



Buckeye Meat Goat Newsletter



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An educational publication of the Southern Ohio Meat Goat Task Force

Our Mission: To enhance the production and marketing of meat goats through educational and practical experiences.

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MEAT GOAT MARKETING PROGRAM

A meat goat marketing program will be held Saturday, February 18th with registration at 9:30 a.m. at the OSU Newark Campus in Newark, Ohio. The event will feature presentations on niche marketing of meat, marketing trends, group sale opportunities, a buyer and seller network, and a producer panel.

Featured speakers will include the following OSU Extension Educators; David Mangione, Jeff Fisher, and Tony Nye. Dr. Paul Kuber an assistant professor of Animal Science at OSU Extension. A lunch and handouts will be included in the registration fee of \$20 for the first person from an operation and \$10 for the second. Four producers will share their success and failures while marketing chevon. Reservations are required by contacting Amy Fovargue at OSU Extension Licking County (740) 670-5323 or fovargue1@postoffice.ag.ohio-state.edu the deadline for reservations are February 15th. Refer to the enclosed flyer for more information.

ASSESSMENT OF THE CURRENT MEAT GOAT INDUSTRY IN THE UNITED STATES

excerpted from Proceedings USDA, 2005, 4th National Small Farm Conference by Dr. Sandra Solaiman, Tuskegee University

Goat Farms in the U.S.

According to the USDA Census (2002), the number of goat farms increased more than 19% with over 12% increase in the goat population from 1997-2002; however, the number of farms selling goats increased by over 45%, and goat sales were up by more than 55%.

Imports and Exports of Goat Meat

The United States was a net exporter of goat meat up until 1990. Exports ceased due to increased domestic demand after 1994. This shift is another indication of increased interest in goat meat consumption nationally. In 2003, the U.S. imported more than 18 million tons (8.46 MT) of goat meat.

With an average carcass weight of 35 to 40 lbs., the estimated 500,000 goat carcasses were imported—goat import was up 151% from 3.36 MT in 1999. The only exporters of goat meat to the U.S. are Australia and New Zealand with 92.5% of shipments coming from Australia. There is a sharp increase in goat meat imports especially from 2002 to 2003. This trend will most probably continue unless there is an increase in domestic production.

Goats Slaughtered in the USDA-Inspected Plants in the U.S.

The number of all goats slaughtered in USDA federally-inspected plants in 2003 has increased 45.1% from 1998. Meat goat numbers have shown a solid increase since 1998, and they likely will continue to increase due to trends in population growth that promote meat goat production. It must also be noted that the meat goat industry in general – is in its infancy; therefore, many on-farm slaughters are not reported.

U.S. Population Changes

The major contributing factor for the rise in interest in meat goat production in the U.S. is the shift in demographics. According to the 2000 Census, the foreign-born population in the U.S. is up 57% since 1990, from 19.8 million to 31.1 million and continues to increase on an upward trend that started in 1970. As of 2000, 51.7% of the foreign-born population was from Latin America and 26.4% from Asia. It is projected that the U.S. Hispanic population is rising at a rapid rate and will reach over 100 million or 25% of the population in the year 2050. This group of immigrants has a strong preference for goat meat and will add to the opportunity for this sector of agriculture to grow.

ESTIMATING DEMAND FOR GOAT MEAT IN THE U.S.

The largest group of ethnic consumers of goat meat is the Hispanics with an increase of 57.9% in population from 1990 to 2000. Muslims, Asians, and Africans also consume considerable amounts of goat meat. Goat consumption is steady except for special holidays when goat meat

consumption increases 3- to 4-fold. There are increases in demand for goat meat for Easter, the Fourth of July and certain Muslim holidays such as Aideh Ghorban or Aideh Fatre. Among Chinese, goat meat consumption is usually higher in colder months, between October and February. Understanding these ethnic traditions and matching the demand with production require marketing education and techniques. Also, the special handling and harvesting procedures may differ according to different religions and traditions and can contribute to the value of the goat meat. Halal harvesting for Muslims and Kosher techniques for Jews may add value to goat meat.

Estimating Populations Having Preference for Goat Meat

An attempt will be made to estimate demand for goat meat based on Hispanic, Asian, foreign-born African and Caribbean populations in the U.S. Based on the U.S. Census (2000), there are about 10.2 million Asians, about 35.3 million Hispanics and four million Caribbean and African-born populations in the U.S. Among an estimated seven million illegal immigrants (Census 2000), over 50% are Mexicans and other Latin Americans that consume goat meat. In total, there are almost 53 million people that have preference for goat meat in the U.S. There maybe others, but due to lack of availability and marketing channels for goat meat, they can't be included.

Estimated Goat Meat Consumption

The average number of persons living in a U.S. household is 2.59 (Census 2000). For the ethnic populations under consideration, a slightly higher number of 3 persons per household is used. Assuming conservatively that only 10% of these ethnic households consume goat meat and without considerations for other parts of the U.S. population, a total of 1.76 million households may consume goat meat. According to the Agriculture Fact Book (2001-2002), Americans consumed on average annually 195 pounds of red meat and poultry per capita in the year 2000. If every ethnic household (three persons) consumes only 72 pounds of goat meat

annually, including holidays, there will be a projected demand for 117.6 million pounds of goat meat. Assuming a 40-pound carcass weight per goat, the total number of goats needed to be slaughtered is 3.18 million per year. This is a modest estimate of the numbers of meat goats needed. A little over 1.1 million meat goats were sold in the U.S. in 2002 and 1.15 million reported goats were consumed in 2003 (Domestic slaughter + imports). It should be noted that the demand for slaughtered meat goats is more than 160% of meat goat inventory in the U.S.

CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED

Major challenges associated with increased goat meat production are: Consumer education; producer education; organized markets and marketing channels. Consumer education could include: The dietary advantages of goat meat; why people of all the old cultures (Chinese, Mayan, African, Middle Eastern, and Greek) eat this meat; and widespread distribution of recipes for different goat meat preparations. Producers should be educated on the best management techniques to raise goats for meat. Using some superior breeds with fast growth rates, especially those from South Africa, have revolutionized meat goat production.

However, the most important factor in the growth of any industry is marketing. Keeping in touch with state agricultural and farmer organizations in developing new markets is important. Producers can benefit from federally-inspected slaughterhouses that can process goats as well as enable interstate sales. With goat meat prices high, direct marketing may be desirable, either on-farm or using the Internet. Considerations should be given to proper harvesting and handling techniques for goat meat for Jewish (Kosher) and Muslim (Halal) clientele.

CONCLUSION

There is an increased interest in goat meat consumption in the U.S. Goats slaughtered in the USDA-inspected plants as well as

goat meat imported from Australia and New Zealand has sharply increased since 1999. The U.S. has changed from a net exporter during the last decade. Increases in ethnic population in the U.S., especially Hispanics, Asians, and Muslims, have contributed to this development. Also, goat meat is a healthy meat and fits the designer diets of health-conscious Americans. Goat production is a great opportunity for small farm producers to target these markets and diversify their farm products. There is a great opportunity for value-added products. However, consumer as well as producer education is needed and a marketing structure must be strengthened.

DROUGHT/OVERGRAZING/FROST SEEDING - Mark Landefeld, Extension Agent, Monroe County

The drought we experienced this summer and early fall caused many declines in pasture production. Overgrazing of many pastures occurred. Overgrazing is **not** a result of the number of animals grazing, but the amount of time plants are exposed to grazing animals. This often happens in a continuous grazing system, but this year's drought conditions made it worse.

When plants are severely grazed, or re-grazed before a sufficient rest period has elapsed, the plant takes energy that has been stored in the roots as carbohydrates to support new leaf growth. As carbohydrates are removed from the roots, the root dies, separates from the plant and eventually decomposes. This process continues until enough leaf surface once again develops to catch sufficient amounts of solar energy that support additional leaf growth and reestablish lost roots. Depending on the severity of root loss, slow re-growth may be noticed for a period of a few weeks to three months or more.

Frost seeding may be a way for the farm manager to reestablish plants and maintain forage composition or introduce new species of plants. Areas chosen for frost seeding should not have large amounts of undecomposed plant material remaining in

the field. If it does, allow animals to graze the area closely before seeding. Frost seeding works best with legume seeds typically, because it is easier for small seeds to fall to the soil surface than it is for grass seeds which are generally larger but lighter. However, grass seeds may work relatively well this year since there is very little plant residue remaining in most fields and openings in the sod are more abundant.

Encouraging legume growth in pasture fields can minimize production costs by reducing the amount of nitrogen fertilization necessary for maximum forage growth. Legumes also improve the quality characteristics of a grass stand. Frost seeding offers several potential advantages when properly implemented. These may include: establishment of forage in undisturbed sod, reduced labor, energy and cash expense compared to conventional tillage methods, the ability to establish forages with minimal equipment investment, and little, if any, "non-grazing" period.

Late winter is a good time to frost seed pastures. The freeze and thaw cycle of the soil helps seeds which are broadcast on top of the soil to obtain good soil-to-seed contact. This is necessary if seeds are to grow and compete with established grasses, other legumes, or weeds.

Planting mixtures and seeding rates differ greatly. Desired species and number of seedlings wanted in the final stand determine how much to plant. As a rule of thumb, if legumes are already present in the pasture, 3-4 lbs. of red clover and 1-2 lb. of ladino or alsike clover seed per acre works well. Birdsfoot trefoil could also be used at 2-3 lbs. per acre. If no legumes are currently present in the stand or seeding one species alone, doubling the above rates may return better results.

If grasses are to be frost seeded into existing pastures, perennial or annual ryegrass, orchardgrass, or smooth brome grass would be recommended. Perennial/annual ryegrass should be seeded at 2-3 lbs. along with orchardgrass 1-2 lbs. or smooth brome grass 8-10 lbs. per

acre. When planting, using a spinner type seeder, do not mix legume and grass seed together. Grass seed will not spread as far as legume seed causing an uneven stand. Make two trips over the pasture and adjust spacing as needed for the type seed being sown.

The following spring, excessive growth competition should be reduced. Frost seeded pastures should be grazed in the spring at regular intervals to allow sunlight to enter the canopy. Do not allow animals to graze plants low enough the first or second rotation to ruin new seedlings before adequate roots are developed.