportunities for other goat producers from their respective communities (i.e., Annual Tri-State Farm Field Day) and they continue to look for other marketing opportunities in the southeast.

The Northeast Sheep & Goat Marketing Program at Cornell University was another initiative that was established in January, 2001, to improve the marketing infrastructure for goats and sheep in twelve states in the northeast.

When funding for the Northeast Sheep & Goat Marketing Program ended in early 2003, the University of Maryland was successful in obtaining a Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education (SARE) grant in 2004 to extend the accomplishments of the program.

The primary objectives of the SARE grant entitled, “The Mid-Atlantic Sheep & Goat Marketing Project,” was to redesign and expand the web site to include other states and to expand the information available on marketing of sheep and goat products. The university is also trying to develop a national resource on sheep and goat marketing.

Other promising news for the industry includes the development of the new Institutional Meat Purchase Specification (IMPS) for fresh goat meat. Meat scientists from Southern University, Louisiana State University and meat marketing specialist from the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) Livestock and Seed Program developed the new IMPS to address the growing demand for goat meat in the U.S. and to facilitate the expansion of a growing market. This activity was prompted by requests from the goat industry for a standardized criteria for carcass evaluation and description of goat meat cuts (USDA, 2001).

Selection standards for live animals have also been established under the new IMPS program. A modest increase in prices is now being paid by packers to producers for goats graded USDA Selection 1, 2 or 3. In addition, prices paid for live animals have been increasing annually for all classes of slaughter goats (Pinkerton, 2005).

The Agriculture Utilization Research Service (AURS) reported in 2001 that most ethnic consumers have low to average income paying jobs when calculated on an income per capita basis. However, their households have a higher percentage of wage earners who are accustomed to spending more of their disposable income (15-20%) on food.

Surveys also revealed that ethnic consumers were willing to spend more for domestically produced goat meat instead of purchasing imports of frozen goat carcasses from other countries (AURS, 2001).
In fact, less than 500 metric tons of goat meat was exported from this country between 1993 to 2004 whereas in 1992, 1000 metric tons of goat meat was exported from the U.S. The average consumption of goat meat at that time (2003) was estimated at 1.15 million which included goats that were domestically produced and frozen imported goat carcasses. From this estimate, a total of 287,500 (25% of the 1.15 million goats) goats were consumed in Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi and Tennessee (Solamin, 2005).

To meet demand, most domestic goats are now kept and consumed by ethnic consumers in the U.S. instead of shipping them to Mexico, Canada and the Caribbean (Kebede, 2005).

Because meat goat production is one of the fastest growing sectors in the livestock industry, beginning producers and some established producers expressed a need for current and accurate information on how to raise goats and produce safe, wholesome goat products for consumers. To address these concerns, in 2005 Langston University (Oklahoma) acquired funding from the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) of USDA to develop training and certification for meat goat producers. Along with experts from several other institutions (Florida A&M University, Southern University, North Carolina A&T etc.) and organizations they created a web-based certification program for meat goat producers to address these issues (refer to appendix A for website address).

On April 24, 2005, ABC News aired a segment on their evening news linking the demand for goat meat to growth in the ethnic population, as well as the increasing number of chefs who were including this item on their restaurant menus (McLean-Meyinsse, 2006). Similar reports were aired on the CBS News (February 18, 2005), NPRS, the National Public Radio station (March 4, 2005) and printed in the New York Times (published on June 15, 2005).

Other interesting news important to the industry has been the development of the FAMACHA® Anemia Guide. Francois Malan, a South African livestock parasitologist was concerned with the problems of controlling gastrointestinal parasites in small ruminants (sheep and goats) in Africa. The emergence of drug resistant parasites, especially *Haemonchus contortus*, the blood sucking worm, was of great concern to him.

*Haemonchus contortus* is a blood sucking parasite that can cause severe blood loss. Up to 10% of the total blood volume may be consumed by the parasites each day resulting in protein loss and anemia in the infected animal (Schweickart, 2004). Economic losses attributed to this worm in South Africa and southeastern United States include productivity losses in infected animals, losses due to the cost of treating the infected animals and losses due to death of the infected animal.

Good management practices, including prevention, control and treatment (i.e., dewormers) of gastrointestinal parasites, can prevent or reduce these losses. However, because this parasite thrives in moist warm climatic conditions, it is a prolific egg layer; and it can go into a hypobiotic (hibernating) state until the environmental conditions are more favorable for its life cycle, it is hard to control.
Furthermore, because of increased parasitic resistance, many of the deworming medicines (extra-labeled use) that are currently on the market are no longer effective in goats. Realizing this problem, Dr. Malan developed the FAMACHA system which has been adopted by many producers in South Africa and the United States to reduce the resistance as well as to control and treat animals infected with the Haemonchus contortus parasite.

The FAMACHA© Anemia Guide allows you to evaluate the color of the mucous membranes of the eye and compare the results to an eye color chart. The chart has five eye color scores. A score of one or two should result in a eye color that is rosy red or reddish pink indicating that the animal requires no deworming treatment.

Goats with a score of 3 may or may not require any treatment (optional). However, goats that exhibit a score of 4 or 5 (ranging from pinkish white to white) will require immediate attention.

When using this guide also integrate sound management practices (i.e., pasture rotation, a bio-security program and quarantine) to reduce the likelihood of introducing and/or spreading parasites and other infectious diseases among your goat herd.

The FAMACHA guide can only be used to prevent and treat parasitic infestations as a result of the blood sucking worm. However, coccidia (a microscopic parasite) still causes severe economic losses to goat producers each year in southeastern United States.

Another growing trend in America is the retirement of the “Baby Boomers” (people born between 1946 to 1964). Baby Boomers are predicted to live longer, be healthier and more active, work well past their parents retirement age, start a second career, and squash all stereotypes we know as the “golden years.” They are better educated, better invested, and expect much more from their lives after retirement (Amoruso, 2001).

According to the Census of Agriculture in 2002, the average age for farmers was estimated at 55 (Schmedt, 2005). Therefore, it shouldn’t be any surprise that many of the goat enthusiastic today are “Baby Boomers.” These individuals are returning to the farm or plan on farming for the first time to supplement their income after retirement. They are serious about their business adventure and are taking every opportunity to acquire new skills and to educate themselves on meat goat production, management and marketing.

Since the number of producers entering the business of raising goats for meat production is on the rise, Florida A&M University and several other 1890 land grant universities (refer to appendix A & B) are increasing their efforts in providing relevant and current educational...
activities specific to meat goat production, business management and marketing for producers, students and other agricultural professionals. Integral to this process has been the continual development of research-based information (i.e., herd health, reproduction, marketing) to assist in the improvement of small ruminant production systems. Community-based organizations, private entities (i.e., Heifer International) and state and federal agencies are also playing a critical role in this process. Through the appropriate technologies, these entities are exploring and applying innovative strategies to assist in improving the social and economic well-being of small and limited resource goat producers in the southeast.

Some Steps For Success

Before "Getting Started in the Meat Goat Business," consider the following suggestions:

Step 1. Educate Yourself

Raising goats for meat production will encompass a wide variety of special skills and knowledge. Contact your local agricultural university or extension office to find out about educational training opportunities in goat production, management and marketing. Classes that may be helpful are nutrition, pasture management, breeding, herd health, reproduction management, establishing a facility, record keeping, marketing and business management.

Some husbandry skills that will be useful in managing your goat herd include hoof trimming, administering oral and injectable medications, physically examining you herd for health problems, using the FAMACHA Anemia Guide to determine the appropriate time to deworm, assessing body condition scores to determine the nutritional status of the herd and selecting and evaluating goats for meat production (refer to appendix B for universities that provide educational activities in goat production and management).
Step 2. Investigate Market Conditions

The first step you should take while investigating market conditions is to identify potential customers that have a preference for goat meat. This can be accomplished by becoming familiar with the ethnic calendar to know when to have your animals or products available for the market (i.e., Easter, Ramadan, Christmas). Find out who else is successful in selling goats or goat products in your area.

It will also be helpful to identify your competition's strengths and weaknesses. This will enable you to differentiate your product from theirs to show potential customers that your business will best meet their needs.

If you will be marketing value-added products (i.e., processed meat), identify the closest state or federal slaughtering and processing facility to your farm to reduce economic losses due to the cost of fuel, the cost of labor and losses related to carcass shrinkages while transporting live animals to the market. You should also start gathering information from your local grocery stores, hotels, restaurants, community organizations and churches, to identify potential business opportunities, especially if you will be marketing value-added products (i.e., retail or wholesale cuts).

When you visit these establishments, find out if there is a demand for the type of product you want to sell in your area. If there is a demand, how often will the customers want the product, and how much will they need; and then ask yourself can you supply enough products on a consistent basis to meet demand as well as to fulfill a contractual agreement.

During these visits, take samples of your product to show prospective buyers what you would like to sell through their establishment. They may also allow you to set up a taste testing panel for customers to sample your products in their store.

If your plans are to market live animals, obtain livestock market reports (not available in Florida) from the local auction to determine the best time to sell your animals. Breeding programs should be designed to make goats available to meet a year-round need or when markets are the most lucrative (i.e., Ramada, Christmas and Easter).

Step 3. Develop a Record Keeping System and a Business Plan.

Effective farm management will require that records are kept and maintained on a consistent basis. A good record keeping system can assist you in making informed business and management decisions. The records must be accurate and include financial and production information. A record keeping system will not guarantee that your business will be a success, but without them you are almost certain to fail.

For financial records include information on operating expenses, equipment purchases, accounts payable, inventories, depreciation records and loan balances.

The information gathered should also assist you in preparing taxes, track your business progress, identify the weakness and strengths of your farm operation and can be used as a planning tool.

For production records, provide enough space for the animal ID, sex, litter size...
(single, twin or triplet), birth weight and ID of the parents of the offspring.

Production records can be used to monitor growth rates (i.e., birth, weaning and market weights) in the herd and to assist you in selecting which animals to retain in the herd for replacements.

On the other hand, a business plan is a detailed blueprint on how you will operate your business. It provides details on how you plan to reach your goals and objectives. The plan exposes opportunities and risks involved and allow you to clearly evaluate your operation over the next few years.

The plan must include an overview of the ownership structure and management team, a clear description of products or services to be rendered, a definitive marketing plan, including actual or expected markets for the products/services of the proposed business, a financial plan and other relevant information.

Finally, consider any strengths, opportunities, weakness (i.e., capital, animal losses, knowledge, flood areas on farm, skill level) or threats to your business; and have a plan on how you will tackle these problems in order to operate your business efficiently.

**Step 4. Estimate the Cost of the Enterprise**

Next, compare production cost with a realistic market to determine your potential profit. The easiest way to develop and evaluate production costs is through an enterprise budget. Enterprise budgets represent estimates of receipts (income) and costs associated with the production of agricultural products.

The information contained in the enterprise budget can assist you in making informed decisions about the cost incurred when raising goats for meat production. Furthermore, enterprise budgets can be used to estimate the profitability of the enterprise, to compare the profitability of various enterprises on the farm, and as an aid in preparing whole farm or cash flow budgets.

There are many sample budgets available that you can use [refer to Bulletin I, vol. 2] to estimate the cost of your production system (i.e., feed, medications, veterinarian services etc.). Take these values and compare them to your potential market.

Don’t forget to subtract all marketing cost such as transportation cost, fuel, labor, slaughtering and processing fees if applicable. There will also be some profit losses if you are transporting live animals to the market due to carcass shrinkage (loss in body weight). Therefore, your profit will be an estimate of your income minus all of your production and marketing expenditures (Adopted from Diop, 2006).

**Step 5. Identify your Resources and Limitations.**

Before you go any further in establishing your business, you need to identify your resources and limitations. Resources may include land, labor, capital, buildings, equipment and machinery. When assessing land requirements consider the following:

1. How much land do you currently own,
2. The stocking rates for goats (7-10 goats per 2 acres to meet a year-round need),
3. The carry capacity (forage available to meet the nutritional demand of the herd ) of your land,
4. What type of soil is on your land, is it suitable for planting forages and maintaining livestock.

Another question to consider is whether you will require labor. If the answer is yes to this question, then consider the type of skills required and who will operate the farm.

More than likely you will also require capital
to start your business, so how much capital do you need for building your facility and where can you apply for a loan, grant or cost-share program are some questions you should ask yourself prior to starting your business.

Step 6. Network with Other Producers

There are many benefits to networking with other producers. For example: (1) Sharing risks, (2) Sharing resources, (3) Working together to meet production and marketing goals, (4) Sharing knowledge and skills and (5) There is also more strength in numbers when you need to address issues with your state legislators regarding the goat industry.

Step 7. Establish the Goat Facility

When starting a meat goat enterprise, it is important to develop a good facility plan and purchase the appropriate equipment to be able to operate your farm efficiently. Adequate facilities are required to confine and protect the herd from predatory animals as well as to provide an area for shelter, feeding and kidding. This is especially true if kidding occurs during periods of inclement weather conditions.

Careful consideration must also be given to how the animals will be restrained and controlled during routine management practices such as hoof trimming, ear tagging, administering medications and weighing. If handled properly, goats are less likely to become stressed and obtain injuries that can severely affect productivity in the herd.

The facility designed for meat goats should, therefore, include plans for building fences, shelters, a catch pen, a working chute (optional) and a storage shed. It is also important to identify where these structures will be located on the farm to save on labor and energy and to provide the best view to observe the herd and to shelter them from the wind, cold and rain. The facility will more than likely be the most expensive investment in your business, so careful thought, should be given to designing a facility that is efficient and will stand the test of time (McKenzie-Jakes, 2005).

Step 8. Develop a Relationship with a Veterinarian and Extension Agent

Before purchasing any animals make sure you locate a veterinarian who has experience...
working with livestock, especially goats. It is good to have access to a veterinarian when you have an emergency (e.g. pregnancy toxemia, kidding problems) that you can not handle on your farm.

Choosing a doctor may not be as easy as it appears because some veterinarians don’t treat or do not know a lot about goats, but many are very eager to work with you. The easiest way to locate a good veterinarian is by word of mouth. Ask your neighbors, friends or other goat producers who would they recommend as a suitable veterinarian for your goat herd.

Once a veterinarian has been identified meet with him/her to let them know what your plans are and ask them to advise you on a herd health program for your animals.

Also, make sure you develop a relationship with your local extension agent to provide you with educational information related to meat goat production, management and marketing. Furthermore, they may also be able to recommend a good breeding and nutritional program for your animals or put you in contact with someone that can further assist you.

**Step 9. Select Breeding Stock**

A successful goat operation will depend on your ability to select animals with the greatest economic potential in terms or meat production. Before you purchase your herd consider starting small (1 buck and 25 does). This will give you an opportunity to learn how to effectively manage your goat herd while reducing economic losses that may occur as a beginning farmer, if you should lose some animals.

Finding a reputable breeder may be difficult at first. However, check the websites (i.e., Florida Meat Goat Association, Goats R US), newspapers (Florida Bulletin), magazines (i.e., Goat Rancher) for listings for goat breeders.

![Fig. 20. The Boer goat, the leading meat breed in the U.S.](image1)

Again, word of mouth is often the best way of finding good breeding stock. Try to avoid purchasing animals from livestock auctions, from a farm that is mismanaged or has a history of disease problems.

![Fig. 21. Inspecting the goat herd for health problems.](image2)

When selecting goats for your herd assess the animals based on their visual characteristics and their performance traits. These traits are adaptability, reproduction rate, carcass merit and growth rates.

![Fig. 22. Inspecting the goat herd for health problems.](image3)
To learn more about selecting and evaluating goats for meat production refer to Bulletin 1 Vol. 5 from the “Getting Started in the Meat Goat Business,” series.

Step 10: Florida Rules and Statutes for Transporting Goats  
(Adapted from Hunter, 2006)

If you plan on transporting your animals into the state of Florida or moving your animals from your property to shows or auctions there are a few guidelines you need to follow:

Goats are required to have the following:

1. An Official Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (OCVI) from your veterinarian that includes:
   a. The official identification of each animal as is mandated by the Scrapie Eradication Uniform Methods and Rules, APHIS 91-55-066.
   b. A statement from the veterinarian that each animal is free of the following diseases: Caseous Lymphadenitis, Soremouth, Pinkeye, Scabies, Scrapie, and Contagious Footrot.

2. You must also have evidence of ownership which must accompany all animals. Scrapie certification does not count as ownership paperwork or the OCVI.

The goats should be deep bodied, rectangular in shape from the side view and show superior growth and muscle development. The buck should be masculine in appearance and the female should be feminine. Both should sexes should also be structurally sound.

Ideally, the hair should be smooth and glossy. Rough hair is generally an indication of parasites or malnutrition. Skin that is loose and pliable with flesh evenly covering the body helps the goat adapt to various climatic conditions and may provide possible resistance to external parasites.

Signs of potential problems includes continuous coughing, limping, diarrhea, and mucous discharge from mouth, eyes, nose or rectum. Animals should be healthy, well-fleshed and have bright, clear eyes. Also, if you purchased your animals in Florida make sure they have been identified with a Scrapie tag before you take them home (for more information read step 10).

Fig. 23. Inspecting the goat herd for health problems (left wart on face; right splayed toes).

Fig. 24. A kid with a folded ear (left) and a doe with rosy red mucous membranes around the eyes (right).

Fig. 25. Preparing animals to be transported to market.
There are no tests required for meat-type goats. However, for animals that are being slaughtered, they must have an official individual identification, evidence of ownership or authority to transport the animals, and be moved directly to a recognized slaughter establishment.

It is also mandatory that all goats that are leaving your property have individual tamper evident (resistant) identification ear tags. White tags commonly known as “free tags” are the standard program tags. Even animals that are going directly to slaughter must be tagged. Blue tags marked “MEAT” or “SLAUGHTER ONLY” may be applied by producers or livestock market operators to animals that are for slaughter only. Only Blue tags may be applied to animals whose herd is unknown. Animals that do not have enough ear tissue, official Registry tattoos will also be accepted (when accompanied by the official registration certificate), or an OCVI that has the registration number on it. Electronic microchips/implants must come with a statement that includes the microchip number and the manufacturer’s name. Owners must know where the chip has been implanted and are responsible for having the chip reader.

For more information about the Scrapie Eradication Uniform Methods and Rules, contact USDA, APHIS, Veterinary Services, National Animal Health Programs (Hunter, 2006).

If you are not from Florida, check with the Department of Agriculture in your state to obtain information on state regulations for transporting animals on or off your farm in your state.

**Step 11. Identify County, State, Federal Agencies and Organizations that can Assist You.**

Lastly, it will also be helpful to identify county, state and federal agencies in your area that can provide assistance for your farm operation. Below are some names of agencies and organizations that you should contact.

For more information please refer to the contact information below.

1. **Farm Service Agency (FSA) - Low interest rate loans.**
   http://www.fsa.usda.gov.uk

2. **Heifer International (HI) - Grants for projects.**
   http://www.heifer.org

3. **Natural Resources Conservation and Services NRCS/USDA - Cost share programs**
   http://www.nrcs.usda.gov

4. **National Sheep Industry Improvement Center (NSCII/USDA) - Loan and grant program for goat or sheep producers.**
   http://www.nscii.org

5. **Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) - Producer Grants**
   http://www.sare.org

Fig. 26 Animals arriving at processing facility (Fort Valley State University).
Meat goat production is one of the fastest growing livestock industries in the U.S. today. Demand for goat meat, from traditional as well as some non-traditional consumers is on the rise. Because of high demand, many small and limited resource producers across the southeast are raising goats as an alternative source of income. However, there are many challenges facing the goat industry. Foremost is the lack of a well-organized marketing infrastructure and the absence of pharmaceuticals developed for use in goats. Seasonality of demand, negative consumer's attitudes, and lack of a consistent supply of domestically produced goat meat are among other factors that has hindered growth in the industry.

Despite these challenges, many producer organizations were established in 2001 for the purpose of marketing goat products. Through niche marketing and the development of value-added products, goat meat was sold through various restaurants and grocery stores around the country. Educational opportunities are also available at several 1890 land grant institutions (refer to appendix A and B) in the U.S. and many producers have been introduced to the latest technology related to management of goats.

However, if the industry is to truly to become viable, marketing channels for goats must be organized, producers must work together to ensure quality uniformed goat products are consistently made available for consumers and producers must be able to obtain a fair price for their products and services. Research must also keep pace with the constant changes in the industry and more attention must be given to educating the public about the role and the importance of goats in American agricultural production systems in effort to continue building a sustainable industry.

References


References (continue)


Vendors

1. Flemming Outdoors, 1-800-624-4493 (fencing)
2. Gallagher, 1-800-531-5908 (chargers)
3. Jeffers, 1-800-Jeffers (agricultural supplies)
4. Kencove, 1-800-536-2683 (fencing)
5. Premiere 1, 1-800-282-6631 (fencing)
6. Sydell, 1-800-842-1369 (goat equipment)
7. Tractor Supply 1-386-752-4256 (fences, feed, gates, etc.)

Websites

2. Langston University Goat website http://www2.luresext.edu/goats/training/QAtoc.html
4. Farm Service Agency http://www.fsa.usda.gov.uk
5. SARE Grant Programs http://www.sare.org
6. Sheep and Goat Marketing Information University of Maryland sschoen@umd.edu (301) 432-2767 x343
Producer Organizations

1. American Boer Goat Association
   (325) 486-ABGA (2242)
   info@abga.org

2. American Dairy Goat Association
   (770) 725-7926
   gameatgoats@juno.com

3. American Kiko Association
   (706) 337-5623
   bbmkikos@frontiernet.net

4. Empire State Meat Producers Association
   (607) 937-3324
   hillplacefarm@att.net

5. Florida Dairy Goat Association
   (386) 496-3111

6. Florida Meat Goat Association
   http://FMGA.nasumilu.com
   tranquility@hotmail.com

7. Georgia Dairy Goat Breeders Association
   gmga.tripod.com

8. Goats R US
   http://www.hbfgoats@infionline.net

9. International Boer Goat Association
   (877) 402-4242
   http://www.intlboergoat.org

    Phone: 919-496-2280
    Fax: 919-496-2594
    E-mail: ncmgp@ordergoat.com
    Websites: ordergoat.com/
              index.html

5. Southeastern Small Farmer’s Network, LLC
   Phone: 386-303-1361
   E-mail: normat@alltel.net
Appendix A

Project Title: "Strategies for Increasing Participation of Southeastern United States African American, Other Minorities and Small Farmers in the Meat Goat/Small Livestock Industry"

Principle Investigators: Tuskegee University* and Southern University*

Project Collaborators:
1. Alabama A&M University*
2. Alcorn State University*
3. Federation of Southern Cooperatives
4. Florida A&M University*
5. Fort Valley State University*
6. North Carolina A&T University*
7. South Carolina State*
8. University of Arkansas in Pine Bluff*

*Sofsec (Southern Food Systems Education Consortium) Institutions

Web Address: http://www2.luresext.edu/goats/library/field/goat_meat_demand99.htm

Universities with Goat Programs

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