

- Measure response to novel goat meat products, especially those designed for upscale restaurants, health food outlets, and ethnic eating establishments.
- Explore contract growing of meat goats, in conjunction with forward contracting of products to wholesale and retail outlets.
- Elucidate bio-chemical properties of goat meat with emphasis on human dietary concerns.
- Improved quantification of supplies and needs among goat meat producers and consumers throughout the year, but especially at periods of peak demand.
- Correlation of on-farm goat inventories with auction and slaughter numbers, both official and unofficial.

CONCLUSIONS

Other opportunities will arise as further research makes them available. Some research needs include:

- Evaluation of Boer goats under southeastern conditions, including crosses with meatier types currently found in the U.S.
- Exploration of out-of-season breeding, including estrus initiation and synchronization.
- Economic assessment of improved management practices, including feed supplementation, rotational grazing, multi-species grazing, parasite control, and predator control.
- Evaluation of post-mortem carcass treatments, with an eye toward improving tenderness.
- Development of live and carcass grading standards for slaughter kids, yearlings, and older goats.
- Study of fabrication and consumer acceptance of processed goat products.

There is little doubt that the consumption of goat meat will continue to increase. Production potential among states in the Southeast, including Florida, is high, because of greater and more dependable rainfall, and an abundance of browse plants favored by goats. As added incentive, Florida lies nearer major metropolitan centers than production areas farther west. The remaining factor lies within the hearts of Floridians. They bring a work ethic, an awareness of ethnic traditions, a relatively good education, and an abundance of small farming operations well suited to the production of meat goats. Whether they seize the opportunity, will depend on both leadership and the incentive to act.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I wish to thank my colleague, Dr. Frank Pinkerton, Goat Extension Specialist, recently retired from Langston University, for his valuable contributions in the preparation of this chapter.